

## THE LATTER PARABLES OF JESUS

### Message 14

Scripture: Mark 13:32-37; Matthew 24:42-44

INTRO: I had not planned to preach this much on the return of Christ, but I am glad the context of these parables have almost required me to do so. I have not studied prophecy much for a number of years, nor have I been challenged on my own conclusions for years. Once more as I delved into eschatology I see how many details I have not yet studied. For example, His coming will be like the lightning that shines from the east to the west. Do you think that is simple? Study that along with other texts of His return and see how it works.

And I also had not planned to include a parable from Mark that occurs chronologically in the Gospels where we are right now. And Luke gives the setting to this parable in Mark and the next one in Matthew, and he gives some very important information the others do not include, though it is only in a very brief passage. And for that reason, I want to include those passages.

Let me mention once more that in my understanding, in our parables now, Jesus is answering the disciple's second question: "What will be the sign of Your coming?" And His answer in the synoptic Gospels is that when you see all these things He had mentioned earlier, begin to come to pass, then you know My coming is near. Then He said, "But, you cannot know the day or the hour." From all that He said, "Watch therefore." And now follows exhortation after exhortation to watch.

In the last message we saw that Jesus likened His unexpected coming to the flood in the days of Noah. In Noah's day, it was life as usual right up until the day the flood came. They ate and they drank and they married and they were given in marriage, right up until the flood came and destroyed them all. That is how it will be when Christ comes. It will be life as usual.

I pointed out to those pretribulationists who believe that this passage speaks of the end of the tribulation that that simply does not fit the picture. Nor does it fit the post-tribulationists view of the rapture as happening at that time. It will be anything but life as usual at that time. They will be begging on the rocks and hills to fall on them. Doesn't sound like a prime time to propose marriage or go to a restaurant for supper.

Our next parable then, comes out of Mark, a parable on the servants and the porter of a household.

#### H. The Servants and the Porter

##### 1. The parable (Mark 13:33-34)

Let us begin by reading the parable. We'll begin in Mark 13:28 because that will show you where we are with this parable (read Mark 13:28-34). You noticed, no doubt, that our passage is parallel to what we covered in Matthew. But Mark now left out that the Lord's return will be like the days of Noah.

##### 2. The Setting

So, let us consider the setting. In a sense all of what has gone on before is the setting from Matthew 24:1-24:31. But more in particular, Matthew 24:36-42 is the setting. And in its greatest particular, Matthew 24:42 is the setting. Jesus said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming." And in Mark 13:33 that particular setting is given in these words, "Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is."

But Luke gives what I would see as the longer setting for what follows in Matthew, and Mark. So turn to Luke 21 (read 21:34-36). So, as I interpret this section, Luke gives the setting to two brief parables, of which the first is found in Mark and the second in Matthew. This morning we want to look at the one in Mark, but the setting comes out of Luke.

Now, over and over again in these passages the believer is exhorted to watch. There is a question I have pondered for a long time. Over and over we are told to watch, but what are we to watch? Are we to keep watching the skies and if we fail to see Him when He appears, will we miss out? What are we to watch?

Well, as I see it, Luke will give us that important answer, and tell us what it means 'to watch'. Look at verse 34 (read). It is not the skies we are to watch, it is what? Our own life! And why are we to watch our lives? Well, first, it is 'lest your heart gets weighed down with things that will take it away from the Lord!'

And here is the question: What things are of the gravest danger to us?

This past week I had the privilege of traveling to Norman Wells with Wayne and Mike here who set up houses in the far north. I have been praying for them and wanted to see what is all involved. I had a week of holidays left and spent it with them. They have the houses barged in to various localities in summer. And this past week we set up two duplexes in Norman Wells. Well, as we were flying over that vast land of snow and lakes and spotted trees I pondered this passage in Luke. When I got home I added to my notes for this message.

Let me show you how Luke pictures the days at the end of the tribulation. You will see that he does not paint a picture of life as usual. Look at verses 20 (read). That is the middle of the tribulation. Now listen as it gets worse and worse in verses 21-27 (read).

Now notice in verse 28 that he tells us that when these things begin to come to pass, we know our redemption, the rapture is near. So look in verses 29-33 at the similarities to our passage in Matthew (read). And now look at these most incredible verses of 34-36, which give us the setting of the parables we are about to look at (read).

So he talks of the danger of having our hearts weighed down. The word 'weighed down' is *baruno*. It means to weigh down or, as the KJV says, 'to overcharge.' The idea is that of the proverbial straw that broke down the camel's back. A camel can carry only so much and if you finally put one last straw on his back, he breaks down. That is the picture here, and what a warning we have.

