

Mark 14:1-2

¹ **After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. ² But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."**

We are quickly coming to the conclusion of the Lord's ministry on our planet. This period of time has more ink dedicated to the telling of it than any other period in history. By that fact, it is safe to assume that these are the most important days of human history.

Mark has finished what he has to say about the Olivet discourse. That is what scholars call the teaching Christ gave about the destruction of the temple and the return of Christ.

And while Mark has finished what he has to say, there is a lot that he left out.

First, he left out the parable of the ten virgins which Matthew 25 reports.

Remember that parable. There were 10 virgins who were invited to be part of a marriage feast. 5 were wise and 5 were foolish. 5 were prepared by having the oil they would need for their lamps **with them**. 5 were not. And the 5 that were not prepared were rejected from joining the celebration. The application of that parable was that we should be prepared for the Lord's return because we don't know when it will be.

Matthew 25 also reports the parable of the talents. In it a man travelled to a far country, but before he goes, he gives varying amounts of money to his servants to invest for the master. The ones who invested it **well**, the master **rewards**. He tells them, **well done good and faithful servant**. You were faithful over a **few things**, I will make you ruler over **many things**. Enter into the joy of your Lord. Then a servant who had been given the least gave his report. He told the master what he did and why he did it. In doing so he revealed his lack of trust and respect for the master. His **lack of proper conduct** was due to his **lack of proper regard** for the Master. He would not do the proper work for the lord because, in essence, he resented and hated him. So he buried the money and then gave it back.

The master's response reveals that the **lack of return on investment** was not so much the issue but the **evil regard that the servant** held for the master. The men were either good and faithful servants or they were wicked and lazy servants. They were either willing to gladly serve the master's best interest, or they would resent the idea that they were required to.

We need to note that **the wicked servant**, and that is what his behavior proved him to be, was **cast into punishment**.

Then the next thing that Matthew tells us that Mark does not is what Christ said about the final judgment. Christ will separate the sheep from the goats. And

again, it is the works that will reveal what was in each of the person's hearts. They were judged **on what they did**, but **what they did** was driven by their regard for their Lord. **What they did** was driven by **what they were**. The sheep took care of fellow believers in need. The goats didn't. And neither party was aware of the significance of the activity.

The sheep were told **Come you blessed of My Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**. The goats were told **Depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels**.

These were all things that Christ taught in the context of living by waiting on His return.

It is really important for us to get this. We were told about future events. We are told that everything is headed toward those events. They are sure to happen. Christ mentions that these are not going to be pleasant times. There is nothing he says that would lead a believer into being optimistic about the future of human society. He essentially tells us that it is bad and getting worse. And you can expect more of the same in human history.

OK then. What should we do in the mean time? It is very very clear here what Christ expects.

All of the parables point to the same basic attitude. We are to live in a way that **we will please the master when He returns**. That is what it reduces down to. We are to **care for His interests** while He is away. That should be our priority.

Everything else should revolve around what it is **that Christ wants done**. The **wise virgins** ordered their **life activities** around that which would **best serve the bridegroom**. The **faithful investors** ordered their **life activities** around that which would provide the **best profit for the master**. And **the sheep** lived their lives **cares for those people around them** who had **needs that they could meet**.

Those who were **cast into darkness**, those who didn't make the cut in these parables, aren't mentioned to have done hideous crimes. They may have been fine world citizens. They aren't cast out for doing terrible external sins. We need to pay attention here. All they were doing was **living distracted lives**. They were living for the here and now. They weren't considering the return of the master. And if they were, they were not aimed at pleasing Him when He returns.

We really need to think about this. We can't hear this through our **theology sieve**. Sure, it has to pass through that first to know if it is trustworthy, if it is true. But we can't **leave it in the category** of "truths we should believe."

Do you really believe you can do something that pleases God?

Do I really believe that there are things I can do that Jesus will one day put his arm around my shoulder and say, you know what Jon? That thing you did really pleased me?

If you are anything like me, that truth is exceedingly hard to imagine. We know what we are. We know that just getting an allowance into Christ's presence is a million times more than what we could deserve. And **that is all true**. So we, at least I, have the tendency to think **grace has me covered**. I can get in the door because of the goodness of God. But I tend to imagine that I could never really **do anything** that would really please God. I could never really do anything that would win His smile or his enthusiastic approval.

