

The Waiting Servant – Mark 13

After the resurrection of Jesus, the story did not end—it entered a new and powerful phase. The risen Christ revealed Himself in unforgettable ways, not just to affirm His victory over death, but to transform and commission His followers for the mission ahead. Each of the post-resurrection encounters were full of meaning, revelation, and empowerment.

Many Christians celebrate Easter without understanding the divine significance of the events that followed His resurrection. The empty tomb was the beginning of a series of supernatural appearances designed to restore broken hearts, to bring new energy by reigniting their passion and faith, and to prepare the disciples for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. All for the purpose of commissioning and empowering them for their mission to go forth and expand the Gospel.

Many Christians celebrate Easter without also understanding the significance of His ascension. Jesus' return to the Father put an end to His earthly ministry and signified the success of His time on earth. In other words, His literal, physical ascension put a stamp on the completion of His saving work done on our behalf. Most importantly, His ascension was the beginning of His exaltation to High Priest and set in motion the start of His new work in heaven, which includes preparing a place for every believer and sitting in wait for His return.

We often talk about the hope of His return, but to do this with understanding, we must recognize that the Lord Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of the Father. He resides there as the head of the Church, as the giver of spiritual gifts, and as Lord of all. No one saved or lost is out of His reach. He truly is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, conqueror of the past, present, and future.

As we conclude our series of messages taken from Mark's Gospel, I want to draw your attention to chapter 13. This chapter contains a great deal of information that is often debated and often used for more than it was intended. In Mark 13, Jesus talks about two important things: the end times and His second coming. Intermingled with Jesus' teaching about the destruction of the Temple, and the signs associated with the end of the Church age, and the promise of His second coming, we also find instructions on how we are to live while we wait on His return.

You see, Jesus, in sharing the prophecies recorded for us here in Mark 13, was not attempting to encourage the Apostles to predict the exact day of His return. Instead, He was encouraging them then and urging us now, to remain watchful, or as it says in verse 9, "be on your guard" and to prepare for the day of His arrival. Jesus' first instruction for how we should live while we wait is found in verse 5 and 6. **Read Mark 13:3-8.** When we look at these verses, Jesus simply warns against the dangers associated with false messiahs who pretend to be Jesus or speak on behalf of Jesus. He says, "*See that no one leads you astray.*" There are no other messiahs. Jesus is the only one. While you wait for Jesus, make sure you do not listen to those who twist the Word, or stretch the truth, to fit their agenda. Stick to the Word and you will be ok.

Jesus also reminds us of things often confused as signs of the end, which are not true signs. We live in a world filled with troubled times. Jesus mentions wars and rumors of war, famines, and natural disasters such as earthquakes, but he says in verse 7, *“do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet.”* Since the ascension of Jesus, false messiahs, hunger, earthquakes, floods, wars; all these things have presented themselves throughout history, but Jesus says, these troubling things will happen, but do not view them as the end. Man has often thought these things meant the end was near, but Jesus in verse 8 says, these things are just the beginning of what is to come. He says, *“These are but the beginning of the birth pains.”* A world that runs away from Jesus will see exponential growth in these things. While you wait on Jesus, make sure you trust Him and not the rumors associated with this world.

Look with me now at **Mark 13:9-13**. Jesus told the Apostles to be prepared for the things that would come against them. Persecution is not a sign of the end but is something every believer should expect. Why? Because the sins of this world stand in direct opposition of Him. Jesus also encouraged them to continue sharing the Gospel even in the face of persecution because persecution does not alleviate the responsibility of the Church to do so. Despite what may be said about us, or done to us, we must trust in the promise of our salvation. Jesus said here in verse 13, *“the one who endures to the end will be saved.”* While you wait on Jesus, make sure your faith endures, and that you continue to share the message of Jesus every step of the way.

From there, Jesus speaks about the defilement of Israel and the eventual time of tribulation that follows that defilement. He is simply informing about the extreme nature associated with this time in history. Jesus warns against moral corruption and encourages His followers to remain morally alert and obedient to the commands of God. We must choose to live for Him at every moment, not just in tough times. While you wait on Jesus, as mentioned a few weeks back, make sure you pursue holiness.

Following the tribulation is the promise of His second coming. **Read Mark 13:24-27**. And then Jesus speaks to the timing of everything. **Read Mark 13:32-36**. How could Jesus *NOT* know the day and hour? As God, doesn't He know everything? Jesus does not know when He will return. Not because He no longer possesses His omniscience — He is still the unchanging God, but because He voluntarily, in submission to the Father, chose to forego His knowledge of this event. He takes the opportunity to remind us that He is just as we are. **Waiting**. I don't know about you, but I find comfort in knowing that my Savior sits, eagerly awaiting to come and take me home. Jesus is now, ***The Waiting Servant***. In the meantime, we are to watch with eager anticipation for His return. Some people have the idea, “We don't know when Jesus is coming, so does it really matter?” Others have the idea, “We don't know when Jesus is coming, so we must find out and set a date.” The right response is, “I don't know when Jesus is coming so I have to stay awake, filled with eager hope, and prepared for His coming.” Jesus wanted the Apostles to focus more on preparing for His return than on the specifics of these prophecies. The same is true for us. If we serve Jesus faithfully and fully every day, then regardless of the situation at hand, we will be ready for when the Father sends Him.