

Small Group Guide

"Stay Awake: Living in the Light of Eternity"

Based on Mark 13:32-37

Overview

In this message, we explored what it means to live as believers who are genuinely prepared for Christ's return. Using the parable of the watchful servants, we examined four principles for living in the light of eternity: living with certainty, living with purpose, living with vigilance, and living ready. The goal is not fear or anxiety about what is coming, but faithful, hope-filled readiness.

Key Takeaways

- Christ's return is not merely possible -- it is certain. The time is unknown, but the event is unmistakable and guaranteed.
 - Eternity for the believer does not begin at death. It begins the moment a person places their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Every believer has been given a specific assignment in the body of Christ. No one is exempt, and no one has aged out.
 - There is a critical difference between proximity to Christianity and genuine spiritual readiness.
 - Watchfulness is not the same as worry. Christians are called to live ready, not live terrified.
 - We are stewards, not owners, of everything God has entrusted to us.
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Opening Discussion

Begin your time together with this question to help the group warm up and engage with the topic personally.

Think about a time when you nearly missed something important because you were not paying attention -- a flight, a deadline, an opportunity. What happened, and what did it take to snap you back to alertness?

Scripture Reading

Have a group member read Mark 13:32-37 aloud before moving into the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

Section 1 -- Live with Certainty (verse 32-33)

1. The sermon pointed out that Jesus said no one knows the day or the hour of his return, not even the angels, and not even the Son during his earthly ministry. How does the certainty of Christ's return -- even without knowing the timing -- affect the way you approach your daily life?
 2. The pastor referenced Acts 1:11, where angels remind the disciples that the same Jesus who ascended will return in the same way. How often do you think about the second coming in your everyday life? Does it feel distant or near to you, and why?
 3. What does it mean practically to live as though eternity has already begun for the believer? How might that shift your priorities this week?
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Section 2 -- Live with Purpose (verse 34)

4. The parable describes a master who assigns each servant a specific task before departing. The sermon emphasized that every believer has been given an assignment, not just pastors or staff. What do you believe your specific assignment is in the body of Christ right now? If you are unsure, what steps could you take to discover it?
 5. The sermon made the point that we are stewards, not owners, of everything God has placed in our hands -- our time, finances, gifts, and relationships. In what area of your life do you find it hardest to hold things loosely as a steward rather than gripping them as an owner?
 6. Romans 12 teaches that God distributes different gifts to different members of the church. How well does your small group or church community affirm and deploy the unique gifts of each person? What could improve in that area?
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Section 3 -- Live with Vigilance (verse 35-36)

7. The sermon described the danger of going through the motions of church life -- singing the songs, knowing the Bible stories, attending regularly -- while being spiritually asleep on the inside. What are some warning signs that a person may be spiritually asleep even while appearing outwardly engaged?
8. The pastor drew a distinction between knowledge and wisdom, saying that wisdom is the application of what we know. Where in your own spiritual life do you sense a gap between what you know and how you are actually living?
9. The sermon used rumble strips as an illustration of how God wakes us up before disaster strikes. Can you identify a time in your life when God used a difficult circumstance, an unexpected event, or even a season of discomfort to wake you up spiritually? What did that look like?
10. In Mark 14, even the disciples who were physically present with Jesus fell asleep when he asked them to keep watch. What does this tell us about the ongoing nature of spiritual vigilance? What habits or disciplines help you stay alert in your walk with Christ?

Section 4 -- Live Ready (verse 37)

11. The sermon closed with four reflective questions: Am I awake? Am I doing the master's work? Am I ready? Am I living with hope? Which of these four questions is the most challenging for you personally right now, and why?
 12. The pastor described the difference between being watchful and being worried. How do you personally navigate the tension between taking eternity seriously and not living in anxiety or fear about what is coming?
 13. If someone who did not know Christ asked you today why they should believe that Jesus is returning, what would you say? How confident do you feel in having that conversation?
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Reflection and Self-Examination

The sermon closed with a call to examine our hearts before taking the Lord's Supper, drawing from 1 Corinthians 11. Even outside of communion, this practice of self-examination is valuable for every believer.

Take a few quiet moments individually before sharing with the group. Ask yourself:

- Is there unconfessed sin I need to bring before God?
- Is there a relationship in the church where I am harboring bitterness or unforgiveness?
- Is there something God has clearly called me to do that I have been avoiding?
- Am I genuinely ready if Christ were to return today?

After a few moments of quiet reflection, invite anyone who is willing to share one thing God surfaced during that time -- not to confess publicly, but to name an area where they sense God calling them to greater faithfulness.

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of the following to commit to as a group or as individuals before your next meeting.

For Personal Readiness Set aside fifteen minutes this week to pray through Psalm 139:23-24, which describes the psalmist asking God to search his heart and reveal anything that needs to be addressed. Journal what comes to mind.

For Purpose and Assignment If you are unsure of your spiritual gifts or your specific role in the body of Christ, speak with your pastor or a trusted leader this week about how to discover and deploy your gifts in the church.

For Vigilance Identify one spiritual discipline -- prayer, Scripture reading, accountability with a fellow believer -- that has grown cold or routine in your life. Make one concrete change this week to reengage it with intentionality rather than habit.

Sunday School Lesson – Rumble Strips – Adult 10.4.2026

For Living with Hope Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know Christ. Commit to praying for that person daily this week and ask God for one natural opportunity to share the hope you have in Jesus.

For Stewardship Review one area of your life -- time, finances, or talents -- and ask honestly whether you are managing it as a steward of God's resources or holding onto it as though it belongs to you. Identify one specific adjustment you can make.

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying together. You may use the following as a guide or pray freely in your own words.

Father, thank you for the certainty of your promises and the hope we have in the return of Jesus Christ. We confess that it is easy to grow weary, to go through the motions, and to lose our sense of urgency. Wake us up. Give us clear eyes to see the assignment you have placed before each of us. Help us to be faithful stewards of everything you have entrusted to us. And may we live not in fear, but in the confident, joyful hope that you are coming, and that you are worth every act of faithful service we offer in the meantime. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Looking Ahead

Next week, the sermon will continue in the Gospel of Mark. As you prepare, read Mark 14:1-42 and pay attention to the moments where the disciples struggle to stay awake and alert. Consider how their experience connects to the warning Jesus gave in Mark 13.