

Series: *“Mark: The Servant in Action”*

Mark 13:1-13: *“Don’t Miss the Main Thing!”* DISMISS KIDS

Theme: *Jesus wants His Followers to Focus on the Main Thing*

Scripture Reading: Mark 13:1-13

Introduction:

- >Brad’s invitation to preach and continue the series in Mark in his absence.
- >I re-read Mark’s Gospel and was hoping I would not be assigned Chapter 13
- >There are certain texts in Scripture, especially as they have related to future events (Ezekiel, Daniel, Matt. 24 and the middle sections of Revelation), that I have **chosen to avoid** because I couldn’t wrap my mind around the details and figurative language to make sense of it all. I have a luxury pastors don’t have. I can “Pick and choose” my text.
- >I’ve been taught eschatology but I was **often times dumbfounded by the textbook authors** or professors explanations and quick frankly would conclude, “Where did they get that from?” Or what in the world does that mean and how’d they come to that?
- >I was taught, *“When the literal sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.”* It’s been a great tool for me over the years but there is difficulty when the literal sense didn’t make common sense resulting in my hesitancy to tackle passages that speak of future events. After studying this, it wasn’t as scary as I anticipated.
- >Just like Matt was dependent on Brad’s preparation last week, I am indebted to **Allister Begg** for my understanding of this passage.
- >Mark 13 is one of those **difficult passages** to interpret. With much debate. We must try to discern what Jesus is saying about the Temple and the end of the age. Not easy.
- >But God does have **good purposes** for giving us Scripture
 - *He desires to give us a clear **message** rather than us creating a chaotic **mess/mystery**
 - *He desires that we grasp the things He wants us to know and trust them to be true.
 - *We **don’t have to guess** about what God wants us to know. He gives us His Word so we can (as the old hymn says) **Trust and Obey.**
 - *We must also **guard** against *“anarchy”* and *“dogmatism”* when Studying God’s Word
 - >**Anarchy** which is the **blind leading the blind. So** “let’s just see what everyone thinks or how they feel about it” (ex: I don’t think Jesus ever says anything against Gay marriage). The other extreme is **tyranny of the dogmatic** person who says, “this is my view and I don’t care what anyone else thinks.”
 - >Pastors must also guard against dogmatism in thinking that their view of a text is the only right view. We can be sure of the main things but may disagree on the not so clear things.
- Remember: The **Scriptures are highly practical**, more so than they are **theoretical**. (more concerned with studying the text rather than applying it.) Ivy League Schools are filled with seminary professors that study the Bible but fail to recognize it’s authority or proper application. 250/242 Universities (One study) **Scriptures is the window** God graciously gives us to reveal Christ to us.
- >So we must **tread with caution** when we seek to interpret the Word: **Hermeneutics**

*We want to align our hearts and minds to Scripture like a good basketball player aligns his/her body with the rim before shooting. We should be constantly working at correcting our wrong ideas.

*Good hermeneutics says certain things are absolutely clear and basic. A. Begg, "I may not understand it all, but I can understand the main things." He says, "The Main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things. God's Word is infallible, but no individual is infallible."

>When it comes to our understanding of Mark 13, we must not forget v.32 (read it)

>**Old Saying: "Hindsight is better than foresight"** Why? Because we can look back and see what really happened versus what we thought might happen."

>Christ's disciples, although they read about a Messiah in the OT, couldn't fully understand what it meant until He actually appeared. They were with the Messiah but didn't fully understand who He was until after He ascended back to heaven. They needed Christ to come to the earth to clarify the OT. We need Christ to come back a second time to clarify much of what we read in Scripture about the future as well. We will need the very presence of Christ to figure out the pieces to the puzzle. In the meantime, it's best for us to not play theoretical games but instead focus on the main thing. We need to take comfort in the reality that we don't have to know everything, we just need to recognize that Christ, the sovereign Lord is in charge of everything.

One writer says *"Do not try to satisfy an unhealthy curiosity. It is a serious misuse of Scripture to make it disclose more than God has purposed to reveal."*

>So with all that said, let's dive into our passage but make sure we don't disclose more than God has purposed to reveal. Let's make sure we don't miss the main thing!

