

Follow – Walking in the Way of Jesus

The Future has a Face

Mark 13:24-37

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June 14th, 2026



Mark 13:24-37

- The future belongs to Christ.
- History is not random.
- History is moving toward the public revelation of Jesus' reign.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 — The church in Thessalonica was IMPOVERISHED and PERSECUTED. They found comfort in Jesus' return. But they also wrestled with anxious questions about it:

- Has it already happened and we missed it?
- If we die before it happens, will we still get to be a part of it?

The IMMANENCE of Christ is IMPERATIVE — that He is HERE and that He is working is PROFOUND and meant to be the means of endurance

- **Imminent return of Christ** = Christ's return could happen at any moment.
- **Immanent presence of God** = God is present and active within creation and among his people,

Jesus uses a parable to remind them that as we live in the age before, we wait with ANTICIPATION.

[33] "Watch! Be alert! For you don't know when the time is coming."

ALERTNESS is not primarily produced by fear, but by ANTICIPATION.

Jesus does not say, "Be terrified." He says, "**Be alert**" (Mark 13:33, 35, 37). Paul does not say, "Speculate." He says, "**Encourage one another with these words**" (1 Thess. 4:18). The return of Christ is meant to cultivate hopeful expectancy that shapes ordinary faithfulness.

Diagnosis:

- What are you waiting for? (Rather: WHO are you waiting for?)
- What future are you organizing your life around?
- Would Jesus' return interrupt your plans, or fulfill your deepest hopes?
- Are you awake to Christ's kingdom, or asleep in the comforts and anxieties of this age?

Perhaps the greatest evidence of spiritual wakefulness is not that we can PREDICT His coming, but that we DESIRE it.

Prescription:

- Practice Hope Daily — Begin each morning with a simple prayer: "*Lord Jesus, help me live today in light of Your coming kingdom.*"
- Hold Earthly Things Loosely — Enjoy God's gifts, but don't cling to them.
- Encourage One Another — Paul's command is striking: "**Therefore encourage one another with these words**" (1 Thess. 4:18).
- Do the Next Faithful Thing — Readiness looks like ordinary obedience over time.
- Cultivate Holy Longing — The early church sang: "*Maranatha, "Come, Lord Jesus."*"

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Series: Follow

Title: The Future has a Face

Primary Passage: Mark 13:24-37

Secondary Passage: 1 Thess. 4:13-18

Big Question: How can we remain spiritually alert in an uncertain world?

Big Idea: We remain alert by cultivating anticipation for the return of Christ, allowing hope in His coming to shape faithfulness in the present.

Keywords: Prepare, Inevitable, Imminent, Immanent, Anxiety, Anticipation, Alert

When you were growing up, what feelings or images did you associate with the return of Christ, or of the end of the world if you didn't grow up in church? How have those perceptions shaped you?

In Mark 13, Jesus repeatedly commands His disciples to "watch" and "be alert." Based on this passage, what does spiritual alertness actually look like? What does it not look like?

Paul tells the Thessalonian believers to "encourage one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18). Why do you think the promise of Christ's return was intended to comfort suffering Christians rather than fuel speculation?

The sermon distinguished between Christ's **imminent return** and God's **immanent presence**. How does believing that Jesus could return at any moment (and that He is present with us even now) shape the way we interpret uncertainty and suffering?

Which of these diagnostic questions resonates most deeply with you right now, and why?

- What (or who) are you waiting for?
- What future are you organizing your life around?
- Would Jesus' return interrupt your plans or fulfill your deepest hopes?
- Are you awake to Christ's kingdom or asleep in the comforts and anxieties of this age?

If you are honest, what emotions arise when you think about Jesus returning? Hope? Anxiety? Indifference? Excitement? What might those emotions reveal about the things you love, fear, or cling to most?

The sermon suggested that *"perhaps the greatest evidence of spiritual wakefulness is not that we can predict Christ's coming, but that we desire it."* What do you think it means to cultivate a genuine longing for Jesus' appearing?

Which of the five prescriptions from this week's message do you most need to practice in this season of life?

- Practice hope daily.
- Hold earthly things loosely.
- Encourage one another.
- Do the next faithful thing.
- Cultivate holy longing.

What is one specific way you can put that into practice this week?

What is the "next faithful thing" Jesus is inviting you to do right now? Is there a conversation to have, a habit to begin, a relationship to repair, a person to serve, or an act of obedience you've been delaying?

Who in your life needs encouragement rooted in the hope of Christ's return? How might you intentionally remind them this week that death, suffering, and injustice will not have the final word? Close by praying the simple prayer of the early church: *"Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus."*