

Mark 13:28-37 - Living Awake to the End Times

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[0 : 00] We are in Mark chapter 13. So if you've got a Bible, turn there, flick there, scroll there.

! I really hate saying that. Maybe I'm just old school. Can I just say, don't hold this against me. I just think people should bring Bibles to church. Amen? Amen? Like, don't email me. I'd rather you bring a phone with a Bible on it than no Bible.

But, you know, it's just easier to say, turn with me too. I don't know if there's something about that. I don't know. You with me, Chips? Yeah, okay, great. All right, with that, I feel like I need to repent already.

So shall we pray? Father, thank you for your word. Lord, we want to hold your word in highest regard. Lord, whether it's paper or digital, Lord, we want to accept, Lord, that whatever is written is written from you, of you, for us.

Lord, and we want to have hearts this morning, Lord, that are humble enough, Lord, to receive it, Lord, and to accept, Lord, that whatever it says, it is right. And if we disagree, we are wrong.

[1 : 22] Lord, help us with that, we pray. Lord, that is a position of the heart. Lord, and as we come to your word, Lord, we just want you to be sovereign over us, Lord, and to teach us and to help us understand, Lord, we pray your Holy Spirit would give us eyes to see, ears to hear.

Lord, we live in a world that is blind and deaf, Lord, and we desire to be a people who are not. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you have been raised from the dead, Lord, and you have given us your Spirit who has opened blind eyes and unplugged deaf ears, Lord.

And we are thankful this morning, Lord, that we count ourselves in that body of people, Lord, who have had their eyes open. Lord, and we pray, Lord, that you would give us even better eyesight and insight into these things.

And, Lord, we pray, Lord, that if there's anything that's said this morning that's not of you, Lord, we pray that it won't last, Lord, and that only your word would last. Lord, we're thankful, Lord, that your word says, even of itself, Lord, that your words will not pass away.

And so we look to that, Lord, to be the steadfast thing in our lives, Lord, the faithful thing, Lord, that we can hold on to each and every day, Lord, that your word is true. Lord, and so we come to your word this morning, Lord, ask, Lord, that, Lord, it wouldn't just be true for us, Lord, that, but we would hold it as true.

[2 : 41] Lord, help us with that, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right. So, Mark 13. We're going to ask a question this morning. And so for you note-takers, you might want to just ask, write this question down or have it in your memory.

And the question is this, are we living awake to God's purposes or are apathy, distractions, and misplaced priorities pulling us away?

That's a long question, isn't it? Sorry about that. So let me read it out again. Are we living awake? You could just go, are we living awake? Am I living awake? Am I living awake to God's purposes or is apathy, distractions, and misplaced priorities pulling me away?

Like I feel like we need to pray again. So what does this text speak into living awake and how can we avoid apathy, distractions, and misplaced priorities?

Just to give you a little bit of a back story, Mark chapter 13, our text for this morning, we're in verse 28. The back story to this is called the Olivet Discourse. It's the shortest of the Olivet Discourse writings, this one in Mark.

[4 : 0 0] And it's about Jesus' return. You remember the disciples had, they'd come out of the temple and they'd ask this really almost comical question.

Jesus, do you see these bricks? And Jesus has said, do you see these bricks? And then there's this pause. And then Jesus says that the temple is going to be destroyed.

And then the disciples say, tell me more. Teach me. And so then Jesus sits down and says, okay, I'm going to teach you. I'm going to teach you about the end times. I'm going to teach you about what it's going to be like when I'm going to come back.

And so the main idea of our text this morning focuses not on the fact of Jesus' return, which we've looked at in the last two weeks.

But we're looking at the preparation for Christ's return. So two weeks ago and last week we looked at, you know, we looked at the Great Tribulation.

[5 : 0 1] We looked at the Abomination and Desolation and all those things. This week we're looking at how do we prepare our hearts for when that time comes. And the main idea is illustrated through the parable of the fig tree and then the call to stay awake.

So there's three things that Jesus says in these verses. I'm just going to give you the outline now on the screen so that you can write these down. So when we come to it, you're already ahead of the game, right? So in verses 28 to 31, Jesus tells us to recognize the signs of his coming.

Then in verse 31, we are exhorted to trust the unchanging word of God. How do we prepare ourselves for the end times?

Well, we need to trust the word of God. And we need to do that today before that time arrives. And then verses 32 to 37, we are encouraged to live ready and awake.

