

The Lazy Servant - Mark 13:32-37

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[0 : 0 0] I am grateful that you have come to worship the Lord with us today. I am grateful for Steve leading worship for us. Josh is up at Children's Camp this weekend, as with many of our children and youth, or I'm sorry, many of our children.

And so he is our worship leader this week up at camp, and so that is where Pastor Josh is. He is there with Pastor Eric. Pastor Eric is the teacher this week at Children's Camp where a number of churches have gotten together to host Children's Camp.

And they are there accompanied with Melissa and Heather. And so that's where Melissa and Heather are as well this weekend. He's up at Children's Camp and Pastor Jay is on vacation.

And so that means if you have a question, I don't even know who you should ask. And so I'm grateful that you are here. When I was a boy, my father, we went hiking often.

We would go camping. It was a form worth of a way the Liddell family would vacation as we would often go camping. And I remember walking with my dad from time to time and we would come up to this peak and my dad would, he would point out all that we could see.

[1 : 1 8] Do you see that lake? Do you see this animal? Do you see this? Do you see that? And inevitably there would be a taller yet peak to climb. And so my dad would say, I wonder what's on top of that?

What we could see? I wonder just what we could see. And so we would walk several more miles and we would summit to this peak and we would look and see and dad would point out all the things that we could say.

Look at this. Look at that. Look how much further we can see. Look how much glorious this is. And then yet there's another higher peak and we would do this time and again. Now I don't know why I kept walking.

If it was the fear of being lost or just to spend time with dad. But it was a good mechanism to keep me get some wiggles out. And so that I would be a little more tired at night. I'm certain that was part of the plan. But I enjoyed those times. And today though we are going to look at this peak that is just glorious and magnificent.

But before we can get to this peak that is glorious and magnificent we need to see a number of other summits and peaks that are also equally beautiful. For example when we talk about the Lord there is the mountain peak of when the Lord chose to condescend the earth. It's called the condescension of the Lord. That is when Jesus condescended to earth leaving his heavenly home and all of his corresponding privileges and came to earth. Oh how beautiful.

[2 : 5 0] The condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ is. But then we would see another peak that is more glorious than that. The incarnation of Jesus. That is when Jesus didn't just come to earth but he also put on human flesh and he was born of a virgin.

The creator taking upon that which he created. Oh how beautiful. The beautiful summit of if God's wisdom in the incarnation of Christ. But it doesn't stop there. There's yet a higher peak and that is the mountain peak of Christ's crucifixion and it's it's a peculiar thing to boast in. This grotesque obscene horrific scene of the innocent one dying a horrific death that the guilty ones would go free and sin would be forgiven. Yet this is what Paul says about the cross of Christ. He says but God forbid that I should boast in anything but the cross of Christ of Jesus by whom the world was crucified to me and I to the world in Galatians. Oh how beautiful the mountain peak of the crucifixion of Christ.

But we know around the the resurrection Sunday of Easter. We know that that doesn't stop there. We celebrate the peak of Christ's resurrection. That the tomb is empty and the death could not hold him. He rose victorious over sin and death and all who placed their faith in Christ's sinless life and his death for sin and resurrection overcoming sin and death have their sin forgiven and spend eternity with Christ.

But yet there's another peak and that is the peak of his ascension. After the resurrection he was visited by some and then he appeared to many and he was taken up in the clouds and returned to this right hand of God.

For Luke says this in the book of Acts and when he said these things and he and they were looking on the disciples that is and he was lifted up in the clouds they took him from his sight and they were gazing into heaven and behold two men stood by him with white robes and he said men of Galilee why do you look standing into heaven? This Jesus who was just taken up into heaven will come in the same way you saw him go his ascension. And yet today's text talks about another glorious peak yet. Today's text that we're going to look at is another beautiful event that Christ will do and is often a neglected peak but it also can be overemphasized as well and that is his glorious return.

[5 : 44] And this one is still yet future these that we have so far talked about as are yet in the past and so we can see this peak off into the distance.

And it's and it is when the Lord will return not as the prophet but the indisputable king of the universe and with him his judgment.