But you know what? That is bad doctrine. We see here that everyone who will be received into the kingdom of God will be enthusiastically welcomed and endorsed. We will get a "Good Job" from our savior. We will get an "Atta boy" from the creator of the world. Do you find that inspiring? You should. We need to let the very notion of this creep into our hearts. We should let it fill our minds and our awareness. When God's word talks about rewards, it means what it says. We **can** please Jesus. Not only that. Believers WILL BE DOING THINGS that please God when Christ returns. They will prove what they are by what they do. You will find this all through the New Testament. Believers live changed lives. Never perfectly, but over time the change is visible.

Now, just to keep things in perspective, **we cannot please Christ** if our sin has not been forgiven. We cannot please Christ in a state of enmity. We can't earn a right standing with God through **any effort of our own**. Our sin problem has got to be taken care of before we can even have a relationship with God. But once we receive Christ's work on the cross to cover our sin, we now **do have** the glorious opportunity to **please God**. We can now do things that somehow have a positive effect on Christ. We can imagine Him giving us the "Well Done" verdict and it isn't fiction. He is actually going to do it some day.

Along with this, we cannot forget that there is another side to this. In every one of these parables, God's endorsement is given based on **activities that are done**. We learn in James that faith without works is dead. We learn all through the New Testament that good works are things that come out of a Christian like cheeps are what come out of bird. It **will** happen and it **has to** happen. When the resurrection power of Jesus Christ is put into a person, something new has to come out of that person. It just has to.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

If we are **created** for good works, and God has **created those good works we will do before He created us**, that pretty much tells us that every true Christian will do good works. They aren't **saved** by doing good works. We are saved by grace

which contains none of our merit at all. But we will **be empowered** and **driven** to do good works.

Now that we have seen that if we are in Christ, our good works can please Christ, we have **all the reason in the world** to **do** those good works. Just think, if you knew that your boss was going to throw you a party and give you a million dollars in 10 years in appreciation for all the work you will do, how hard would you work? Especially if you knew he didn't **have to give you a penny of it**, but he wants to. Well that is the position that we are in.

Christ bodily resurrected. His ascension was seen by a lot of people. But He is coming back. And when He does, He will reward those who are **living by waiting**. Do you believe that? If you do, if you know that you can do things today that will please Him when He returns, why not do every one that you can? Why not invest every talent for His service? Why not regard every aspect of your life in regard to how you can please Jesus?

We have been given every reason to serve Christ in this life.

Look at your life this morning? What is your life for? Really? Who are we trying to please? Where do **most of our efforts** go? Where do our **best efforts** go? What would you do today if, at the end of the day, you would stand before Christ? What if He would be at your bedside this evening? What would you do today if you knew that when He shows up at your bed tonight you could have done things for which He would say, good job? I am pleased that you served me that way today? What would you do differently?

That is the mindset we are talking about. That is what **living by waiting** is all about. Is that what we are doing?

I came across this while I was studying and I couldn't help but include it. It is by AW Tozer and is very prophetic.

The longing to see Christ that burned in the breasts of those first Christians seems to have burned itself out. All we have left are the ashes. It is precisely the "yearning" and the "fainting" for the return of Christ that has distinguished the personal hope from the theological one. Mere acquaintance with correct doctrine is a poor substitute for Christ. And familiarity with New Testament eschatology will never take the place of a love-inflamed desire to look on His face.

If the tender yearning is gone from the advent hope today there must be a reason for it; and I think I know what it is, or what they are, for there are a number of them. One is simply that popular fundamentalist theology has emphasized the utility of the cross rather than the beauty of the One who died on it. The saved man's relation to Christ has been made contractual instead of personal. The "work" of Christ has been stressed until it has eclipsed the person of Christ. Substitution has been allowed to supersede identification. What He

did for me seems to be more important than what He is to me. Redemption is seen as an across-the-counter transaction which we "accept," and the whole thing lacks emotional content. We must love someone very much to stay awake and long for his coming, and that may explain the absence of power in the advent hope even among those who still believe in it.

Another reason for the absence of real yearning for Christ's return is that Christians are so comfortable in this world that they have little desire to leave it. For those leaders who set the pace of religion and determine its content and quality, Christianity has become, of late, remarkably lucrative. The streets of gold do not have too great an appeal for those who find it so easy to pile up gold and silver in the service of the Lord here on earth. We all want to reserve the hope of heaven as a kind of insurance against the day of death, but as long as we are healthy and comfortable, why exchange a familiar good for something about which we actually know very little? So reasons the carnal mind, and so subtly that we are scarcely aware of it.