So there's some challenges here already for us this morning, isn't there? So he tells us to recognize the signs of his coming.

[6 : 1 3] He exhorts us to trust in the word and he encouraged us to live ready and awake. So firstly, verse 28, look at with me. Jesus tells us to recognize the signs of his coming. And he does so by giving us a parable.

He says there's verse 28, from the fig tree, learn its lesson. Now, Luke is clear that this is a parable that is being given.

So in Luke's account, he says, let me tell you this parable. So I want to tell you that, I want to tell you what Jesus is not saying before I tell you what he is saying.

Is that helpful? Because one of the problems of this section is actually Jesus using the fig tree as an example. And I think that as I was reading this, I was just thinking, actually, Jesus, it would have been more helpful if you hadn't have used the fig tree as an example.

Because we kind of get ourselves in knots because of the content, the fig tree, the issue of the fig tree. So let me just give you a little bit of a backstory.

[7 : 2 0] And you'll notice from chapter 11, when we looked at this in Mark 11, that the fig tree speaks of Israel. Most oftentimes it's talking about Israel.

And again, just from that study in Mark 11, just as a recap, the Bible speaks of Israel in three different ways. It uses three different trees.

All right. So it uses, if you want to call the vine a tree, let's just go with it. It is a tree. All right. So we have the vine. We have the olive tree.

And we have the fig tree. And although they're all speaking about Israel, they do so with a different emphasis. And you need to understand this.

And we talked about this before. If you're going to understand how do we as Christians respond to what's happening in the Middle East today in terms of Israel's presence in the land, the Jewish people's presence in the land, and then the war against Hamas in Gaza or Hezbollah in Lebanon, we need to understand how the Bible speaks about Israel.

[8 : 27] So whenever the Bible is talking about the picture of the vine, when it uses the vine in terms of referring to Israel, it's actually referring to Psalm 80. And there it's talking about the vine is Israel in the promised land.

It's the people of God in Palestine, in that area in the Middle East. And so, you know, all of what we see, and this is kind of the snippet from a couple of weeks back, all of what we see in the news today, as biased as it is, what we see going on in the Middle East today is exactly actually what we would expect to see.

We would expect to see a massive amount of tension, struggle and challenge. Because it's the people of God, the people of Israel, trying to claim the land, who's actually, we know from Romans 9 and 10, and you must read Romans 11 in that whole context, but we know that the right to occupy the land as the vine has largely been withdrawn from them, partially at leastly, right?

At leastly is not a word. It should be. So, look, Ezekiel 15, super clear, and you can read this in your own time. God says, I'm going to set my face against you.

In Jeremiah chapter 8, it's on the screen, God says, When I would gather them, declares the Lord, there are no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig tree, even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has been passed away from them.

[9 : 59] And so one of the problems of the Middle East, and the Middle East problem right now, is that we live in a time, a time of flux, right? The people have returned, but the people have not occupied completely.

One of the problems is that the vine has been replanted back into the land of promise, but the time for fruit hasn't come yet. God is, in many ways, still judging the nation of Israel.

God's faith, in many ways, is still against the nation of Israel. That's the vine picture. But listen, there's also the olive tree picture, which almost certainly speaks about the spiritual blessings of Abraham and the patriarchs.

So, as you read the Old Testament, you read about many, many different people groups living within the people of God, right? So, they have become almost beneficiaries of the Genesis 12 blessing, right?

And so it's quite true, when you look at the olive tree kind of motif that runs through the Bible, that you see many, many different people groups.

[11 : 09] Rahab, for example, she wasn't an Israelite. Ruth wasn't an Israelite. But they certainly were blessed because of Israel. Their spiritual blessings that the nation of Israel passed on to those people who lived within them.

And that's why Paul says that the Gentiles who believe, that's most of us, have been grafted into that tree. We are now the beneficiaries of that promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, and then subsequent promises to his children.

And so it's quite true that the church are recipients of the spiritual blessings, spiritual privileges that have been given to Israel, which is why we are now called, Paul calls us, the Israel of God.

It doesn't mean that the church has replaced Israel in God's program. It doesn't mean that God has rejected Israel. It just means that the oil from the tree, salvation in Jesus, is reaching the nations.

And then the third picture is the picture of the fig tree, which we come to this morning. Mark chapter 11 deals with the fig tree in more detail, and the fig tree is the picture of the nation state of Israel.

