

也许就是今天——马可福音 13:32-37

## Perhaps Today—Mark 13:32-37

### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture Reading: Mark 13:1-37; 1 Peter 4:7-11

**Mark 13:32-37**(NASB1995)

**32** But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*. **33** “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come. **34** *It is* like a man away on a journey, *who* upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, *assigning* to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. **35** Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—**36** in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. **37** What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”

- Christian homes often have decor with Scripture verses, such as the “Love Is...” passage, or “The Lord is my Shepherd.” However, perhaps the best words to place in our homes as a daily reminder are these: “Perhaps Today.” Yes, the day of the Lord’s return is indeed perhaps today!
- The Lord’s return happens in stages; and the specific form of His return depends on which era we’re talking about (see the previous five messages). But in whichever era, the application of the Lord’s return to believers’ daily life remains the same: to be constantly on the alert! This is the concluding message of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse to us.
- Outline:
  - Title: Perhaps Today—Mark 13:32-37
  - 1. A Clear Answer — No One Knows the Time (v.32)
  - 2. A Crucial Application — Be Prayerfully Alert at All Times (vv. 33, 37)
  - 3. A Classic Analogy — Like Doorkeeper Watching in the Night (vv. 34-36)

### **A Clear Answer — No One Knows the Time (v.32)**

- “But of that day or hour no one knows”: And yet, people keep making predictions. One website lists over 200 predicted dates of Jesus’ return in church history. Didn’t Jesus say that no one would know the date?

**【Discernment】** Many cults have a history of predicting dates. Especially Jehovah’s Witnesses, they are the most dedicated date-setters. If anyone heeds to Jesus’ teaching, he’d easily identify such heresies.

【Interpretation】 In context, “the day and hour” here refers specifically to the time after the seven-year Tribulation, when Jesus will return with the saints to the earth. It doesn’t refer to the Rapture of the church seven years prior. This means even in the Tribulation, believers, knowing they’re in the final seven years, still won’t know the precise day or hour of Jesus’ return. Undoubtedly, at that time, even more date-setters will arise; but Jesus said, “Don’t believe them. They’re lying.”

【Application】 This message, directed toward believers in the Tribulation, is perhaps even more applicable to us today. What we await is Jesus’ return to gather the church to meet Him in the clouds before the Tribulation. This Rapture has no specific sign leading up to it; it could happen at any moment. There is no prophetic event that has to be fulfilled before the Rapture. We could hear the trumpet of God at any time, then the dead in Christ will rise, and the living believers will instantly be transformed into glorified, imperishable bodies. Immediately afterwards, we will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58).

- “Nor the Son”: Jesus, in His humanity, humbled Himself by willingly setting aside certain divine privileges.
- “But the Father alone”: Just get rid of any thought of possibly knowing the date! Such thoughts always lead to un-alertness. Apparently, the disciples didn’t learn their lesson well, for even after Jesus’ resurrection, they were still asking about the date! So Jesus reminded them again that the date is set by the Father and it is not for them to know (Acts 1:6-7).

【Application】 Do not waste time on this. Treat each day as the day you might meet the Lord, for Jesus could indeed return at any time. So always be watchful and prayerful, ready to welcome His coming. That is what truly matters.

### **A Crucial Application — Be Prayerfully Alert at All Times (vv. 33, 37)**

- "Take heed, keep on the alert": This is the fourth time of the same command (cf. vv. 5, 9, and 23). To sum up the key message of the entire end-time teaching in one word: Take heed. How exactly are we to do that? "Keep on the alert (and pray)."
- “Keep on the alert”: Ancient manuscript adds “and pray”. The way to take heed is to be prayerfully alert.

**Luke 21:36:** “But **keep on the alert at all times, praying** that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

**Mark 14:38:** “Keep **watching and praying** that you may not come into temptation...”

**1 Peter 4:7:** “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and **sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.**”

【Principle】 In Scripture, watchfulness and prayer always go hand-in-hand. True watchfulness is characterized by a life of constant prayer. He who has a weak prayer life shouldn't presume to think his heart is being watchful for the Lord.

【Interpretation】 The kind of prayer here refers to prayer in the broadest sense—not limited to the kind with words and closed eyes and folded hands, but a prayerfulness that permeates one's entire life. Even as one eats or sleeps, the soul remains in close communion with God, constantly seeking His will and His pleasure in all things.

【Application (negative)】 A watchful, prayerful heart wouldn't say, "Hey! The weekend's here—let's go drink and party!" "Hey! Church is over, now the rest of the day is mine to do whatever I want." "Hey! Singleness is great—I can live my life fully to myself." "Hey! I've worked hard all day; why should I be expected to do house chores at home and to take care of the kids?" These thoughts do not reflect a heart that is watchful and prayerful.

【Application (positive)】 A watchful, prayerful heart has only one voice in mind at any time: "God, how would You have me serve You right now? If You were to come back right now, what would You want to see me doing or thinking?"

**Luke 21:34:** "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with **dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap.**"

【Example】 A pastor once called a young brother on the phone, and the brother, realizing who's on the other end, immediately rushed to turn off the inappropriate music that was being played in the background. The pastor said, "Did you get surprised by a phone call from me? What if it were the Lord coming?"

### **A Classic Analogy — Like Doorkeeper Watching in the Night (vv. 34-36)**

- "It is like...": Jesus continues to emphasize watchfulness with a parable.
- "Commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert": Not that other servants don't need to be on the alert, but the doorkeeper's alertness is visibly obvious—eyes wide open, not dozing off, and staying awake the whole night through. Jesus uses the visible physical watchfulness of the doorkeeper to illustrate the invisible spiritual watchfulness required of all disciples.
- "Putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task": Jesus has assigned each Christian a measure of authority for him to accomplish a certain task. Watchfulness isn't just about being careful what *not* to do; it's about **being diligent in the things we are called to do.**

**1 Peter 4:7-10:** "The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and **sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.** Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another... As

each one has received a special gift, employ it in **servicing one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**”

**【Interpretation】** Though the principle of serving applies to all areas of life, this parable has a clear emphasis on serving **in the church**. The church is God’s household (1 Timothy 3:15), so the house in the parable is the church. Jesus through the Holy Spirit assigns in the church various gifts, roles, and authority for disciples to serve one another in the church. Therefore, a proper understanding of the end times must produce a deep love for and faithful service in the church.

- “You do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning”: These are the four watches into which Romans divide the whole night. The doorkeeper stays up the whole night because thieves can come at any moment of the night. He must keep a constant watchfulness for the thieves.
- “In case he should come suddenly and find you asleep”: Even more than the thieves, the doorkeeper’s greater concern is the master’s unexpected arrival. A thief can only steal your possession, the master determines your life as his servant. The relationship between the servant and master is of utmost importance—the servant certainly doesn’t want the master to find him lax.

“Sin is more than just breaking a rule; it is to grieve the Person who loves us beyond measure.”  
— A pastor

**Psalm 130:6:** “My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.”

**【Exhortation】** Be watchful, work diligently, and serve earnestly. Wait for the Lord’s return as the watchman waits for the morning. That moment will be the brightest dawn—the blessed moment for which all Christians throughout the ages have eagerly hoped.

### **Conclusion and application**

That moment may indeed be **perhaps today**. Are you ready? If you haven’t yet trusted in the Lord for salvation, today might be your last opportunity because the day Jesus returns to judge the earth could indeed be today. If you have received saving grace, are you truly living in a watchful and prayerful state of life today?