Again, in these times religion has become jolly good fun right here in this present world, and what's the hurry about heaven anyway? Christianity, contrary to what some had thought, is another and higher form of entertainment. Christ has done all the suffering. He has shed all the tears and carried all the crosses; we have but to enjoy the benefits of His heartbreak in the form of religious pleasures modeled after the world but carried on in the name of Jesus. So say the same people who claim to believe in Christ's second coming.

History reveals that times of suffering for the Church have also been times of looking upward. Tribulation has always sobered God's people and encouraged them to look for and yearn after the return of their Lord. Our present preoccupation with this world may be a warning of bitter days to come. God will wean us from the earth some way - the easy way if possible, the hard way if necessary. It is up to us.

Looking at the condition of the church in the US, I think AW Tozer was right when he said this about 40 years ago. Will we live by waiting? Really.

Now that we've reviewed the content that other Gospel's held and Mark left out between Mark 13:37 and Mark 14:1 let's move on to our text.

¹ After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. The Passover is two days away now. It is still Wednesday. Passover is on Friday. All through the history of mankind we have seen the substitutionary blood sacrifice. It began when a sheep had to be killed to clothe Adam and Eve. Innocent blood was shed to cover their sin. An acceptable blood sacrifice was required even at the time of Cain and Able.

When Abraham placed Isaac on the alter, an acceptable blood offering was provided by a ram caught in a thicket.

Then there were the Passover lambs that were offered the night before the Israelites left Egypt. The blood on the mantles caused the death angel to pass by the house. Judgment fell where there was no blood covering.

The cross was also foretold in Ps 22:1-18, Isa 53:1-12 Dan 9:27 and Zec 12:10.

Then John the Baptist said of Christ "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" ([John 1:29](#)).

The Passover was one of the biggest spiritual events for any practicing Jew. This was the day where the sacrificed lamb had its greatest significance. All the people understood that they owed their existence to those lambs that were sacrificed to save them from the judgment of God and to deliver them from their bondage.

All of the Jewish history was pointing forward to the event that was about to happen in 2 days. So it is no coincidence that this event was falling on Passover.

This was God ordained. It happened when it would be most clear what it meant. On Passover.

And this year was prophesied in Daniel 9:25-26

Daniel 9:25

²⁵ **"Know therefore and understand, *That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.***

Christ's crucifixion was happening at the same time that the **Passover lambs were being sacrificed** in the temple. God was killing His spotless lamb that would take away the sins of the redeemed.

The feast of the unleavened bread began the next day and lasted a full week. It commemorated Israel's exodus from Egypt and was named for the bread they took with them. It was unleavened because it did not have time to rise given how quickly they had to get out of Egypt.

It is important to note that this timing was critical. Christ had to die at this appointed time. There had been many attempts to kill him earlier. Christ always managed to evade the dangers. But this death could not wait another day. Now was the time. It had to happen in two days. That would have seemed very unlikely to anyone who was taking bets. But it was **going to happen**, nonetheless. You may sometimes get the idea that **God does not keep track of time**. You may think he must not know how many days you have suffered or how badly you need something right now. Well scripture assures us, God is very aware of time. He doesn't calculate it like we do. And he knows **the other things we need** more than we might need comfort. He is, after all, getting us ready for eternity. And

that, evidently, takes a lot of training. So we can trust and believe, **God knows what time it is.**

And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. ² But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

We learn a little more in Matthew.

Matthew 26:3-5

³ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. ⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

We could title this section- **What not to do in a church business meeting.**

According to both texts we see that the chief priests, the scribes and the elders met at the home of the high priest, which incidentally is called a palace. That is a problem in itself.

What we see here are Pharisees and Sadducees on the same murder committee. These guys hated each other viciously. But Jesus had **attacked the profit centers of the Sadducees' money making schemes** and had **constantly criticized the Pharisees** so-called spiritual leadership. He revealed them for the scoundrels and reprobates that they were. So they hated Christ too. It would be interesting to know how all these parties were invited. But here they were. One big happy hateful family.

