

The Parables of Jesus

- The Second Usage of the Parable of the "Watchful Servants"

-Mark 13:35-37

As we continue on with our Parables we can see that we are getting to the end of Jesus' ministry while He was on the earth. In Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:3 and Luke 21:7, we see while on the Mount of Olives just prior to the Last Supper, Jesus was asked by His disciples, "...when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In Matthew 24:4-28; Mark 13:4-27 and Luke 21:6-28, Jesus went into a dissertation of the "signs of those times." He then proceeds to use a series of parables in which this is the second. Remember, in its context within this teaching setting with His disciples, Jesus is using this parable in answering their question "...when shall these things be?"

Jesus previously used this parable in His ministry as previously discussed in Luke 12:35-38. Jesus uses this parable again, now in this setting, to reinforce its principles and lesson to the disciples concerning the end times. We will review, the first time Jesus had used this parable as it is found in Luke 12:35-38. The first time Jesus used this parable, He and His disciples were in the region of Galilee. Jesus was teaching and giving warnings to His disciples and the multitude to beware of the hypocrisy and "leaven of the Pharisees."

Jesus now uses this parable a second time in Mark 13:34-37. However, in this context, Jesus is using it as a continuation of His response to the disciples as to when the Kingdom of Heaven will come, the signs of His coming to establish His Kingdom, and of the end times. The major emphasis for using this parable a second time was to make sure His disciples, both then and today, are always on "watch" and ready for when Jesus will return to establish His Kingdom.

The Second Use of the Parable of the "Watchful Servants - Mark 13:34-37- *"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."*

Jesus is using this parable again, however, the emphasis of its usage this time concerns "the end times." Jesus, who in Mark's Gospel always refers to Himself as the "Son of Man," was comparing Himself to a "man" who takes a "far journey." Jesus was referring to His soon return to the "right hand of the Father" after His death, burial, and resurrection. We must remember that we are in the last few days of Jesus' life on this earth.

In the parable we see that during the time that the "man" would be away, he gave all his "authority" of doing the work of his business to his servants. Jesus first refers to the "servants" of the household. In using the term "servants," Jesus was stating that while He would be away He would give all of His disciples all His authority to do the works of, and bring forth, the Kingdom of God upon the earth until He returned. This giving of His authority goes along with the concept of "occupying" until He returns.

Jesus then uses the term "porter" which refers to a "gate-keeper." The "gate-keeper" or we can say "doorkeeper," was entrusted with the responsibility of who would come in and who would be able to leave the house. The porter would normally have the "key" to lock or unlock the gate. It was a position of great responsibility and trust, as well as a position that was to give proper oversight of the other servants. The important thing that we must remember is that it was the "porter" to whom the owner of the house has given the responsibility to "watch" for the master's return.

Jesus was referring to the leadership that would be within the Body of Christ, both at that time and at the time of His return – whenever that would be. We must remember that during Jesus' ministry, He had many

more disciples than just the twelve. However, it was the twelve that were to become the primary leaders of the Body of Christ.

Therefore, Jesus was primarily referring to the twelve at that time but He was also referring to all future leadership within the Body of Christ – even to this day. He was referring to those who would be entrusted to not only properly oversee the other disciples in doing the works of the "Household of faith," but they would also have the responsibility of "watching" for the return of Jesus.

Jesus was saying that leadership within the "Household of faith" is a "key" ingredient to His successful return. It is the responsibility of the leadership within the Body of Christ to always be alert, be ready and be watching for Jesus' return. It is also the responsibility of the leadership of the Body of Christ to ensure that those entrusted to them by their master, Jesus, would also be ready and prepared.

How do we stay ready and prepared for the return of our Lord, Jesus? We stay ready, prepared and watchful by knowing His Word, for ourselves and not what other tells us concerning the Word. We stay ready, prepared and watchful by knowing what Jesus said concerning the entire Word of God and its truthfulness. It is the entirety of scripture that we are to know, believe in and walk in.

In these last few public parables, we see Jesus, as He is preparing for His death, desiring to truly prepare those that would be seeking after Him and those that truly love Him. He is letting them know, in advance what will be required of them. The key word that Jesus uses is the word "watch." He uses it three times in this parable, which literally means that He is using it exponentially 3 times, which refers to it being 1000 times important to "watch" and be ready for His return.

Jesus stresses to His followers, His true disciples that each and every one of them is to "watch" and be ready for His return – whenever that may be. Jesus was giving His future leaders, the twelve disciples and all leadership today, who would be entrusted with God's "Household of faith," the understanding that they had the greater responsibility to grasp the "signs" of His return. They are to "watch." We are to be on our guard and be on "watch" for His return.

This means that Jesus was very emphatic concerning His return. He knew at that time and He knows today, that many will fail to watch for His return. That is why He is emphatically giving these parables to those that call themselves His true disciples, His true believers, His true followers. These are the last of His parables to the majority of those that have stayed the course with Him during His ministry here upon this earth.

These are the last of His parables to us as true believers in Him before He goes to the cross. He is telling us, **three times** in this parable alone, that we are to "watch." We must be on alert and be watching for His return – at all times.

What does Jesus mean as He is speaking to those that truly love Him and are seeking after Him, to watch? In some translations we see it translated as "stay awake." It literally means to "give strict attention to; to be cautious and active; to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake you." As we can see, Jesus is letting His true disciples know that they are to watch and be ready unless they are overtaken. What do we mean by "being overtaken?"

It means that we can be "taken over" by strange doctrine and by false teachings and incorrect doctrines concerning, not only His return, but also about our faith in God and in Jesus. In this scripture, Jesus emphatically calls upon those that are truly seeking Him to be on guard and to "watch." We must always be ever so careful to not get caught up in false teaching and man's doctrine. Jesus states emphatically to all those that truly believe in Him, that they are **to watch, to stay awake and not be caught off guard.**

We all would do well in these days we are in, to heed the words of Jesus as found in Mark 13:37 - "***And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.***"