

BE ON THE ALERT/BE WATCHFUL

Matthew 24:42-25:13

I. THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT WE CAN SAY WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY ABOUT EVERYONE'S FUTURE

- A. "In this world nothing is certain but _____ and _____."
- B. According to the Bible, the only thing we can say with certainty about everyone's future is _____ (see Acts 17:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
- C. There are some people who think that death (and not judgment) is the only thing that is certain in everyone's future
1. "I was not, I was, I am not, I do not care"
 2. "I was not, I was born, I was, I am not; so much for that."
 3. "Death does not concern us, because as long as we exist, death is not here. And when it does come, we no longer exist." (Epicurus, Greek philosopher who lived 341-270 B.C.):
- D. Matthew 24:42-25:30 is about both ignorance and certainty!

God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, (Acts 17:31) to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. (John 5:22, 27) In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, (1 Cor. 6:3 , Jude 6 , 2 Pet. 2:4) but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Cor.5:10, Eccl. 12:14, Rom. 2:16, Rom. 14:10,12, Matt.12:36-37) (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 33:1)

II. WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE FUTURE, WILL HAVE AN IMPACT UPON THE WAY YOU LIVE IN THE PRESENT

- A. Belief in future judgment is **foundational** for ultimate meaning and purpose in the present.
- B. Belief that death is final tends to **take away** ultimate meaning and purpose from the present.
- C. The warning that Jesus gives is that none of us knows the time of the future judgment, but we must always be living in preparation for it.

III. KEEPING WATCH MEANS LIVING A LIFE OF FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE TO JESUS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WILL ONE DAY RETURN AND CALL US TO ACCOUNT

- A. The Greek word translated "be on the alert" or "keep watch" is *gregoreuo*. The name *Gregory* comes from this word.
1. Being on the alert and keeping watch does not mean calculating timetables and trying to predict the time of Jesus' return.
 2. Alertness is part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).
 3. Being on the alert is another way of thinking about faithful discipleship. Watchfulness is faithfulness (24:45-46; see 1 Corinthians 16:13; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 16:15).
- B. There are severe and everlasting consequences for those who do not heed Jesus' command to "be on the alert/be watchful":
1. They will be cut into pieces and assigned to the place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:50-51).
 2. They will be shut out from the wedding feast and hear Jesus say, "I do not know you."

Matthew 25:12

"But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, **I do not know you.**'"

Matthew 25:13

"Be on the alert then, for **you do not know** the day nor the hour."

3. They will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30).

C. Jesus' parables are addressed to professing Christians!

1. Master/slave relationship (Matthew 24:46-48)

2. All the virgins were on their way to the wedding to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1)

3. Master/slave relationship in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

IV. SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR OF HIS RETURN WE WILL ALL BE TEMPTED TO BECOME SPIRITUALLY LAZY AND LETHARGIC

A. The evil slave did what Jesus commanded us not to! He is taking a gamble by predicting the timing of his Master's return. He

B. Trying to predict the return of Jesus isn't something that only cults do. It's what professing Christians do when they do not daily die to themselves, take up their cross and follow Jesus.

C. The "HOPE" of the disobedient professing Christian is not the return of Jesus. Rather their "HOPE" is that Jesus will not return and find them in their sin! (see Titus 2:11-13)

Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

13 **while we wait for the blessed hope**—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and turn it into a prayer. Pray that God would help you to live presently based on the fact of your future accountability. Pray that you would be watchful and not be like the evil slave who said in his heart, "My master delays..."

What is more certain than death and taxes?

How is Matthew 24:42-25:30 about both ignorance and certainty!

What is the Greek word for "be on the alert/keep watch"? (Hint, it comes from Noah's middle name)

What does it mean to "be alert"? Does this mean we should be trying to calculate the timing of Jesus' return?

What are the consequences for not being alert/watchful?

Is Jesus' warning to "be alert" directed primarily to Christians or non-Christians?

Why is the disobedient life of a professing Christian a prediction about the timing of Jesus' return?

What is the tragic irony of the bridegroom saying to the five foolish virgins, "I do not know you" (Matthew 25:12)?

Can you think of some practical ways that you should be watchful and alert?

