



19 Minutes With the Messiah

The Householder

(Mark 13:32-37)

Jesus' Body as the Temple
The Living Water
New Cloth
New Wine in Old Wineskins
The Salt of the Earth
The Light of the World
The House Built on the Rock
The Two Debtors
The Sower
The Weeds
The Growing Seed
The Mustard Seed
The Yeast
The Hidden Treasure
The Fine Pearl
The Net
I AM the Bread of Life
Becoming Childlike
The Unmerciful Servant
I AM the Light of the World
I AM the Gate
I AM the Good Shepherd
The Good Samaritan
The Friend at Midnight
The Rich Fool
The Wise Servant
The Barren Fig Tree
The Great Banquet
The Lost Sheep
The Lost Coin
The Lost Son
The Shrewd Manager
The Rich Man and Lazarus
The Unworthy Servants
I AM the Resurrection and the Life
The Persistent Widow
The Pharisee and
the Tax Collector
The Workers in the Vineyard
The Ten Minas
The Two Sons
The Wicked Tenants
The Wedding Feast
The Fig Tree
▶ The Householder
The Ten Virgins
The Talents
The Sheep and the Goats
A Lesson About Foot Washing
I AM the Way
I AM the True Vine
The Woman in Labor
I AM the Alpha and the Omega

³²[Jesus said,] "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵"Therefore 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. ³⁶If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

1. "No one knows about that day or hour, not even . . . the Son." What makes these words of Jesus somewhat troubling? How do you explain them?

2. In Jesus' parable, whom does the man represent?

Whom do the servants and the one at the door represent?

To what does the man's leaving refer?

His return?

The period of time between the two?

3. In the parable, why didn't the man tell his servants the exact time of his return?

___ He didn't know when he would return.

___ He forgot.

___ It was not the man's duty to share that information.

___ Sharing this information would lead the servants to unfaithful work.

4. Why would it be spiritually dangerous if Christ had revealed the moment of his return?

5. Jesus referred to spiritual "sleeping" in Matthew 24:37-39: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." What two things were true of the "sleepers" of Noah's time and are true of "sleepers" today?

6. What "assigned task" has been given to every follower of Christ? What unique "assigned task" does a pastor have? A parent? A factory worker? A daughter? A student in a public school? An invalid in a nursing home?

7. What is the main point that Jesus is making in his parable of the householder?

8. Does the message of Jesus' unexpected return in judgment fill you with fear or with joy-filled anticipation?

For Further Study:

9. What gets in your way of taking seriously Christ's commands to nurture and protect your saving faith and to "Be on guard! Be alert! Watch!"?

10. Evaluate the following statements made by the organization Mission for the Coming Days.

"If we do not know the time (i.e., the time of Christ's return), it is very hard for us to be always prepared and awake."

"Meanwhile the Lord has revealed the time . . . October 28, 1992."

(Both quotations are from the brochure "Rapture: Oct. 28, 1992.")

Prayer

Lord Jesus, although we do not know whether it will be in the evening or at dawn, your return to judge is imminent. Stir us from any spiritual apathy or drowsiness. Deepen our trust in you as Savior, and move us by your saving love to watch for your return in glory. Amen.

Helps:

(1) Although Jesus is the omniscient God, according to his human nature and in agreement with his mission as Savior, he set aside the full and constant use of his divine attributes.

(2) The man is Jesus who left at his ascension and will return on the Last Day. The period between the two is the New Testament era. Jesus' servants are his followers. Those at the door are the watchmen of the church: pastors, teachers, etc.

(3) As master, it was not the man's duty or obligation to tell his servants the time of his return. Doing so could very well have led his servants to be unfaithful to their duties, to apathy, and to a lack of vigilance.

(4) Our sinful nature would use this information to postpone taking spiritual matters and Christian responsibilities seriously.

(5) "Sleepers" immerse themselves in earthly pursuits and activities. Although these activities are not necessarily sinful in and of themselves, the "sleeper" allows these to keep him from hearing and heeding the signs of the times. Destruction, then, comes on the oblivious "sleeper" unexpectedly.

(6) Every Christian is to be watchful and ready for Christ's return through faith in Jesus the Savior and by the strengthening of faith through the gospel in Word and sacrament. Christians will also be faithful to their mission of sharing the saving gospel with others. In addition, Christians have been given unique gifts and have been placed into unique roles or vocations where they will faithfully use their gifts to carry out their God-given responsibilities, glorifying God in all that they do.

(7) Watch! Be ready at all times for Christ's return!

(8) God's law will speak to the sinful nature within us, leading us to fear his wrath over our sins and to repent of our spiritual apathy and drowsiness. The good news of forgiveness and salvation in Christ will lead us to watch for his return with joyful anticipation and to serve him faithfully while we wait.

(9) Answers will vary.

(Examples: constraints on time and schedule, misplaced priorities, materialism, the temptations of Satan, the world, and the sinful flesh.)

(10) The Bible indicates just the opposite—that knowing the moment of Christ's return would lead to apathy, unfaithfulness, spiritual drowsiness, and a lack of preparedness. Obviously, Jesus did not return on October 28, 1992. Any prediction, even approximate, of the date of Christ's return and the end of the world is presumptuous and wrong. Jesus said, "No one knows."