I. **A Simple Comment prompts a Serious Response 13:1-2**

Review Context: Middle of passion week; Transitioning from Triumphant Entry, to His final instructions and Christ's true identity as the God Man, to his rejection by the religious leaders and their influence on the crowds, to his walk up the via Delarosa to the Cross.

>Pastor Matt did a great job of helping us understand the last few verses of chapter 12 where we were warned not to be deceived by appearance and discovered that those who are not significant in culture are the most significant in the kingdom.

>The widow's meager offering is a direct attack on the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who were more interested in their appearance and authority than they were on recognizing that Christ was the fulfillment of Scripture. So, Jesus and his disciples leave the Temple and begin their short walk across the way to the Mt. of Olives.

A. **A Disciple's Comment v. 1** (nonchalant) like, Hey, look at those deer in that field or Man, that is a gorgeous beach house?

"Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings."

>The Temple was a sight to behold. Not as beautiful as the one Solomon built but quick a structure none the less.

>Josephus (1st century Jewish historian) says the Temple *“lacked nothing that could astound the eyes.”* The rabbis were known to say, *“He who has not seen Herod’s Temple has never seen a beautiful building.”* A disciple makes a nonchalant com.

B. The Master’s Response v. 2 Jesus takes advantage of the comment to introduce an essential element regarding Himself and the future of the Temple.

>Jesus says the temple will be destroyed. Not just damaged but obliterated. He is saying the Temple will be done away with, obsolete. No longer needed.

>I don’t think we could ever fully understand the significance, but His followers did.

>This might help: CNN Announcement: All Cellphones will no longer work tomorrow!

1. The significance of the Temple

>the beauty of the Temple doesn’t compare to its’ religious significance.

>the Temple and what it represented was the center of their universe.

>the ARK, in the holy of holies, was the symbolic presence of God. 1 Day is...

>This is where God is! He lives in the Temple and it’s sacred. Everything that matters about Judaism is connected to the Temple.

2. The significance of the Prediction

>So the prediction about destroying the Temple doesn’t have significance because of its physicality but because of its theological implications. To destroy the Temple was to destroy Judaism.

>The Religious leaders wanted to destroy him not the Temple. His prediction was a huge argument for the prosecution at His trial.

>His disciples would equate the destruction of the temple with the (end of age)

II. A Serious Question prompts a Serious Response 13:5-13

A. The Disciples’ Question (asked by the inner group: Peter, James, John, Andrew)

>They could see the splendor of the Temple from where they were sitting on the Mt.

>if you sat in that spot today you’d see the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Why? Because what he predicted happened in AD 70. Gone, flattened, never rebuilt, but replaced.

>Note: It is a private question. I’m not sure why but probably thought this was serious business only the closest of friends should discuss.

>So they ask the question that we would have probably asked. “When, when will it happen and how will it happen? What should we be looking for? Right, we want to know exactly when something is going to happen. We want our Bible scholars to tell us all the details about the future. Like them, we want to know when and how catastrophe will strike so we can prepare for it.

>They understood most of the OT prophecies but they didn’t understand all of them.

>Like us, there are things we want clarified. When it comes to the future, we want to know when it will happen, how it will happen and what will happen. But

1. The question they should have asked: Why? Like us, it would be best for them to understand why it was going to happen. But that didn’t cross their mind.

>Why will the temple be destroyed?

Short Answer: It will no longer be needed.

>Matt. 12:3-8 “something greater than the temple is here, If you would have known what this means....Jesus in Lord of the Sabbath” They were spiritually blind! They Missed the Main Thing.

>The sacrificial system that is the center of the temple is no longer needed.

>Jesus’ sacrifice is the final provision for man’s sin. (Blood gutters come down)

>**The priesthood would become obsolete.** Hebrews 10:18-22 hasn’t been written yet but for our sakes and the redemptive Plan of God it needed to be written. *“Where there is forgiveness (once and for all through Christ’s sacrifice) there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God (not the temple but the body of true believers) let us draw near with a true heart of full assurance of faith.”* Think

>**What happened on the cross?** The veil of the temple was torn in half. The wall between God and men has been removed. It’s the good news of the Gospel. We have access to God!

