

Last Sunday of the Church Year 2018

Mark 13: Jesus our Waking

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³² “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵ **Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—** ³⁶ **lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.** ³⁷ **And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.**”¹

In the Name of Jesus.

Advent begins next Sunday. And THESE sorts of plain hymns:

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 13:24–37). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

**The night will soon be ending; The dawn cannot be far.
Let songs of praise ascending Now greet the Morning Star!
All you whom darkness frightens With guilt or grief or pain,
God's radiant Star now brightens And bids you sing again.**

For WHAT does Jesus bid us ‘Stay awake! Watch! Keep Guard!’ For HIM! For the One Who took the little girl by the hand and said, ‘Talitha! Quum!’ ‘Little girl! Rise!’ And then, though EVERYONE ELSE was talking about her in hushed tones of death, and weeping and wailing—she listened to what HE said to her: she got up; and she walked around like only the wonder that is a twelve year old girl can walk around. And He commanded her parents to give her something to eat.

For The One Who that same week as these dire words of tribulation and darkness were spoken, asked: ‘Simon? Are you asleep? Could you not watch; could you not be on guard; could you not STAY AWAKE, even one little hour this night? Rise; let us be going; my betrayer is at hand!’

Watch! Be on guard! Stay awake—THE GOSPEL CALLS OUT!!!—

For the One Who cried out and breathed His last, at the ninth hour—that’s about three in the afternoon by our clocks! The DAY noon turned to midnight and His words began to come about.

The disciples had asked HIM about the destruction of the Temple building, and Jerusalem, and the exile of the Jews; AND the end: of the world, of time, of their precious, little lives. ‘WHEN will this happen and WHAT will be the SIGN?!’

While, the whole time, there were sitting on the Mount of Olives—where He will return!—sitting there with HIM!

Frustration breaks through with the signs at this time about the REASON for the SEASON: Mary’s Boy’s Birthday! Whom our young man has informed us is on a HOLIDAY this year! Your poor pastor feels the frustration too—thanks to my doctor prescribing feelings for me!

But Jesus birthday celebration—coinciding with CHRISTMAS this year!—what does brother Charlie say? ‘Plenty of OPPORTUNITIES!’

‘What I say to Y’ALL I say to ALL Y’ALL!—oh, I LOVE living in Louisiana!—to you, to y’all, to ALL: the Kingdom of God HAS arrived and WILL appear with the clouds of heaven, with the mighty angels, and with great power and glory—

And you, we all, all men, are invited to look forward to THAT, to THEN, to HIM!

For as the Gospel according to Saint Mark repeats for sixteen chapters, in many and various ways: ‘The healthy do not need a

doctor! The SICK need a doctor! I have NOT COME—and I will NOT COME AGAIN!—for those who WOW the demands of the LAW! I have come for the those with guilt and grief and pain. Yes, that the devil and the world cause them. But most of all: for those who get guilt and grief and pain from their own flesh!’

**Yet nights will bring their sadness And rob our hearts of peace,
And sin in all its madness Around us may increase.
But now one Star is beaming Whose rays have pierced the
night:
God comes for our redeeming From sin’s oppressive might.**

**God dwells with us in darkness And makes the night as day;
Yet we resist the brightness And turn from God away.
But grace does not forsake us, However far we run.
God claims us still as children Through Mary’s infant Son.**

It’s a bold move, my dear ones: but Jesus made the move!

He GUARANTEES us, and all, that EVERYTHING that goes on in this darkness—and makes it darker still—is a sign: for us, for all! Branches becoming tender and leaves beginning to shoot out! Summer is near then. He is near: NOW! And signaled as near, at the door, AT each act of violence against us—OH, Lord have mercy! And AT each act of violence against Him, each other, the world, from OUR lips and OUR hearts. Our hands? Our feet? Our ALL?

He, our King coming soon, is bolder STILL! Not only does He pledge HIMSELF and His pardon and death-cancelling as the reason for ALL SEASONS, ALL times, ALL darkness—as precursor to HIS light!---

After His resurrection, He did not yet think the Gospel was little enough, despised enough. So, what did He give the Church to keep us awake and watchful and on guard until the End, our End? ‘He who believes and is baptized will be saved!’

They roared with dark laughter when He was mocked as King on the cross: NO subjects; NO power; NO crown—unless you count thorns. No GOD! ‘O, God! Why forsake ME? Of ALL men?!’

Since that day, our evil insides—and those who are NOT as sick as you and I are; that’s why they’re not here with us today!—our whole darkness in which we feel too much AT HOME despises, thinks little, of a little bit of water and a Word that is God’s Name. Or a little bit of bread and wine, which boasts what NO man’s OLD man can ever GET...

You are the baptized, dear saints of God. I’ve got no other assurance that YOU are ready for Him to come with great power and glory, with mighty angels, on the clouds of heaven.

How did THAT happen? How did THIS MAN, your lousy preacher, end up with NOTHING to add to the gift Christ gave to raise His elect? Y’all must be doing some mighty praying!

Dark news? You have been baptized at Jesus' mandate! So, dark news is a note from heaven from your King: On my way!

Dark thoughts plague you? Guilt? Heaven thinks you are cleaner than you'll ever need to be! Heaven tore open the day Jesus was baptized with sinners. Heaven was overjoyed the day YOU were baptized too!

Does the cold, dark grave and the unknowns of death scare you? They scare ME plenty! NOT just the ending of my practiced schemes and politicking. But what each man's conscience knows: dying ain't the problem! The Living GOD is the problem!

So the dark world will keep on stumbling around, preparing for something they do not even know is coming or how to be at peace with it as it comes!

But not only are you and I READY by Christ's Spirit for that day of SELECTION—confident, despite what all the polls say!

We have been made bold, like our bold, little King, to cry out and DEMAND from Heaven, from Him, the hurry the whole thing up!

Come! Not in terror, as the King of kings,
But kind and good with healing in thy wings,
Tears for all woe, a heart for ev'ry plea.
Come, Friend of sinners, thus, abide with me!
In the Name of Jesus. Amen.