

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #272

Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: The "Olivet Discourse"

Part VI: Jesus Commands Readiness For His Coming Using Two Parables

MT 24.45-51; MK 13.33-37; LK 21.34-36

(MT 24.45-51) *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.*

48 "But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(MK 13.33-37) *33 "I command you to be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.*

35 "Therefore I command you to keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.-- 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

(LK 21.34-36) *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 I command you to always be on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On Mount Olivet, Just Outside Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
	Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: "The Olivet Discourse"
Title	Part VI: Jesus Commands Readiness For His Coming Using Two Parables

COMMENT:

In today's text Jesus began to bear down on the surpassing importance of obeying the key imperative of this discourse: **"I command you to always be on your guard; be alert; watch!"**

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Jesus' explanation of his final coming comprised about 35 verses. His application section was longer than the explanation. He had spoken three parables in a row that morning to his enemies. Now, he will string together five parables in immediate sequence for emphasis. Our obedience to his command regarding his final coming is of paramount importance to our Lord. Make no mistake about this.

The first, second, and fourth parables all focus on staying on guard, or readiness for our Lord's return. The third and fifth parables add his expectation of our faithfulness in service while we stay on guard. *We might say that undistracted, focused ministry of the gospel IS our expression of readiness.*

In these verses Jesus commanded us to be **"alert"** once, to stay **"on guard"** twice, and to **"watch"** three times. These six commands all mean the same thing: to exercise self-control in maintaining a constant state of readiness, like a soldier standing guard on the front lines of a battle field.

Luke characteristically included the discipline of prayer in his record. Jesus linked **"watch"** with **"pray."** Some, but not all of the ancient Greek manuscripts of Mark also follow **"watch"** with **"and pray."**

The ability to sustain readiness over the course of a lifetime depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit that can only be maintained with a fervent prayer life. Prayer and power always team up as partners through the Holy Spirit. Conversely, failure to pray inevitably ends in falling prey to the many temptations that so easily distract us from obedience.

APPLICATION:

Jesus' point is clear. The issue in dealing with Jesus' final coming is not information. If we did know the day and hour of his coming we would be even more distracted and useless to him in this age. Our need is not for more end-time information. It is for more obedience.

Jesus has told us everything we need to know to do his will: love God and others in a way that causes us to stay focused on our primary task of making disciples of all the nations, until he returns.

Maintaining this priority is the spiritual struggle of our lives. The only way to prevail is to **"keep on watching and praying."**

How will you watch and pray today, and this week?

What action plans do you have in place to maintain your readiness?

What can you do to improve your plan?