[12 : 18] It's specifically talking about the sovereignty of Israel. So when Solomon was king of Israel, you remember it says in 1 Kings 4, that Judah and Israel lived in safety from Dan to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.

Which means that there was a sense that everyone in their household had enough. They were able to come and go as they pleased. They didn't worry about invasions from other countries.

They were autonomous. They were free. They were independent. The fig tree talks about the sovereignty of Israel, the nation state of Israel. And so looking back, you know, we can see from 70 AD, probably even earlier than that, some might argue, all the way through to 1948, there was no nation state of Israel.

Even though there was a vine and there was an olive tree, because there was a promised land and there was the people of God in it. There was spiritual blessings going out of the nations because of Jesus.

But it wasn't a fig tree. And you can recall and you can look all the successive non-Jewish political powers that have controlled Israel since 70 AD, whether it's the Romans, Byzantines, or the Arab nations, or the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem.

[13 : 44] Even in 1918, when General Allenby marched in Jerusalem and the British Empire took it back, it wasn't until the nation was born on the 14th of May, 1948, that the fig tree all of a sudden came back.

And so the problem is this, and I'm telling you all of this to tell you this. The problem is this, is that when we get to a passage like this and we go, fig tree. Most of you know your Bibles and you go, ah, fig tree must be talking about the nation of Israel.

But it's not talking about the nation of Israel. Okay? So, because we assume that every single time that the fig tree is used, it must be talking about the end times, it must be talking about Israel, we automatically assume that Jesus must be talking about Israel in this passage, but he isn't.

Jesus says, and read this carefully, from the fig tree, learn its lesson. And this is the lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaf, you know that summer is near.

Now look, the main point of this parable is actually not the birth of Israel. He's dealt with that in Mark chapter 11 already. This is a lesson about being ready and awake for the return of Jesus.

[15 : 05] It's about knowing the signs. Now, is part of the rebirth of Israel one of the signs? Absolutely, we've dealt with that. But he's not specifically and uniquely only dealing with Israel here.

He's saying, look, when you go into a garden at a certain time of year, you're going to see buds on the tree. And those buds on the tree are telling you that a new season is approaching.

Summer hasn't arrived, but things are warming up. And the lesson is that these aren't the main thing. The budding isn't the main thing. The main thing is that something is approaching.

That's the parable. He says, the branch becomes tender, puts out its leaves, you know summer is near. And look, look at verse 29.

He says, so also. So again, this lesson isn't about Israel. He says, so also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near at the very gates.

[16 : 10] Simply, when you see the things that he has already spoken about in this passage, the rise of Antichrist, the abomination of desolation, standing where he should not be standing, the great tribulation on all the world, when you see stars, signs in the stars, know this, these things are the dawn rising on a new season.

That's the parable. And so then he says in verse 30, truly I say to you that this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. On the surface, what it seems like Jesus is saying, is that he is predicting the end within his generation, doesn't he?

Or at least the disciples' generation. But actually what he is referring to is this idea that there will be a continuous presence of rebellion against God until Christ returns.

That this whole sequence of abomination of desolation, Antichrist, great tribulation, he's saying that that will continue, and it will continue on until God does something about it.

And the reason that that's probably the best interpretation is because the whole passage has to do with this seeming destruction of God's work.

[17 : 32] And the seeming destruction of God's people. And this is why he chucks in verse 31, and we'll come to it in a minute, with the encouragement that heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away.

You've got to read that in the context. It's not just a cute fridge magnet verse. Right? It's put there to remind us, yes, evil is going to continue. Rebellion is going to continue.

There's going to be wars and rumors of wars. Trouble after trouble. Struggle after struggle. And these things will continue. Don't be surprised by them. But, heaven and earth, even heaven and earth, are going to pass away.

But here's the encouragement. My word will never pass away. And so, when Jesus says, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place, the immediate context of this sermon gives us help.

So, the immediate context of the sermon is Matthew 21, where Jesus has said, therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to people producing its fruit.

[18 : 43] And then this, this, this, and then comes this statement from Jesus about the destruction of the temple. And the question from the disciples about when this would take place. And so here, Jesus is saying, there are some things that are going to be experienced.

And some things that some, some of you are going to experience the 70 AD as partial fulfillment of the temple being destroyed. Some will enter the great tribulation and have, see the, the complete fulfillment.

But I want you to know that these people are not going to get away with it. There is going to be justice. The people who trample down the city, it's not going to go unnoticed.