>Look at what Jesus says in v. 10 of our chapter *“The Gospel, (the good news of Jesus’ atonement) must first be proclaimed to all nations.”*

>The why question is so significant, and his closest followers were at risk of completely missing it. As were the religious leaders of the day.

>**Don’t miss it.** Any attempt to be satisfied by a religious system that excludes or de-emphasizes the significance of Christ and His Superior atonement is empty.

>Don’t be caught falling into the trap of holding onto religious externals more than Christ and Christ alone and thinking that the externals somehow still matter. That would make you a moralist or a legalist, a code follower more than a follower of Christ.

>When Jesus said the Temple would be destroyed what was He saying? In a nutshell: THERE IS NO MORE A PLACE ON EARTH THAT IS SACRED. There is no more a special place that Christ followers have to be in to enjoy the beauty and holiness of God. FOLKS, THERE IS NO MORE SANCTUARY! You are God’s Sanctuary. If you are following Christ your heart, mind and body are the Temple of God. Not this building we come to each week. True, we meet in it to worship God and fellowship but it is not God’s house. You are. Don’t miss it.

>Don’t think we have to be in this building or a building like it to do the work of God. We actually come to this building to take a break for doing the work of God because the work of God goes on out there through the relationships we develop.

>**Explain it this way:** Some think the **church building is the field** we go to, to do the work of God. We serve or bring others into the field on Sunday. Like a farmer who goes to his field and plows on his tractor. At the end of the day, he leaves the tractor to return to his work another day. Not so. Actually, the church is a force in the world not a building to go work in. We come to our building for R

and R so we are encouraged and equipped to go back into the world to do God's work. This building is wonderful but it is not sacred. God doesn't live here.

>III: **Jade and summer camper:** "You mean I don't have to be at our church to talk to God?"

>Allister Begg says, "*The destruction of this structure, that is the temple (real or symbolic) has to take place before a person can surrender to Christ.*" repeat

>The externals, the inferior lists don't compare to knowing Christ. Don't miss it!

2. The question they did ask: When and What? Matt/Luke record the same ?

>They were assuming the destruction of the temple and the end of the age (or when Christ would return) were one and the same. They couldn't fathom life without the Temple. So, they asked, When will these things happen, give us an idea.

>In hindsight, we can see that there are 2 patterns or notions being referenced here.

>First of all, they were concerned about 2 events 1. The destruction of the Temple and 2. The demise of Jerusalem itself. They connected both to the end of the age.

The Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was sacked in AD 70 under Roman Emperor Claudius. We see this part of Christ's prediction has been fulfilled. hindsight

>But, like most of the OT prophecies, you also have **2 stages or fulfillments here**. An immediate fulfillment and a future fulfillment. It's called a dual or double fulfillment or a short-term and long-term fulfillment. Some would say there is a "near" fulfillment and a "far" fulfillment.

>Ex: The prophet Joel writes, "I will pour out my spirit on all people" which we now know was on the Day of Pentecost when Peter stood up to preach. But Joel also says some other things about blood and fire and smoke and astronomical signs and the gathering of all nations for judgment. Which, we believe will be fulfilled when Christ returns. Some Biblical prophecy is near and has already happened; other parts are still far off but are going to happen.

>The 2 stages are often very difficult to discern. The destruction of the Temple and signs of the times are difficult but then when you add the "Abomination of Desolation" Jesus predicts in the next session, well it just gets a lot harder to grasp.

>In Mark 13 there is the immediate (destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple) but there is also future application related to the bigger picture that breaks through the immediate and applies to the entire age (church age or age of grace).

>**Don't try to put all the little pieces together.**

My struggle was my attempt to put the little pieces together when it came to future events. I couldn't do it, so I avoided it.

III:**THE WORLD'S MOST DIFFICULT PUZZLE (50 DOGS)**. Problem: same 50 dogs pic on the back side but turned ¼ sideways. Impossible.

