

Series - On Your Mark!

Date/s - 14 Oct 2018

Topic - The Olivet Discourse (Mark 13)

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

**Welcome** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html> < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs like "The Lion And The Lamb", "In Christ Alone", "How Great You Are" or "Jesus I Come".

**Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Reflect on the sovereignty and grace of God as we move into the end times;
2. Commit to keep watch and stay awake for Christ's return.

**Word** [45 min]

Pastor Ernie preached on the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13:1-35).

Jesus preached on the Mount of Olives of the signs to come when His disciples asked questions about the timing for the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and on the second coming of Christ and the end of the age. At that time, the temple was still in construction. The Temple was built not to glorify God, but out of a desire by King Herod to gain favour with the Jews. The Temple took many years to complete and it was a beautiful temple but it was destroyed in 3 years after its completion.

**Signs of the Destruction of the Temple**

1. False Christs (v5-6): Unnamed Egyptian (58 A.D.), Theudas (60 A.D.) and Ben Judah (66 A.D).
2. Wars, Famines, Earthquakes (v7-8):
  - Jewish-Roman War: 1.1M Jewish Deaths (mainly due to sickness and hunger) during six-month Roman siege, Christians fled to Pella based on Christ's warning in Mark 13
  - Famine (Acts 11:27) – the famine was so great that even the church as far away as in Corinth participated in relief efforts (1 Corinthians 16:1-5, Romans 15:25-28).
  - Earthquakes (reported by Josephus – AD 66, Tacitus – AD 51 and other earthquakes reported in AD 47, 51, 60, 62 and 66)
3. Tribulations - Persecution of Believers (v5-6 – Persecution of Jews). Types of tribulations include religious, political, domestic and universal.
4. Abomination of Desolation (v14-20) – the defiling of the Temple (prophecy based on Daniel 9-11) and AD70 Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple)
5. Cosmic Disturbance (v 24-27: possibly Mount Vesuvius Eruption)

In essence, every sign that Jesus Christ mentioned in Mark 13 came to past! Ps Ernie then preached that Mark 13 also points to a future fulfilment at the end of the age and of Christ's return (see Joel 2:28-31). The same signs that forestall the destruction of the Temple will also happen before the end of the age.

What is the right posture for Christians to have?

1. No one knows the day and the hour (v. 32)
2. Look for the signs that really matter – not to be ruffled by rumours
3. Watch (v. 33)
4. Stay awake (v. 35)

We must not be “weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life” – see Luke 21:34.  
What is of this world will not stand, only God’s Word will be eternal – see Matthew 24:35.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Mark 13:1-35. What does the passage tell you about God’s grace and sovereignty?** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A question for the cell to look at the passage and recap what was preached. Leaders can ask members to share what are our takeaways from the sermon or our thoughts as we read the passage. Here are some articles leaders may wish to refer to: <https://www.gty.org/library/study-guides/40-5144/signs-of-christs-return> or <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/making-sense-olivet-discourse/>

The important points are:

(a) God keeps His promises, His eternal kingdom will come and His promises are true – see Matthew 4:17 and Zechariah 13:1; and

(b) God’s is sovereign – see Matthew 24:2. God is in full control of everything that happens. The key is trusting in God’s sovereignty and His promise that “all things work together for the good of those who love God” – see Romans 8:28.

2. **All the signs Jesus pointed out came to pass and the early Christians were able to escape to Pella because they paid attention and listened to the signs. How can we do the same in our present day and age?** [15 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A relate and reflect question for members to think and share about. Leaders can ask members to think about how is our individual heart’s posture towards the end times and how we respond in terms of how we react. Leaders can use a scale to ask members to gauge where we are with respect to end-times “prophecies” – Do we react quickly? Are we balanced? Are we apathetic? Ask members to share from there. Leaders can then wrap up the discussion using the pointers shared by Ps Ernie on how Christians can have a right perspective or posture with regards to the end-times prophecies.

3. **What are the struggles we face that act as a distraction for us to keep watch? How do you overcome them or remind yourself to keep watch?** [15 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A reflect and response question for members to share about the struggles we face. Are we over confident in our standing as Christians? Are we lazy? Do we fear disapprovals of others and putting what others think of us ahead of what God’s Word says? Do we go for what is convenient or comfortable?

Leaders can also tweak the question to ask members about the struggles we may face in reaching out to the lost. The Cell can then pray about these struggles and for God to restore us into the right posture with

Him.

**Works** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. All RiverLifers have a correct heart posture towards the end times, being watchful & stay awake.

**Announcements****1. Combined Filipino Service**

Sun, 21 Oct | 2pm | Grace Chapel

A Combined Filipino Service will be held on 21 Oct to gather all RiverLife Filipinos for a time of bridging and fellowship. It will be a time for Filipinos in RiverLife to connect with one another and to welcome new people into their midst. All are encouraged to bring their Filipino friends or employees for this service.

**2. For Men Only "How Can I Be A Good Father"**

Sat, 17 Nov | 2-5pm | Victory Chapel

As fathers, we often ask ourselves where have we failed? Why are our children not responding to us? In what ways are we doing well? How can we be good fathers? Come and hear Ps Benny Ho share his heart on this important matter to all men, fathers and would-be-fathers.

Men's Ministry will be organizing a Men's Fellowship Talk with Ps Benny Ho followed by dinner provided in the atrium till 7pm. Registration is free, with a collection of freewill offering during the seminar. Those interested to attend, can register on Eventbrite at <https://bit.ly/2yaPf5W>.

**Church Vision Statement:**

"A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father's glory from generation to generation."