Evil is not going to prevail. It's good for us to remember that, isn't it? It's good for us to remember that evil is not going to prevail.

There's going to be a reckoning. And then to reinforce that point again, Jesus says in verse 31, that heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will not pass away.

[19 : 50] And, and essentially what he's saying is, look, he's saying all of, all of these things are going to be experienced, but you can stand firm on this promise.

What promise? That evil is not going to, even evil is not going to have the last word, that Jesus is coming back. And so then in verse 28 to 31, he's then, he, so he's told us how to recognize those signs of his coming.

And in verse 31, he, he exhorts us there to trust in that unchanging word, to put up trust there. So there are going to be people come and go.

And they will not pass until is the idea. Heaven and earth itself will come and go. But my words will not be like that. The psalmist says in Psalm 119, forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

There's some irony in that, isn't there? The heavens are going to pass away. The word that is firmly fixed in the heavens is going to remain. Even if everything else, even if you, you discount everything else in your life.

[21 : 12] The one thing that will remain is that Jesus is coming back. Isaiah said, in Isaiah 40, the grass withers, the flower phase, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Peter says that there's going to be people in those days, in the last days. And I would say, I've had enough conversations with people to understand. We're probably in the last days now, just based on this next verse saying, where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. Have you had a conversation like that? And nothing changes. See, things just carry on.

We're going to be in the same place a thousand years from now. If climate change hasn't got us or something else hasn't got us, whatever it is.

And people say, well, Jesus isn't coming back. Like it's been 2000 years. Nothing's changing.

[22 : 14] It's going to keep going and going and on and on and on and on. But Jesus says, heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will not. And, and it's a Greek, Greek word, which is, if you, if you ever want to put an exclamation mark into Greek grammar, that's how you do it.

It is, it's definite. This will not happen. Exclamation mark, asterisk, whatever emojis you want to put on there. That's how we would do it today.

That's what he's saying. There's no way possible. Never, ever that my words will pass away. Spurgeon said this.

He said that the word of God is the only unshakable foundation in a world of uncertainty. And then look at the third thing that Jesus says is that he encourages us to live ready and awake.

Verse 32, concerning that day or that hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the sun. And everybody's like, what?

[23 : 30] Angels I get, sun, don't understand. And can I just tell you, just, this is just me to you.

There's, there's some things in the Bible that there are tensions that we just have to live with. Like you can get tripped up by this verse.

And getting all kinds of knots with that verse. But the truth is that there are, there are tensions. There are, there are things in the Bible, especially when, when they concern Jesus.

Like we don't, we don't understand how Jesus doesn't know. Or am I just the only one?

I mean, I can see some heads nodding. Like how does, how doesn't Jesus know? Like, what do you mean that Jesus doesn't know? The hour. But listen, the Bible is filled with all of those tensions.

[24 : 28] They're not contradictions, they're tensions. Right? And they're, they're, they're tensions about Jesus. So Peter says in Acts chapter three, verse 15, just get this one. He says in the sermon, he says that you killed the author of life.

Like, I don't even know what you do with that verse. That's a tension. How do you kill the author of life? I don't know. So just live within that tension.

Right? I don't know how that happens. Because Jesus is perfectly human and perfectly divine. And we don't know how that happened either.

And so sometimes, you know, we just have to kind of sit back and go, you know what, Lord, I don't know about the nature and what the nature of Jesus and how that exactly works and how exactly is a hundred percent human, hundred percent God.

He doesn't know stuff. Like there's even stuff in Hebrews that talks about him learning things. I'm like, how did Jesus learn stuff? It's a tension.

[25 : 38] But it does say, and this should be encouraging to us concerning that day or hour. No one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the son, but the father does. The father does.

So verse 33, be on guard. Be on guard. Like if there's, if there's ever a passage of scripture that is good for us in the times that we're living, it's be on guard.

Stay awake. Isn't it? Be on guard. And he said this already twice in this chapter, verse nine, be on your guard. Verse 23, be on your guard. And then he says, keep awake, be on your guard.

Keep awake. Four times in the section, actually he's told us to watch and it's a present imperative. So you must be at all times keeping watch. You don't keep watch and then clock off.

All right. It is constantly be watching. Someone once said that when Christ calls us to watchfulness, he invites us to live fully awake, not in fear, but in faith.