Sins and sinners will be finally judged. It is the final glorious mountain peak and the topic of today's passage so if you have your bible with you today we're looking at a series of gospels or parables in the gospels. We find ourselves in Mark chapter 13.

If you want to turn your bible there we'll begin reading in Mark 13 verse 32. This is often referred to as the sleepy servant or the this parable of the doorkeeper but this is what the word of the Lord reads as we read it together. Mark 13 starting in verse 32.

But concerning that day or that hour no one knows not even the angels in heaven nor the Son of God but only the Father. Be on guard keep awake for you do not know when the time will come.

[7 : 04] It is like a man going on a journey and when he leaves home and puts a servant in charge each one with his work and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake for you do not know when the master of the household will come in the evening or in the midnight or when the rooster crows or in the morning lest he suddenly find you asleep and what I say to you are and what I say to you I say to all stay awake. Would you pray with me glorious god help us as we read the bible think about it together and may your spirit be our instructor may we learn and believe and trust and live in light of its truth only you god can accomplish this and only you and it's in your son's name Jesus we pray amen.

In this these set of verses it's it's meant to be a wake-up call for the disciples it has this uh it's not so instructive as it is a call to response stay awake be ready for his return.

What makes the Lord's return difficult is we want a timeline we want a fixed date of his return and uh and we have things to indicate the last days knowing nothing more should occur until the Lord returns nothing more on earth's calendar should there is nothing more that's required for his return to be imminent he could return at any moment. Timothy writes it this way there will be terrible times in the last days people will be lovers of themselves lovers of money boastful proud abusive disobedient to their parents ungrateful unholy without love unforgiving slanderous without self-control brutal not lovers of good treacherous rash conceded lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of god having the form of godliness but but denying its power have nothing to do with them and that is the attributes of the kinds of things that we've manifested in the end times there and so we know that we are in season for the Lord's return but here's the thing since even the disciples they longed to see the Lord's return because they asked him before he ascended uh his ascension they said

Lord is it at this time that you'll restore the kingdom of God to Israel it's kingdom of heaven to Israel and he responds so since 2,000 years ago the Lord has been in due season for his return the apostles wrote in such a way that the incarnation of Jesus that they were living in the last days the prophets wrote in the Old Testament of the Lord's return is one event it gets a little more complicated with the writers of the New Testament so whether you believe in the one return in two phases that is the rapture and his glorious return or you believe in just one single event of the Lord's return there is room for debate but at fourth we believe in the one event with two phases as spoken of earlier but for our sake and for the text today that isn't the point the point is the Lord will return and are we ready some have said that Jesus is in his in Jesus the kingdom has come in the preaching of the gospel the kingdom is coming and the return of Christ the kingdom will come in all of its fullness when Jesus returns the kingdom will come and all of its fullness and the text illustrates that in four ways and so today what we're going to do is make four observations of our text four observation the first one is this we are ignorant of the time of Christ's return and i'm sorry that's a little small perhaps in writing i have vast pockets of ignorance for example i do not know or i cannot explain how the eye of an insect works i have no idea i have no idea how a nuclear power plant truly works i could not explain it to you or the valuation of any company how do you value what amazon is worth i don't know how do you do that and so that my pockets of ignorance are vast i have tons of them i could continue to go on and say i have no clue about this i have no clue about that and sometimes i'm ashamed of my ignorance and there are times when i should know something and i don't with regard to not knowing the day or the hour of the return of the lord i do not know and i refuse to feel bad about that because i'm in good company look with me in verse 32 but concerning that day or that hour no one knows no one knows no one can explain this no one knows the day or the hour and and it's not just humans it's it's the angels in heaven don't even know i appreciate how john calvin wrote of this text with regard to the angels not knowing and he says it would be proof of excessive pride and covetousness to desire that we who creep on this earth should know more than is permitted in the angels in heaven and not only does no one know not only do the angels not know but also christ himself does not know jesus christ himself despite being the son who is co-eternal and co-equal with the father jesus submits himself as mediator on our account and so some of these times this has bothered some to say well how is it that jesus could not know you could say it either one of two ways either jesus said uh this because he was speaking out of his humanity or he voluntarily restricts his knowledge in this matter but we don't know and we don't know why but that is not the point this this text point of saying jesus does not know is