So, this emergency meeting was called because of the leader's concern for the flock's spiritual need? No. It was called for how to discern a certain problem spiritually? No. It was called to cry out to God in prayer for guidance? No. It was called because **they hated someone so much** they wanted to kill a man. I know a little about eldering, and that is not a good purpose for an elder's meeting. If you elders out there are thinking about calling a meeting to kill someone, there is no need to invite me. I'm not coming.

And look who it is they want dead. God's son. What an irony. Here these guys are, arguing vehemently about which party is serving the one true God better, the Sadducees, the party most true to the first 5 books of the bible. And the Pharisees, the ones that believe God can't be kept in the Sadducees box. The Pharisees argue that God is still capable of amazing miracles like the resurrection of the dead.

And here they are together meeting peacefully and orderly to accomplish how to kill the only begotten Son of God thoroughly.

We see it again and again, but it must be said. Not everyone who says they speak for God truly do so. Not everyone who thinks they are spiritual really are. We do not need to hold out our hands in fellowship just because someone says they like

God. These people, while sometimes are the greatest friends of God, could also just as easily be the greatest enemies of God. Discernment is always required. I remember a so called youth rally I was involved in at one time. There was all kind of prophetic speech going on about what God was going to do in Garrett County based on the presence of this crusade. It didn't look like it would work to me, based on what I knew about secular kids, but I figured if God was going to do this thing, I wanted to see it. Well about 10 kids showed up for the first meeting. After the kids all left, and they were mostly church kids, the leaders of the event went through all the rows and cast all the demons out of the seats. I remember thinking at that point, one must pick their spiritual allies closely. Not everyone who says **they know something about God really knows something about God.** As it is now, much of the greatest resistance to bible believing churches who tell the truth about things like homosexuality and abortion are people from liberal churches. When these people speak of their love for Jesus, we do well to ask them, who this Jesus is that they love so much. AW Tozer said a long time ago that "It is no use to deny that Christ was crucified by persons who would today be called fundamentalists.." We have got to watch our lives and our doctrine closely. We have got to be discerning to make sure that those we trust to represent Christ really do. Saying Lord Lord is not enough. Not everything that **proclaims** loyalty to Christ really **has** loyalty to Christ.

Look at the last part of our text this morning.

⁴ and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. ⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

Look at the methods that these so called Jewish leaders were using. These people had determined, outside of the word of God, what needed to be done. And they were bound and determined to get it done by hook or by crook. These guys may have been movers and shakers, but they were not in any way **representing God.** We can never determine what God wants His church to be doing **outside of the word of God.** This goes along with what we talked about a few weeks ago. There **are** some things that every believer ought to be doing. Every believer ought to be **reading the word of God and praying.** He or she ought to be **fellowshipping with other believers.** He or she ought to be **meeting the needs of other believers.** And he or she should be **spreading the gospel** as there is opportunity. We can safely proclaim those things. But anything that **scripture doesn't say** you should be doing is not for me or anyone else to be telling you that **you should be doing.** These leaders left the pages of scriptures in their oversight of their responsibilities. And by so doing, they allowed flesh to rule. When that happens we can always know the enemy of our souls is behind it.

We must submit to the Lordship of Christ through His Word. If His word says it, we should believe it or do it. If it does not, it might be good or bad, but we have

no authority to command it in Christ's name. God does not need trickery. He does not require a clever mind to accomplish His will. And He certainly does not require a poll to be taken for leadership to determine what Christ wants done. The leadership of the church does not need to know what **the world wants** in order to give them **what Christ wants them to have**. The religious leaders kept their thumb on the opinions of the masses. True spiritual leadership doesn't require that scrutiny. We can just do what our Master tells us to do. That is enough.

Christ told us that His message was going to create an uproar in the people. He just told us that the true message is likely to divide families and sometimes result in our imprisonment and death. And unlike these spiritual leaders in our text, we are not to change **one little thing** to avoid the massive disapproval of the crowds. These guys needed to care more about what **God thinks** and less about what **the crowds think**. And that may be true of churches today, who pretend to provide spiritual leadership but they do it based on the polls they take of the masses. That is a very dangerous path. We need to consider that it was the religious leaders that killed Christ who cared so much about what the masses wanted. Christ only cared about what His Father wanted.

So this week for application we would do well to consider, what does it mean to live by waiting for Christ's return. How would my life change if I really believed that I could do things today that would really please Him? How should my life change to live for His return?

And second, we do well to consider what true spiritual leadership is. We need to discern those issues based on what God says.