

Gospel of Matthew - The End

Matthew 24:29-44; Mark 13:32-37

Icebreaker: How did you practice BLESS this week?

Discussion: For group discussion to be fruitful and engaging for everyone in your group, make sure that your discussion groups are not larger than 4 people. If possible, break up into groups of 2 or 3.

Larger Group: (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone
- Introduce the direction for the evening.
 - Read Mark 13:32-37 highlight the following
 - The starting place of this conversation is that Jesus is clear that we will not know when he is coming back and we are not to grow apathetic toward that unknown day.
 - Our goal is to stay alert and eagerly anticipate the Lord's return.
 - "So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." -- Hebrews 9:28
- Prepare to break into smaller groups

Smaller Groups (20-25 minutes) Give the following instructions and break into small groups (2-3 people).

Have someone read Matthew 24:36, 42-44. Jesus is warning us against being led astray by false teaching and false teachers who would distract us from devotion to Him. His warning also insists that we not grow apathetic and lose heart.

- What are some ways that you have been led astray and distracted from Jesus by an over emphasis on the end times?
- What are some ways that you have found yourself becoming apathetic about Christ's return?
- How has over emphasis or under emphasis on Christ's return affected your compassion for others?
- How has over emphasis or under emphasis on Christ's return affected your passion for Jesus?

Have someone read Mark 13:24-27. Jesus is coming back in clouds with power and glory. This imagery reminds us of God's glory leading Israel and filling the temple (Exodus 13:21-22; 2 Chronicles 7:1). God's presence eliminates evil and injustice. Christ's return means that His justice will right all wrongs!

- What are some ways that Christ's return motivates and encourages you to act with compassion toward others?
- What does the idea of Christ's return stir you toward working for justice in our

community?

- What are some ways that Christ's return motivates you toward personal holiness?
- How does the idea of Christ's return stir you to renounce ungodliness and live uprightly in the here and now (Titus 2:11-14)?

Have someone read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. Paul reminds the church in Thessalonica that we are to encourage one another by reminding one another of Christ's return.

- How can we help one another to stay alert and keep the return of Christ as an encouraging reminder to each other?

Larger Group:

Return to larger group to give summary of your discussion in smaller groups (5-10 minutes)

How does acknowledging your limitations, vulnerabilities and weaknesses help you communicate the gospel to your friends and family?

Allow time to pray for the lost, end with B.L.E.S.S. (10-15 minutes)

Where are group members in the B.L.E.S.S. process? Model for them how to answer briefly, for example:

"I'm praying for _____".

"I have been having good conversations with _____". "I'm having lunch with _____ on _____ (day of the week)."

Closing prayer - (2-5-minutes)