not necessarily teaching us something about christ that's not the point of this the point of emphasis is that jesus doesn't know the hour of his return and so the emphasis lies that so be prepared because no one knows but the father does and that is the point of emphasis not on what christ uh his christology it's not something about christ it's about being prepared for no one knows being ignorant of his return causes tension for some uh i am saddened by how many throughout the years people have followed claims of being messiah someone has claimed being a messiah and people have followed them it has happened throughout the millennia of church history or throughout history what is worse is not just those who claim to be the messiah claim to be jesus but how many followers each of them get around them who follow them in their deception but it it sets us up for that doesn't it no one knows the day or the hour and so if somebody says i'm the messiah people are can have been tempted to believe in it and have believed in that if i said if you lived in the 90s and if i said weiko texas many of you may think of david koresh who claimed to be jesus and he other he and the other branch divideans and he named himself after in honor of king david and syris jo the great and all of them died in the atf raid the failed atf raid in 1993 thankfully chip and joanna gains have reclaimed the reputation of weiko texas since then closer to home and you may not know this william davies in 1833 through 1903 was his lifespan he began a communal society of 80 acres down in walla walla that he referenced as the kingdom of heaven 80 acres who knew that's how big it was and he thought and he taught his disciples that he was michael the archangel who had lived in previous lives as abraham uh adam abraham and david he declared that his firstborn son in 1868 was the incarnate jesus christ he was jesus christ his son was jesus christ so he claimed and they called him walla walla jesus and now this is what's tragic about this but do you see that no one knows the day or the hour people can be swept into deception because do you think if you heard walla walla jesus do you think the followers went up or down they went up it when when walla walla jesus was born people followed this even more his secondborn son was uh uh was declared to be god the father so this man michael the archangel whose given name was william davies he was michael the archangel he had two sons the father and the son on this 80 acre kingdom of heaven ranch and it all came to a collapse when both of those children died of diphtheria the son and the father were wiped out by diphtheria apparently and now i'm poking fun a little bit but it's tragic that because no one knows the day or the hour people get deceived and and so they forget what is written in matthew jesus says at that time if anyone says look here is the messiah or there he is do not believe it for false messiahs and prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders if it possible even to deceive the elect we are all susceptible and that is why it is important to know what the lord's return will look like and be like we do not know the time of his return but we do know that jesus's return will

[17 : 48] be unmistakable paul writes of this in first the colonians 416 that the lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel with the trump of god it will not be a secret event it will he will be accompanied with angels he will be bringing with him his judgment it will not be a secret event jesus later said in the gospels then they shall see the son of man coming in the cloud with great power and glory every eye will see him with great power and with great glory there it will be a unmistakable event you won't have to wonder is this really jesus i don't know how that trumpet of god works out of what that looks like but i could imagine this is scott so this is not in the bible but that the lord hands michael the trump of god whatever that looks like and michael the archangel wets his lips and says i've been waiting all my whole life for this and he gets ready he wets his lips and blows that trumpet i don't know if that's how it really happens but my point is this it will be an unmistakable event you will not have to wonder if the lord returns when he returns so don't be mistaken by walla walla jesus or any other jesus jesus john the revelator says behold he comes in the clouds and every eye will see him you can't miss it you won't have to wonder if that is jesus history has been full of wrong date setters history has been full of wrong false messiahs do not be deceived no one knows the day or the hour but his return will be unmistakable as a pastor it would actually break my heart to hear of anyone at fourth memorial church following a false client messiah that would break my heart second observation that we want to make is there are no excuses for being unprepared our ignorance of the timing of the second coming of christ provides no excuses for our unpreparedness our ignorance is emphasized look with me in verse 32 no one knows verse 33 but uh for you do not know the time or the hour you will come and then in verse 35 do not for you do not know when the messiah so the our ignorance is emphasized in this text but our ignorance of his timing may be emphasized but it does not give us an excuse to be unprepared look how many times the phrase for stay awake is emphasized verse 34 stay awake verse 35 stay awake and then lastly concluding in 37 stay awake not knowing the master would return is no excuse for not being prepared when you go home the homework for this week and i i truly mean for you to do this i would like for everyone to read Matthew chapter 25