[26 : 48] Living fully awake. And as I, I thought about that this week and the struggle of getting up in the morning when it's dark.

And I literally yesterday morning, I even think I mentioned it to Loz. It was just wonderful to see. Well, it wasn't so wonderful, but it was wonderful to see the garden in daylight.

I mean, the garden is a mess, but it was wonderful to see it in daylight because myself, as many of you, you leave when it's dark, you come home when it's dark. And it's like, do I even have a garden?

Right. And so yesterday morning, I'm like, oh, that's what that mess looked like. Right. And, and so as I was thinking about that this week, and just kind of contemplating the times that Luke, or excuse me, Mark is saying, be awake, be awake, be awake, be fully awake.

We realized that actually this gospel, Mark's gospel is not Mark's gospel. It's Peter's gospel. Right. We know that, don't we? Okay.

[28 : 00] So it was Peter relaying most of this information to Mark. It's really Peter's gospel. And I wonder the significance of the repetition of the phrase, keep awake for a man like Peter.

Like verse 33, stay awake. Verse 34, stay awake. Verse 35, stay awake. Verse 36, stay awake. I wonder how many times that had reverberated around Peter's mind.

When Jesus said to him, when they were heavy with sleep, would you stay awake? And he was found sleeping three times. Could you not watch for me with one, just for one hour?

Jesus said. And Peter's exhortation reminds, remind being reminded by Jesus. Jesus told me this.

He told me this stuff. And I couldn't stay awake even for one hour. And then, then he, then Jesus gives us the reason to stay awake.

[29 : 05] He says for the reason for, you don't know when the time will come. So, so be on your guard, stay awake, because the time might come when you don't expect it to come.

And then verse 34, he gives us another parable. And he says, it's like a man going on a journey.

And when he leaves home, he puts his servants in charge, which we can all relate to, right? It's like a man goes on a journey, he leaves home, puts his teenage children in charge.

Comes back to no home, burns to the cinders. He puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.

Therefore, stay awake. So, I want to highlight again, look, a parable, there's just one main idea from a parable.

[30 : 11] There's not multiple ideas from parables. The idea is to stay awake. That's the idea. And, I think one of the, the questions that, we could benefit from asking, and benefit from attempting to think about an answer.

And, maybe we'll do some more work on this, during our life groups this week. Is that, is, is one of the questions like, how am I supposed to stay awake? Because, if you've ever tried to stay awake, for any length of time, you know it's incredibly difficult, right?

And, it's one thing to stay awake, but it's a completely another thing, to stay fully awake. Like, we know the difference, don't we? Right, to stay awake, means to, to stay just awake, so that you're still, conscious.

Fully awake, is, being alert, to the things around you. And, we've all had that struggle, late at night, when we're driving home, from a long day.

Right? And, we've got the music on. It's probably some, 80s rubbish, singing along to you. Windows open. Heat is on at the same time.

[31 : 22] empty coffee cups, lit to the back seat. Why? Because we're trying to stay, fully awake. We're not just trying to stay awake.

Being awake, doesn't help us, when we're driving a car. Fully awake. And, that's the, that's the exhortation, is to be fully awake, to be fully, knowing what's going on. And so, one of the questions, that I think is helpful for us, is to ask, well, how do we do that?

How do we, how do we stay awake? What does it mean, to live life, fully awake? Well, I don't think, it should be a surprise, that there are some hints, there are some ideas, in these verses.

And, I think the first is there, in verse 34, where Jesus says, that the man goes away, and he puts his servants, in charge. Like, how do you, how do we, how do we, as a church, knowing that Jesus, has gone, and he's coming back?

What do we do, in the meantime? That's, that the man, is the man, who's gone away. He's put his servants, in charge. Well, that, that, that, that, that, that word, charge, in the Greek, is exousia, which means, authority, or power.

[32 : 38] It's the ability, to make decisions, on his behalf. And actually, you know, as I was, thinking about that, the, the opposite, to that word, is a really, interesting, English word, which is, apathy.

When we become, apathetic, to responsibility. And I think, you know, don't we live, in a very, apathetic age? You know, particularly, around things, related to the Lord, and to, things of the church.

Yeah, we're quite happy, to neglect, the call, to be responsible, with the Lord's things, aren't we? Like, the Lord's things, tend to be, floated pretty much, down the list, of our order of priorities.

I mean, to the point, and you know what I'm going to say, and you know, this is not a dig, but to the point, where we've designed, church rotors, so that we only have to serve, once a month.

