

Watch and Pray

07/27/2014

Mark 13

“Watch and pray” is an important phrase in Scripture. It is an instruction and, at the same time, a warning. There is great danger if we do not heed this warning. The word “watch” is mentioned four times in this chapter (Mark 13:33,34,35,37), as well as the phrase “take heed” (Mark 13:5,9,23,33). The context, in Mark 13, is that we should be mindful of Christ’s return and cautious of many dangers that we will encounter. Some of the dangers are external, concerning what others might do to us. Some of the dangers are internal, concerning what we might do wrong, or what we might neglect to do.

This study will not focus on the details of prophecy. Rather, it will focus on the matter of being watchful and prayerful about the pitfalls of the spiritual warfare that is in the world. We must be attentive until death or until Jesus comes again. Along with the expression “watch and pray,” please note the use of the words “take heed” and “beware.”

Watch and Pray! **We need to be awake, attentive and diligent, so that we are faithful to the will of Christ** (Mark 13:31-37 cp. Luke 18:1-8; 21:33-36; Romans 13:11-14; Titus 2:11-14; I Peter 4:7-8).

Watch and Pray! **We need to be careful to avoid temptation.**

The world says, *“It’s easier to say you’re sorry, than to ask permission.”* Christ taught us to pray, *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”* (Matthew 6:13) This requires serious pre-thought for the things that we are doing (Psalm 119:59). See Matthew 26:31-41 and Mark 14:27-38.

Jesus was agonizing in prayer before His crucifixion. He asked the disciples to watch and pray with Him. They slept because of physical weakness and mental/emotional sorrows (Luke 22:44-45). Jesus warned them that yielding to their weaknesses would set them up for temptation. He already warned them what temptation was coming (Matthew 26:31-35), but they were sure that they would not fall into such a thing! To “watch and pray” is as much a physical battle and discipline as it is a spiritual matter.

What kind of temptations are we watching for?

Beware of false prophets / false doctrine (Matthew 7:15; 16:6-12; 24:4; Philippians 3:1-3; Colossians 2:8)

Beware of men in general (Matthew 10:16-18 = the natural man, who is unspiritual and doesn’t know the Lord cp. I Corinthians 2:14; II Thessalonians 3:1-2; both politically motivated people and religiously motivated people – Mark 8:15)

Beware of hypocrisy (Luke 12:1-5) and **covetousness** (Luke 12:15)

We need to take heed unto our personal attentiveness and application of the Scriptures

(I Timothy 4:12-16; II John 5-8; Luke 8:11-18; Acts 13:40-41; I Corinthians 10:12)

Watch and Pray! Be attentive to what is happening to other believers. Pray for them and the advancing of the gospel. See Ephesians 6:18-20 (note vs. 10-20); Hebrews 13:3. Remember to watch for God’s blessings, giving thanks with your prayers (Colossians 4:2-4; Philippians 1:3-5; 4:6-8).