>Don't sweat the little details (the when's, how's and what's) but don't miss the main things either. Just thank God you know you're on the winning side! You see...

>The Purpose for Mk. 13 is to equip Christ's immediate followers to prepare for what would happen in their lifetime and to equip all His followers until the end of the age. This age began at Pentecost and it will end when Christ returns. So we are watching, waiting and praying as we live for and wait for our King. It's practical. It'll all make sense when Christ returns. The puzzle will be solved. So, how Christ responds to

their question is significant for us because he states some facts about the future and some essential commands if we are going to endure to the end. This text was Good for them and it is good for us. Unfortunately,

- >Religious leaders have tried to predict when the end of the age will happen. 88
- Reasons why Jesus will return in 1988 (didn't 89 reasons in 89) but this was just a repeat of a guy named William Miller who preaching the end would come in 1843, didn't happen so changed it to 1844. 2012 the end of the Mayan Calendar; Harold Camping's book 1994? Haley's Comet Panic; Y2K scare, there was a real hen in 1806 who appeared to lay eggs that said Christ is coming and we even have the fictional character Chicken Little who proclaimed, "The sky is falling."
- >**Problem:** These are all an **attempt to disprove what Jesus says** in v. 32. No one knows.
- >Remember that 2 of the 4 guys that were with Jesus at this time wrote Epistles.
- >What did they write for us? **I John 3** "we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him. John doesn't want us to miss the main thing. **I Peter 1** "we are being guarded by God's power (now) for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Peter doesn't want us to miss the main thing. We must live with expectation!

So, as we finish today, we see how Jesus responded to their question.

B. The Master's Response: 2 Stages of Fulfillment (immediate and future) 2 parts to His Response (Facts and Commands).

NOTE: Jesus doesn't give them or us everything there is to know but everything they and us need to know.

III: Parent to their child who asks why? "Because I said so." That's enough.

1. First command: **Don't be led astray!** 5-6 "*See that no one leads you astray*".

>Jesus doesn't want them to miss the main thing.

>**Fact #1:** False teachers will come in His name seeking to lead you astray. True in the first century? True today? Charlatans in the first century and charlatans in the 21st

2. Second command: **Don't be alarmed!** 7-8

>Jesus doesn't want them to miss this.

>**Fact #2:** Nations will go to war and natural disasters and world hunger will happen.

True in the first century? (500 Jewish Zealots held off the Roman Army for over a year before they conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. True Today?

Googled "When was the last time man lived in a world without war? Answer: NEVER

>Jesus adds a disclaimer to this prediction: Even with all this war, conflict, natural

disaster and world hunger, he says the end is not yet. He says "this must take place".

In v. 8 he says this is just the beginning of the birth pains. Wars, earthquakes and

hunger will just be the start but He is clear that this doesn't mean it's the end of the

age. Yet.

III: "Briggs and Stratton vs Braxton Hicks" labor pains. Tim's birth: Pam "shut up"

3. Third Command: **Do be on guard! 8-10** "Don't be led astray by false teachers,

don't be alarmed by the conditions of the world. Recognize false teachers and

recognize the birth pains. Don't miss them but DO BE ON GUARD. Emphasis is:

MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON GUARD. See to it that you stay awake. (23,32,35,37)

>**Fact #3:** “your enemies will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings **FOR MY SAKE**, to bear witness before them. **This is a promise:** If you follow me you will suffer. True in the first century? All 11 and countless others died a martyr’s death. True Today? Paul says in Phil. 1:29 *“for it is granted to you (as a gift) that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for his sake.”* Grace and Suffering are gifts today as they were in the first century.

ILL: Voice of the Martyrs: I have been humbled and convicted of the imbalance in these two gifts. God’s Grace far outweighs our suffering.

4. The fourth command: **Don’t be anxious! 11-13**

>**Fact #4:** They will bring you to trial and deliver you over to the authorities (to be put to death). He even states that it’s their families that will do it. V. 12 *“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and the children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake.”*

>The first Century followers were hated by the Jews because they claimed Christ was God. The gentiles hated them because they stood for things they hated. True today? > “and have them put to death” Is Jesus saying something extreme or normal?