Matthew chapter 25 you will read a parable of the virgins there are 10 uh wise and 10 foolish virgins and you'll read and in that chapter you will chapter uh Matthew chapter 25 this is going to be in found in verses one through 13 is this parable it is a very common Jewish setting of a wedding wedding celebrations uh would go on for a week about a week everyone in the wedding party knew that it was the responsibility of them to be ready to accompany the bridegroom when he comes and accompany him to his bride and in that parable there's a phrase that is that is uh that would kind of bring tension to the story it says and there was uh there was a delay it's mentioned in verse five that the master was delayed or the bridegroom was delayed and there adds the tension and so some of the virgins went out and lit their lamps prematurely and ran out of oil and then they were the foolish ones and the and they the the wise one still had oil when actually the bridegroom returned or came and in verse 12 it's sad there's a finality to the statement of those foolish virgins who had spent their oil already and tried to get some from the wise virgins who had not yet spent their oil and and he says to the foolish virgins i i never knew you who want to come into the to the celebration he says i i'm sorry the door remains closed i i never knew you and and then and then verse 13 that that parable concludes with this watch therefore for you do not neither know the day nor the hour there is no excuse for being unprepared being ignorant of the time where the hour is no excuse for not being ready when he does return you cannot live on borrowed faith this is important there's a finality to that statement i'm sorry i never knew you you can't come and enjoy the wedding party with me and my guests there's a finality to that statement and you cannot live on borrowed faith meaning if you grew up going to church maybe your spouse knows the lord and you accompanied your spouse in coming to the church and you think because i'm married to this person and i know about god but i've never placed my faith in him believing in his life death and resurrection maybe i'll go to heaven too that is not true the bible does not teach that you cannot live on borrowed faith second to those of us who are in christ for those who are in here who have placed their faith in christ and have believed in his life death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin if the lord were to return right now would he be pleased is there a relationship you are in that you need to terminate that it is sinful is there a besetting sin that you are caught up in and you need to confess to another and seek help are you harboring unforgiveness who is your disciple are you abiding in christ in his word and prayer faithfully are you abiding in him are you abounding in the work of the lord are you prepared if he were to return today we do not know the day or the hour but we do expect but we are to be busy about what he expects us to do which brings me to our third point

ignorance serves as an incentive look with me in verse 34 it says it is like a man going to a journey and when he leaves home he puts his servants in charge each with his work each servant with his work and commands the doorkeeper stay awake ignorance is not an excuse it is an incentive i grew up in a church that emphasized the return of the lord which i am grateful for and yet uh and i have amassed several books myself on this topic and i have read much yet i i want to say there it can be an unhealthy preoccupation of the lord's return and i i have found two kinds of groups of people that i want to serve as a caution and then i want to get into some other things two cautionary words some i have found uh can become agitated that is they're like a cat on a hot tin roof they are jumping around not investing anywhere deeply but they are a frenzy of service for the lord they are going to church they are only going to churches who place great emphasis on this as well so there's an agitated christian who's just busy for the lord everywhere but not investing deeply anywhere second there's a tendency to become isolated that is one can become isolated from the world i mean why vote if the lord is going to return what about the environment if the lord is going to return and so someone can become a little bit isolated from our responsibilities today with regard to the world in which we live in and so it's not healthy to become agitated just busy for the lord it's not just it's not healthy to become isolated when we consider the return of the lord he has not called us to be agitated frenzied about ministry work or become isolated he has said in verse 34 when he leaves home he puts his servants in charge each with his work the meaning of the parable is obvious Jesus is the one who the master who goes on a long journey and he puts his servants in charge who are the servants his disciples his believers and the work is the things that he has called us to do as believers in Christ each with his own work and each one's work is different your work is going to be different than mine mine is going to be different than yours you have a responsibility that may be separate and distinct and different than mine and this is what i love about the lord is that there's no room for comparison he has given you something to do but he has called us all to do some things in common so what does he expect of us let's just talk about a few commands that are given to all of us clearly in scripture we are called all of us to make disciples it is why the mission statement of our church is to make disciples who are transformed by the gospel for the glory of God all of us are called to make disciples it's not just something we do at church it's what all of us are called to do when Jesus said in Matthew 28 18 through 20 says all authority has been given to me on heaven and earth go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son Holy Spirit teaching them to obey all that i've commanded you and lo i am with you always even to the end of the age we are to make disciples so who are you depositing truth into and using your influence to cause them