I still struggle with that. The Bible teaches us, that it is our responsibility, as believers, to work, uncompromisingly, for the Lord.

[33 : 57] And so, maybe you can, maybe you can relate, and you know, I've just been thinking about this, for our upcoming sermon series, next year. Maybe you can relate, to the prophet Jonah, I can.

Like, every single time, I open Jonah, I'm like, Jonah should have been, called Simon, because this is me. Running from responsibility. Giving the responsibility, to preach, five words.

I mean, it's not a lot, is it? It's not a lot to ask. Jonah, can you say five words for me, to all of these people? Just let them know, they're going to smoke, and burn for eternity.

That's all I want you to do. And Jonah's like, yeah, no, I can't do that. It's not my responsibility. Maybe you can choose someone else. Nahum's around, prophet Nahum, he was around at the time, can you choose him?

Maybe, um, you can relate, to one of Jesus's sermons, about the, the servant, who was given, great responsibility, over a single talent, but chose to bury it.

[35 : 09] That's not being responsible. Or the Israelites, who God called, to take possession, of the promised land, but in fear, they wander, in a desert instead.

As people of God, we must fully understand, that until the Lord returns, we, we have been given, responsibility. Responsibility, to step up.

It's not an option, of a servant, to debate it, or decline it. I think that, that goes some way, to help us understand, what it means, to live fully awake.

Then the second thing, there in verse 34, is when Jesus says, each to his work. I mean, don't you just love, coming to church, and being told what to do? Um, like, like, as if you didn't have enough, on your plate, right?

Um, so, he says, look, each to his work, it is like a man, going to a journey, going on a journey, leaves home, puts his servants, in charge, step up, responsibility, you have power, and authority, over my things.

[36 : 24] Each, with, his, highlight that, underline it, work. So, what does it mean, to live fully awake? Well, it means, to discover your work, and do it.

It's a call, to avoid, misplaced priorities. It's, it's a call, against idleness.

It's a call, against laziness. Jesus is saying, look, I'm going away, when I'm back, when I'm away, I want you to work. And I don't want you to work, for your stuff, and for your things.

I want you to, work with my stuff, you have authority, over my stuff, with your work. And you don't know, when I'm coming back.

This isn't like, Jesus is coming, look, busy scenario, right? This is, you don't know, when I'm coming back, so get to work, and keep working. I don't stop working, just because it's difficult.

[37 : 31] Don't stop working, because challenges come. You have a work. And so, maybe you don't relate, maybe to responsibility, and to Jonah, and the servant, but maybe you can relate, to the rich young ruler, who asked Jesus, what he must do, to inherit eternal life.

And Jesus said to him, go and sell your possessions, and follow me. And he walked away sorrowful, because his priority, was wealth. Or maybe you can better, relate to Solomon, whose heart shifted, from worshipping God, to pursuing personal pleasures, or the Israelites, under Haggai, who prioritized, rebuilding their own homes, while neglecting, the rebuilding of the temple.

And that's not a call, to live in squalor. It's just to have, the right priorities. James says, James chapter 2, as the body apart, from the spirit is dead, so also faith, apart from works, is dead.

We can have all the faith, that we think that we have, but if we're not working, our faith is dead. And so our responsibility, lies, in working for the Lord.

Working in his power, through his authority, and when we do that, we can't fail to accomplish, what he wants accomplished. So the challenge then, is that what are we working at, for the Lord?

[39 : 15] Thirdly, we not only see, it's our responsibility, to work for the Lord, whilst we wait for his return, but at the end of verse 35, Jesus says, that the man commands, the doorkeeper, to stay awake.

So there's servants, and doorkeeper, you know, there's two different groups, of people, servants, and doorkeeper. And, and, regardless of, what we, you know, view, when David says, I'd rather be a doorkeeper, in the house of the Lord, and we kind of, we automatically assume, that, that doorkeeper, must be a really, really kind of, low ranking, kind of job, into actually, it's the other way around.

The doorkeeper, in the temple, there were four, in David's day, there were 4,000 doorkeepers, right? And they, they looked after the entrance, to the tabernacle, on shift, on rotor, maybe it was once a month, I don't know, right?

But they were Levites, and their job was to protect, what was going into the tabernacle. And they stood there, hour after hour, after hour, after hour, what were they doing?