David Platt (Radical writes) *“As Elisabeth Elliot (Jim’s wife) points out, not even dying a martyr’s death is classified as extraordinary obedience when you are following a Savior who died on the cross. Suddenly, a martyr’s death seems like normal obedience.”*

>Jesus commands his followers to not be anxious (Jesus said the same in His great sermon). But here, Jesus adds a clause that provides the reason not to be anxious considering their inevitable court appearances in which they will have to defend their faith. The clause is in the form of a promise. *“Do not be anxious (worried) beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”* Don’t fret over what you will say to your enemies when they attack and accuse you because, rest assured, the HS will give you what you need to say when you need it. True Today?

>I remember hearing of reading this a long time ago. “If you were put on trial to prove that you were a Christ follower, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” Don’t be anxious just be ready to defend the Gospel.

>This is where v.10 and the end of v. 13 fit it.

- C. **The Master’s Objective** (Jesus is being practical.) Don’t be led astray by false teachers, don’t be alarmed by the conditions of the world, do be on guard and don’t be anxious about your testimony. Why? Because the Gospel must be proclaimed and proclaiming it will come at great price. Then and now.

1. **Regardless of the situation, the Gospel must be proclaimed 10 Don’t miss the main thing.** It’s the message their generation and every generation since needs to hear.

>Jesus already said 8:34, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” As were they, we are called to proclaim the Gospel, regardless of the situation. I trust our camp staff is ready. I trust our camp staff will stand firm in the midst of conflict. Pam already knows what lawyer to call when the day comes that I’m arrested for standing for the truth. Proclaim it, regardless.

2. Regardless of the situation, the Gospel must be proclaimed but also not that Saints must endure to the end 13

>Finally, sever the ties, face the challenge and endure to the end.

>If you are led astray, if you are alarmed, if you aren’t on your guard you refuse to endure to the end, if those things are true of you, you will not be saved in the end either, because you won’t continue in the faith. These are some of the hardest words from Jesus we could ever hear. There are many theological implications and viewpoints here. We believe in eternal security but what Jesus says get our attention. Endure to the end. How do you endure to the end? **Answer:** By enduring to the end! By keep on keeping on.

>Jude helps us: “But you beloved, 1. **building yourselves up** in the most holy faith and 2. **praying** in the Holy Spirit, 3. **keep yourselves in the love of God**, 4. **waiting** for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. We must actively pursue our faith in Christ. There is nothing passive about the Christian life. Ah, but don’t forget what else Jude says, “*Now to Him who is 1. **able to keep you from stumbling** and to 2. **present you blameless** before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ be the glory, majesty and dominion.*”

>You keep on Keeping on because God is the one who will keep you keeping on.

>Keep watching, keep waiting, keep praying, keep trusting, don’t quit, don’t give up, don’t allow the craziness of this world or the regulations of some man-made religious schemes to make you want out. Endure to the end. Trust and Obey no matter what!

>Paul tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling knowing that it is God who is working in us. Paul says “*he is sure of this, that He who began a good work in you (as a true, adopted son or daughter of God) will bring it to completion at the Day of Jesus Christ. (at the end of the age.)* That must be where we put our hope.

>Don’t miss the main thing. Endure to the end. Regardless. Be on Guard!

But then in the next section Jesus says run away to the hills when the Abomination of Desolation happens. I’m so glad Pastor Brad will tackle this passage next week.

A Few Applications for us today: finish with these reminders.

1. Approach Bible study reverently, fervently, and humbly.
2. Trust that Jesus is in control of the apparent craziness. Remember we do this “for His name sake”
3. Don’t be distracted by the externals that prevent you from seeing what matters most.
4. Christ promised He’d return, it’s best we trust him and don’t ask too many questions.
5. Keep yourself in the love of Christ as you watch, wait and pray for His return.

Closing hymn: I will Trust my Savior Jesus