

The Parables of Jesus #17
The Parable of the Porter on Watch
(Mk. 13:34-37)
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Introduction

A. Earlier in our study of the parables, we found that Jesus used them to illustrate different kinds of truth

1. The nature of the kingdom of heaven
2. The nature and character of God
3. The nature and character of God's people
4. He also used them to illustrate the sureness of judgment

B. Mark 13 is a chapter of judgment

1. Primarily it is a statement of judgment against Israel
2. We learn things that apply to any judgment of God against man
3. In principle, these truths would apply to the final judgment

C. To understand the parable, look at how Jesus led up to it

1. Mark 13:2 -- states judgment against Israel
And Jesus answered and said to him, ""Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (NKJ)
2. Mark 13:9 -- specific warning to his disciples
But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. (NKJ)
3. Mark 13:23 -- they would see it as fulfilled prophecy
But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. (NKJ)
4. Mark 13:30 -- it would happen before that generation died
Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. (NKJ)
5. Mark 13:32-33 -- God left open the specific date and time
But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (NKJ)

D. The parable -- Mark 13:34-37

It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming-- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (NKJ)

I. THE PARABLE

A. Again, we start by paying attention to what is being illustrated

1. Mark 13:34

It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. (NKJ)

2. Mark 13:34

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. (KJV)

3. Without getting into textual criticism, most versions omit the part about the "Son of man"

4. It is not necessary to make the point

- a. the story illustrates the action of a master with his servants
- b. it certainly illustrates the same thing about the Lord
- c. from the context, we know it illustrates man's preparation for God's judgment

B. The action of the master is to assign responsibilities to his servants

1. The master was going on a long trip -- distance and time

2. He gave authority to his servants

- a. responsibility and power to act in his absence
- b. this is a master who trusts his servants

3. Each servant had his assigned work

C. To the porter or doorman, he gave a specific responsibility

1. He was to watch

- a. means to "keep awake"
- b. the idea is that of vigilance, awareness, and protection

2. We can assume two basic reasons for "watching"

- a. so that enemies, thieves and other people who might bring harm to the master's house could be kept out
- b. so that the master would have ready entrance to his house and to all that belonged to him when he returned

D. This servant's responsibility was a great one

1. Who was he to watch for -- specifically for his master

2. When was he to watch -- constantly

3. What was his responsibility -- to keep a vigilant watch

4. Why was he to watch so carefully -- because he didn't know when his master would return

5. What was so important about this servant's job -- his was the key to all the other activity of the master's house, and making it ready for the master's return

II. LESSONS TO LEARN

A. Remember, the story illustrates the importance of readiness, knowing that judgment is coming

1. Mark 13:33 -- Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (NKJ)
2. We need to know some things about judgment
 - a. judgment is a sure thing -- it will happen
 - b. everyone is involved in the judgment of God
 - c. the time to prepare for judgment is before it happens
 - d. once judgment happens, there is no second chance

B. Consider the following verses on judgment

1. Ps 50:3-6
Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge. (NKJ)
2. Ps 96:13
For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth. (NKJ)
3. Eccl 11:9
Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. (NKJ)
4. Eccl 12:14
For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (NKJ)
5. 2 Cor 5:10
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NKJ)

C. There are reasons to be watchful, ready for the master's return

1. Because the time of the Lord's return is unknown -- no way to know when it is
2. Because when he comes, he will expect all his servants to have fulfilled their assigned responsibilities
3. Because the time of his return will be surprising, unexpected -- it could be at any time of the day or night
4. Because without constant watchfulness, we will be caught sleeping on the job

D. Consider the following verses

1. 2 Pet 3:10-12

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (NKJ)

2. 1 Thess 5:1-6 (read)

3. Rev 3:1-3

E. There are things that can happen to keep us from watching

1. We might get tired and give up our watch too soon
2. We might get busy doing something else and neglect our preparation
3. We might think, after a long delay in the master's return, that there is no longer any reason to keep such a vigilant watch
4. We may abandon our post completely, or even become like one of the master's enemies

CONCLUSION

A. Assume for a moment that, as one of the Lord's servants, you were given the job of keeping watch

1. How good a job have you done to this point
2. Are you ready for him to return
3. If he came today, would both you and all other servants be prepared

B. Judgment will come

1. We don't know when
2. You can be sure, it will be at a time we least expect it
3. Watch -- so that you will be ready

C. Invitation