Now note that Luke lists three things that weigh the heart down and from which he warns us; carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life. Now I would like to give you an assignment. How do these three relate to each other? Well, as I see it, they relate like this. The word translated 'carousing', or 'surfeiting' means, as I understand the word used here in our text, 'to eat to the full' or overful. So what we have here is an overemphasis on eating.

The word translated 'drunkenness' does not necessarily mean drunkenness, and I don't think that is its meaning here. It is my view that the thinking behind this word is Hebrew and means to drink to the full. The verb of this word is used in John 2:9 where Jesus made wine after people had 'well drunk'. It does not mean drunk there, it means to have drunk to the full, to be satiated. That is the idea in our text.

The third and last thing is the cares of this life. Now, just what are the cares of this life? Well, they include providing our daily food, but go beyond that to looking after clothing and housing and transportation and all other necessities of life. What I think the passage is talking about is when we overburden ourselves by going beyond providing for our daily necessities.

Last week one day in the camp up north I had a chat with the two older ladies that were the cooks in the camp we were staying. And let me give you some idea of what looking after their own food and drink and cares of this life were like. They got up at 3:30 a.m. They made breakfast. After breakfast they ate and cleaned up the dishes and rooms and started lunch. After lunch they cleaned up the dishes and did other cleanup work and then started on supper. After supper they cleaned up the dishes and by now it is maybe 7:30-8:00. And now they go to sleep to get ready for 3:30. Now that is almost enough to drain any time for anything spiritual. But what if they took an extra job to go beyond providing for their daily needs? And that is, as I see it, what our passage warns about.

When we go beyond eating and drinking and looking after the cares of this world, which are a Biblical requirement, to hoarding and laying up for ourselves so we can eat, drink and be merry for the rest of our lives, that can easily weigh our hearts down and take over, and all of a sudden we find ourselves neglecting the weightier matters, our eternal life. The cares of this life can easily lead us from the most important matter in life.

In Mark 4:19, in the parable of the four soils, Jesus said of the seed that fell among thorns, and I quote,

"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." That is the danger Luke is talking about. The Bible is very clear that the believer is to provide for his household. Our problem is when we go beyond that. Looking after our daily needs is what can lead us to go beyond that which can lead us to the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of this world. Whatever in life has the potential of distracting us from Christ, may cause us to be unprepared for Christ when He comes. Herein lies our danger. This is what we must watch!

But Luke gives us a second very important piece of information here. Note carefully what Luke says in verse 36 (read). Now, we have here a very strong verse that indicates a pre-tribulational rapture. The word 'to escape' is *ekphugo*. It means to escape out or flee out. It does not mean to be kept through. The apostle Paul escaped, *ekphugo*, out of Damascus when he was let down from the wall in a basket (2 Cor. 11:33). He was not saved in Damascus, he was saved by escaping out of Damascus.

Go to Revelation 3 (read 10). The promise from the Lord is to keep these Christians 'from' the hour of trial which will come upon the whole world. Our post-trib friends say that it means He will keep them 'through' the hour of trial. The word translated 'from' is *ek*. Like *ekphugo*, it means 'out of' not through.

Now it says to watch and pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Now I ask you, how could we be accounted worthy? Whom would we have to be worthy to? Well, the Lord, of course! And on what ground could He account us worthy to escape all these things?

Before we go on, I want to point out one danger of these verses. From such Scriptures some have taken the position that there will be a partial catching up. Only spiritual, godly Christians will be raptured, and I just caution against that view.

So, again, on what ground could He account us worthy? On the ground of our good works? On account of what we

have done for Him? On what ground? And I would conclude, it is on the ground of two things. First, that we have repented of our sins and have accepted Jesus as our Messiah. We have been justified by faith. But second, because we have lived by faith. Go to Matthew 7 (read 24-29). It is he who hears the teaching of Christ AND, does it! The Lord puts a lot of stress on obedience.

In Luke 8, Jesus was teaching in one place and His mother and brothers came to talk to Him but they couldn't because of the crowd of people. And others came and told Jesus. Some think that Joseph may have passed away and they have come to inform Jesus. But in Luke 8:21 Jesus said, "My mother and brothers are those who hear My word and do it!"

And according to Luke, if we let our hearts get weighed down even with legitimate things, they have the potential of ultimately leading us off the path. So according to Luke we are to pray that God would keep us in His path and give us the courage to obey His word in order that we might trust God by faith and live by faith in obedience to Him.

Then notice that Luke says in our verse. We are to watch and pray always; why? That we might escape. Escape what? That we might escape 'all these things that are to come to pass', not just part of them. And here I would remind our mid trib friends that it is not just the last half of the tribulation that Christians escape. I remind the pre-wrath believer, it is not just the very last part of the tribulation we escape. I remind the post trib believer that it is not that we would be counted worthy to endure through all these things, but to escape out of them all!