unto maturity under God's authority and his leadership who are you to be teaching his commands who are you spiritually maturing as a result of your influence who are you discipling the second question or expectation is to proclaim the gospel when the disciples are questioning Lord is it at this time that you are going to return and he responds in this way in Acts 1:8 he says but you will receive power this concern about when i will come and restore the kingdom to israel is not what i'm going to respond to i'm going to respond with what i need you to be busy about right now and he says this but you will receive power by the Holy Spirit when he comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem Judea Samaria in the ends of the earth so who are you actively sharing the gospel with that does not know the Lord who is that and do we have the gospel easy on our lips meaning his his life his sinless life his death for sin his resurrection conquering sin and death are those things easy on your lips do you know the gospel well thirdly we're called to abide with Christ all of us are i want to talk about spiritual disciplines because it is the means by which we abide with Christ and when i say spiritual disciplines we need to understand the purpose of them the purpose is to know the Lord it is the means by which the Lord has reveals himself so um let i'll get into these a little more specifically but spiritual disciplines are the practice or habits of God's people since biblical times so these things are just the practice of God's people throughout God's word i appreciate Don Whitney's help in this because he he writes about attributes of spiritual disciplines because he would say this he he says they're both personal and they're corporate for example we pray privately but we also pray corporately they're both um they're both personal and they're corporate also think about God's word we read God's word personally but Paul says to Timothy give attention to the public reading of

God's word that's something we're supposed to do corporately as well it's not just personal it's corporate so spiritual disciplines are personal they're corporate they're also about doing and being they're both doing and their being and let me explain they are both activities doing and being reading the bible fasting worship ministry and service giving the aim of doing spiritual disciplines isn't to check a box but it's becoming more like christ it is becoming more mature the aim is always who you are becoming not merely doing but it often begins with doing so it's both doing and being thirdly is that discipline modeled in the bible is it the practice of the bible is it the practice of God's people why is this important virtually anything uh if if you don't um keep yourself confined to is this practice found in God's word then anything has been labeled a spiritual discipline for example i've heard people say uh i gardening gardening is a spiritual discipline or exercise um these can be spiritual disciplines but those are not necessarily things that have historically been said to be true of God's people throughout all of God's time now they may be enriching personal things that you can do that you can commune with the Lord with but that would not say that's a spiritual discipline the problem is that the leaves us to determine what is best for our spiritual health and our maturity rather than accepting those things that God has revealed in scripture as a means of experiencing God and growing in christ likeness what do we see modeled in scripture reading the bible reading God's word prayer assembling with other believers fasting meditating on God's word giving and there are others but those are the primaries thirdly or fourthly is that discipline promoted in scriptures this helps us determine uh what is good for spiritual maturity and godliness and progressing in holiness so for example second timothy three reads this all scripture is breathed out by God and it is profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work equipped for every good work including and pursuing the purpose of godliness the good work of growing in christ likeness so scriptures are sufficient for that so what is promoted in scripture above all the other spiritual disciplines i would say God's word and prayer these are the two chief spiritual disciplines because they're promoted in scripture often more than the others fifthly are they derived from the gospel spiritual disciplines is that which are derived from the gospel not divorced from the gospel they are rightly practiced the spiritual disciplines take us deeper into the glories of the gospel of Jesus Christ not away from it as though as we have moved on to some advanced level of Christianity this is one of the criticisms i have about the emergent church movement of recent years lastly it means it's not an end the end that is the purpose of practicing the disciplines in godliness we are we are to as paul we were told Paul wrote to Timothy says this