And they were keeping guard, standing, staying awake, watching. So the nothing unclean, came into the area. Look, this is a call for Christians, to not be distracted.

[40 : 44] Distraction is one of those, I'm so, I get so easily distracted, by stupidity, most of the time. So maybe you're like Martha, who was distracted, because of busyness.

Or maybe you can relate, to Peter, who got distracted, by the storm. Or Samson, who got distracted, by desire. Or the Israelites, who got distracted, by idols. Or one of the saddest stories, in the New Testament, in 2 Timothy 4, Demas, who Paul says, deserted him, because he was in love, with this present world.

Like I think, there's a constant danger, for the Christian, isn't there? To be distracted. Stay awake, stay fully awake, live fully awake. Don't become, apathetic, to responsibility.

Don't have, conflicting priorities, with the Lord's things. Don't become distracted. Jesus says, it's like a man, going on a journey, he leaves his home, and puts his servants, in charge.

Each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper, to stay awake. Therefore, stay awake. For you do not know, when the master of the house, will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster, the rooster crows, or in the morning, lest he comes suddenly, and finds you asleep.

[42 : 25] And what I say to you, I say to all, stay awake. May the Lord, help us to do that. Father, thank you for your word. We thank you for your word, that doesn't change.

Lord, we thank you that, even though we live, in a changing world, and a rapidly changing world. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that we have a foundation, in that world of uncertainty.

A sure foundation. Lord, that your word, doesn't change. Lord, your word, because it is God-breathed, will accomplish, that which is sent to accomplish. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that we can rest, and be assured, that you're coming back.

Lord, regardless of what, the world's, narrative is. Lord, regardless of how sometimes, we, lack the faith, and belief, that you are coming back.

That doesn't change, the fact that you are. Lord, we want to thank you for that. Lord, we want to thank you, Lord, that you not only, have promised to come back, Lord, but you have set up your people, to be busy, doing your work, while you're away.

- [43 : 35] Lord, we pray this morning, you would help us. Help us to, step into, and up to responsibility. Not to assume, other people are going to do it.
- Lord, to, to take that call, as our own. To make disciples, of the whole world, of all nations. Lord, help us to, not become, distracted, Lord, from, with, with, with just, other things.
- Lord, we want to keep the main thing, the main thing. Lord, help us to do that. Lord, help us to, realign our priorities.
- Lord, maybe this morning, we feel like, our priorities, are not your priorities. We pray. Lord, help, help us, encourage us. Lord, to reorder those.
- Lord, maybe they've come, they've become out of sync, a little bit. Lord, maybe we need to make some changes. Change is hard. None of us like change. Lord, that's why we need you, to help us.
- [44 : 48] Lord, if we've got off track, Lord, if we, are not like the servants, or the doorkeeper, maybe we've fallen asleep, a little bit. Lord, I pray this morning, Lord, that your Holy Spirit, would come and awaken us.
- Lord, that you would open our eyes, to see the things, that are happening in this world. And Lord, we wouldn't just, leave this place, kind of thinking, well, my eyes are now open, Lord, but, our, our shifted priorities, and our focus, on you, Lord, would be displayed, in the love, that we have for each other, our changing priorities, in our, in our bank balance, our time schedule, the people, that we relate to, Lord, help us to, not just agree, with these things, Lord, we pray, Lord, that your Spirit, would do some deep work, this morning.
- And so, Lord, we just want to, just commit this, time now, to you, Lord, and, Lord, as we pray together, and as we sing together, Lord, we just ask, your Spirit would minister, to us, Lord, that we, would not fight, against him, Lord, that we would just, let him do his work, in us.
- Lord, if we need to come, alongside each other, to, to help each other, or to pray, for each other, Lord, we just pray, that that would happen, this morning, Lord, we'd just feel free, to do that. Lord, the coffee's going to keep, that's going to be fine, Lord, we just pray, that we'd give you, this time, to do, to do any work, that you want to do.
- Lord, I pray, Lord, that there would be, none leaving, this morning, with a heaviness, of heart. Lord, you, you haven't, given us, a spirit of fear, Lord, so we pray, Lord, that there wouldn't be, fear here, this morning, Lord, but we pray, Lord, that we would sense, freedom here, this morning, and so Lord, help us with that too.
- [47 : 00] And Lord, as we just sing, these songs, Lord, we just ask, Lord, that the songs, Lord, would be, would mean something, not just to us, but to you. Lord, we pray these things, in Jesus name.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.