

08.15.10 / Mark 13

Passage Insight

Mark 13 could potentially sound rather frightening at first read, but as we'll see, it's a passage full of hope. At the outset of the passage, one of Jesus' disciples is focused on the beauty of the buildings and stones of Jerusalem, and Jesus is quick to remind them that those structures are temporary and will not remain beautiful (or even existent) forever. When asked when the destruction will take place, Jesus doesn't directly answer the question, but instead points his disciples to the truth and reminds them to keep their eyes solely on Him. In these statements Jesus makes it plain that for those whose eyes are on anything but the Lord, only deception awaits. While this may seem like doom and gloom, the reality is that it's extremely hopeful. The fact is that we don't even know what we truly need (Romans 8:26-30). This is hopeful, however, because Jesus, who is one with the Father and His Spirit, is fully able to do all that needs to be done, more than we can even ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). In other words, the work doesn't fall on us, and neither does the knowing of what's to come or when.

There will be much persecution for those who follow Christ (Mark 13:12). But there is hope even in this, as Jesus is enough for those who love Him. While following Christ costs us everything (Luke 14:33), what we gain is far greater (Philippians 3:8-11) in that we obtain a righteousness that we could not have otherwise gained and in so doing, gain Christ Himself, who now lives in us. So, even in the mention of suffering, there is hope for those of us who are in Christ (Romans 5:3-5).

This passage does not only address the end times. It's incredibly applicable in our day to day, as it calls us to seek and trust in Christ alone for all good things, all provision, and all sustenance, ALL THE TIME, reminding us that focusing on anything else is a stray path. We don't know the future and are not supposed to (Mark 13:32). Instead, we are to trust solely in the Lord and in the exercise of HIS will (Matthew 6:10; James 4:13-17), not our own. While we are encouraged to work and to think ahead (Proverbs 6:6-11), we are also called to request from God DAILY bread (Matthew 6:11), recognizing that ultimately we can do nothing to sustain or provide for ourselves. Whatever fear or pride or other sin that would drive us to worry about our earthly provision is the same sin that would drive us to miss the heart of this passage: that God alone is to be the focal point of our life, whether that brings pain or pleasure, hardship or ease, for He alone knows all things and their timing.

Jesus created us and uniquely made us with intent; we did not control this process (Psalm 139:13-16; Colossians 1:16). We continue to have life because of God's sustenance (Psalm 3:5; Colossians 1:17), and our salvation is only ours now because it first belongs to God and He has given it to us as a gift of mercy (Psalm 3:8). What else could we possibly focus on that could hold a candle to the light of our God who made us, sustains us, and has saved us? NOTHING. To Him be all the glory and power forever.

Application Questions**All Eyes on Jesus**

- 1) For those whose eyes are on anything but Jesus, there is only deception and ultimately destruction. Where are your eyes on the things of this world rather than on Him?
- 2) Where are your eyes on yourself rather than on Jesus?

- 3) What lies are you believing that make these things or even you yourself seem like a better focal point than Jesus?
- 4) What truth about who Jesus is replaces these lies (be specific)?

Sin in the Way

- 1) Where does your fear and pride lead you to think you can or should seek to meet your own needs in your own timing?
- 2) If you trust yourself, you're failing to believe some truth about Jesus. What truth about Him are you failing to believe?
- 3) Jesus longs to free you from this deception of self-trust. Confess and pray with your group about this.

Worrying About the Future

- 1) What are you worried or anxious about when you think of the future?
- 2) Who are you trusting to know your needs?
- 3) What does Jesus have to say about how and when your needs are met?
- 4) Who in your group can recognize when you're worried or anxious about the future and can then point you to Jesus and the truth of His provision in those moments?

Sources

- Prayer