[36 : 05] to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness so we are not godly just because we practice spiritual disciplines that's what the great air of the Pharisees was they felt by doing things they were godly no they are means of godliness there there is no shortcut rightly motivated they are the means of godliness i know a few ladies here in the church who visit one another one travels to see the other across town and they sit together and they recite memory verses to one another it's the whole purpose of the visit they sit across from each other and they recite verses that they're trying to memorize internalizing god's word in their heart i think that's beautiful and this is one of the cards that i'm working on right now first Peter 2 22 through 25 i don't quite yet have it memorized but i'm working on this verse these verses even as we speak what i'm spend time in god's word pray and if you want some help with that you see that's that's not a discipline of my life regularly and consistently do what these two ladies do see let's let's come up with a reading plan you let's read a chapter a week together or a chapter a day and then we'll have seven chapters read by the end of the week let's get together and let's talk about what we what we've read that's sometimes helpful both in account of for accountability and for personal growth to learn to what it is it like to grow in spiritual maturity and godliness jesus says in john 15 5 i am the vine you are the branches whoever abides in me and i am him it is he who bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing jesus doesn't want his people to be just full of a flurry of activity but making disciples and proclaiming the gospel he desires of us to be fruitful fruitful and it takes abiding we abide with christ through the spiritual disciplines and if you want some help or tools with that would you come see me afterward i'd love to help get you started so perhaps it's been some time since you have read god's word faithfully may i encourage you to begin today ask a friend can you get together recite memory verses pray together with a friend you will not be disappointed you will not be disappointed last our fourth observation that we make of our text today is that the there is the certainty of the lord's return we may be ignorant of the proximity how close it is but we are not ignorant concerning the certainty of his return ignorance of his proximity is planned we are not to know the day or the hour but knowledge of his certainty is equally planned we are to know that he will return verse 33 says but when the time will come verse 35 will come and so verse 37 stay awake there is a certainty of his return you may not know the day or the hour none of us do but we know he will return his return is without question the implications are without question this is not a passage that is called to us to contemplate it is a it is a passage that is meant to call the disciples to action notice who his first original audience was if you look back in verse three chapter mark mark chapter 13 verse 3 and he sat on the mount of olives opposite of the temple peter james and john and andrew asked him privately tell us when these things will be and what will be the sign

and all the things that are about to be accomplished these they asked two questions but notice that there's only four of them sitting there on the mount of olives but but notice verse 37 he says but what i say to you i say to all stay awake so i'm not just talking to you for who are in my immediate audience the ones who are asking me this question i'm not just speaking to you for to stay awake what i'm saying to you about the certainty of my return i am going to return and i'm saying that to all of us stay awake so this is a call to actions satan's favorite words are tomorrow i will tomorrow i will place my faith in christ tomorrow i will get out of this sinful relationship tomorrow i will begin reading my bible faithfully tomorrow i will be faithful to the lord tomorrow i will forgive that individual tomorrow i will be faithful to begin to attend a local church again tomorrow i will begin to live a generous lifestyle are we more like the sleepy servant it says lest he come suddenly and find you asleep are you asleep lazy apathetic indifferent the same event this christ's return will cause some to be in anguish the return of the lord will call was cause anguish to the foolish anguish for the lazy apathetic indifferent sleepy servant but that same event the return of the lord that brought anguish to the fool will bring joy to the wise and oh i want to be in that group and i want us as fourth memorial church to be in the group of the wise who receive the return of the lord prepared eager ready so let me pray father thank you that we can always go home and read the bible research these things and see if it is so lord i pray for those who are here who have never bowed their knee to you and believed in you for their own sake i pray that today would be a day of salvation for one who may say lord today i place my faith and trust in you forgive me of my sin i believe in your life and death for sin and resurrection for the forgiveness of my sin and for those of us who are in christ here today lord i pray this is would be this would have its intended end as you said it in the first century it would be a call to action that there would be things in each of our lives where you say lord i want to be more faithful in this area or i commit this thing to you i will get out of this sin for relationship i will renew myself to a discipline that used to be more of a habit when you return i want that event to be joyful to me thank you lord and it's in your name jesus we pray amen