Now, there are two things we must be accounted worthy of by God. One is to escape all these things. The second is to stand before the Son of Man. I would say this, if we will not be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man, nor will we escape all these things!

All this then is the setting of this parable. And the setting is quite plain. It is this, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour Your Lord is coming."

Watch, wherefore? One will be taken and the other left! If you do not watch, you may end up being left! Watch wherefore? An overemphasis on eating and drinking and the cares of this life might cause us to lead us off the path altogether and we might end up not being accounted worthy to escape all these things! Sobering thoughts!

### 3. The interpretation

So let us read Mark 13:33-34 and then interpret the parable (read). Notice it begins like this, "It is like..." What does it refer to? Well, the coming of Christ, of which we do not know the day or the hour! And what is it like? It is like, a man going into a far country and who gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch."

First, it is like a man going into a far country. We have seen this in an earlier parable. The disciples thought that Jesus would set up the kingdom immediately, and to correct that, Jesus gave the parable of the minas. He says in Luke 19:11-12, "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." So, we have seen this thought earlier already. The idea is that Jesus will be leaving this world and will be gone for some time.

Then our parable says that the landowner gave authority to his servants. The Lord Jesus has given authority to His servants, and we are some of those servants. The Lord has given to believers authority and power over demons! Some of you have experienced that. And he gave to each servant a work to do. Every believer has a work to do. May I ask you, what work does He have for you to do? Well, let me tell you that it can be anything from janitorial work in the church to preaching! There are many believers who do not know what their gift is. That does not necessarily mean they are not exercising their gift. Those who recognized gifts can often see what it is. Let me say this, we have a responsibility in the time we have here on earth. It is to do for the Lord

what He wants us to do. He has given to every man his work.

Furthermore, in this parable He commanded the porter to watch. The porter is the gate or doorkeeper. He would have the responsibility not to allow into the house that which would be destructive to it or to allow the house to be broken into. There would be certain people allowed in and others kept out. The similarity here to a pastor's work is so striking that many commentaries take note of it.

Recently a 4 and ½ hour video was put out called, "Left Behind or Led Astray?" It is a supposed expose against the pre-tribulational teaching. And one of the complaints is that pastors are not doing their job. They are not preparing people for the antichrist and the tribulation, which they will now soon enter. I have over 20 books that deal with this subject. One is by Jim McKeever called, "Christians Will Go Through The Tribulation: And how to prepare for it." It deals first with the theological matters and why the rapture must occur at the end of the tribulation, and then it shows how to get prepared with food etc... to survive 7 years. The video I mentioned mentions Dave MacPherson. His book is called, "The Incredible Cover-Up" which of course is, that Christians will not be raptured before the tribulation but will go through the tribulation.

It is the manner of some post trib people to say that those who believe the catching up will happen before the tribulation, are simply escapists. They don't want to go through the tribulation, so they invented this view. I do not know of any more useless than inventing a view just to comfort yourself. In a video on a rebuttal to Thomas Ice on the pre-trib rapture, Jacob Prasch, a Jewish Christian pastor said to the pre-tribbers, "Don't go to China and persecuted countries and tell them about your pre-trib nonsense. They're in the tribulation already."

It seems there may be those out there that tell Christians they will not experience tribulation and that tribulation is for non-believers. Its amazing to me that anyone could go so far off base. The Bible teaches us to expect persecution and tribulation. There is a huge difference between experiencing tribulation

and experiencing 'the tribulation'. Neither Christians in China or any other country have ever experienced anything like what is coming! It will be a time such as has never been.

We should always be prepared for tribulation. We have been promised to have tribulation. I hear complaints about the pretrib view as being made up of people who want an easy out. Listen, twisting Scripture will not provide an easy out. If you want an easy out, Christianity is not for you. It should have nothing to do with what we want. Interpreting Scripture in order to get out of it what we want is simply absurd. Our interpretation will not change what will happen in the future. Our interpretation must be in line with what God meant, or we are wrong. It is that simple.

I would further caution those who say that pastors who hold to a pre-trib view are not preparing their people. That charge could be laid at the feet of the post-tribber. They are teaching outright that Christ cannot come for at least seven years. Are they preparing Christians to expect Him today? No! People are taught not to expect Christ for at least 7 years. They are preparing people to meet antichrist, not Christ.

Now, let me say this: I do not treat the pre-trib view as though it is without question the right view. It is the view I find that has the most objective support.

#### 4. Application

But look at the application of our text in verses 35-37 (read). What is the application? Watch! Watch your life! One moment of drowsing, and a little sin, and a little more, and sleep may come! So watch! Remain spiritually awake and alert! Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping, spiritually!

So, let us go right into the next brief parable of the master and the thief.

### I. The Master And The Thief (Matt. 24:42-44)

#### 1. The Parable (42-43)

We go to Matthew 24:42-44 (read). We have here a parable of a householder. The original word is 'oikodespotees'. It is the word house + despot. We get our word 'despot' from this word. A despot is one who has unlimited authority, and does what he wishes. We usually use it in a negative sense. But an oikodespotees was one who had full authority over the house, and therefore had the greatest desire to keep his house in safety.

## 2. The Setting (32-41)

So we move to the setting. The setting is that of the parable we looked at in Mark. But look at the few brief words of the setting in verse 42. It says, "Watch therefore..." Wherefore? Well, Jesus answers like this, "...for you do not know what hour Your Lord is coming."

Let me give you an important pillar of the pretribulational view. It is that of imminency. The word 'imminent' means something could happen at any time. If something is imminent, something is going to happen, but you do not know exactly when it will happen. So look at 24:32-33. After these certain signs, you know it is near, imminent. Verse 36 (read). That is imminent. Verses 38-39 (read). The flood was imminent. Verses 40-41 (read). That is imminent. Verse 42 (Read). That is imminent. Verse 43 (read). That is imminent. Verse 44 (read). That is imminent. And we could go right through to 25:30 and there would be passage after passage that stresses imminency.

Now, for those who hold Christ comes for His own in the middle of the tribulation, or before the great wrath of God is poured out or at the end of the tribulation, for them the coming of Christ is not imminent. Now, that is a problem for those who hold that Christ raptures the Church at the end of the tribulation. If Christians are not raptured before the tribulation begins, they will know the day it begins. It begins with the confirmation of a covenant by the antichrist for seven years. So the rapture is not imminent today, because it is more than seven years away. It won't be imminent three years after the tribulation begins, because it is still 4 years away. It won't be imminent when you are 6 and ½ years into the tribulation, because it is still 6 months away. It won't be imminent 6 years and 11 months

in because there is still a month to go. It won't be imminent 6 years 11 months and 3 weeks in because you know it is still a week away.

Now let us say you argue that it is imminent that last week, because you can't know the day or the hour because it might happen a day or two early or a day or two late. Do you think that is imminent? Do you think it is necessary to say, "Watch, because you don't know the day or the hour your Lord is coming?"

### 3. Interpretation

So, let us interpret this parable. Look now at what Jesus says in 24:43 (Read). The believer is likened to a householder, or the master of the house. That means he has the greatest interest in seeing to the safety and well-being of the household. And our translation says if he would have known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched. Right here we must make a note on the word 'hour'. The actual word for hour here is 'watch'. I understand the Hebrews divided the 12 hour night into three watches and the Greeks into four. So one watch was either 3 or 4 hours, depending on whose watch was used. But if the householder had known in which watch the thief would come, he would have watched during that time. Now, if you know the watch in which the thief is coming, you do not know the minute or the hour or even in what 3 or 4 hour period of the night the thief will come. So how long does he have to stand guard? Well, he has to start at the first minute of the first watch, and if need be he will have to watch for 12 hours, all night! So what is the teaching here? We do not know the day or the hour, we do not know in what watch the Lord will come, so we must be ready at all times.

Now, let me cause you to think for a moment. Maybe you want to think about this throughout the week. Have you ever pondered what it would be like if Jesus had said, "I will come for the Church in 2025, at 3:00 a.m. Pacific Standard time." For the past 2000 years, how many do you think would have watched? Would you be watching now?

But look at what He did do. He said, "Here are some signs that my return is near, but you cannot know the

day or hour." Do you know what He said? He said the angels in heaven don't know that precise time. He said in Mark that not even He Himself knew that time. It is a time only God knows.

So, since the master of the house does not know in what watch the thief will come, if thievery is a problem, he will have to be alert all the time. Since Christ might come at any moment, we must be alert at all times. This is imminency!

#### 4. Application

Now, before we go to the application, I will call on those who are going to sing the conclusion to this message for us to come and get ready. As they come and get ready, look now at verse 44. Here is the application (Read). He says, "Therefore..." And we must ask, "Wherefore?" And the answer from the parable is because the householder did not know in what watch the thief would come, he had to begin watching in the first watch. Then he says, "Therefore, you also..." Also? Like who? Well, we as believers need to be on watch also, just like this householder.

Let us go further, "Therefore, you also be ready..." Ready? What is ready? How can I be ready? Well, don't let anything take your eyes off of the Lord, not legitimate things and certainly not illegitimate things. Be ready! And now, why all this instruction in the application? Well, you also be ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect Him! Now I ask you, if the catching up is at the end of the tribulation, you think you wouldn't expect Him to come when He said He would come? Then you would hardly be a believer. No, He is coming when it is life as usual. It could be just any day now.

CONCL: Conclusion by a special number.