

Title: STAY AWAKE, MARK 13:24-37  
(Chatham, NJ; 11/27/11, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis]

Theme: Staying awake means keeping one's faith alive and active during high times as well as low times when temptations to be lazy can sometimes be the greatest.

Purpose: To inspire alertness by reflecting not only on the words of Christ about his return but also by seeing the alert, faithful behavior of some during trying times.

Introduction:

1. Jesus tells his followers to "stay awake." (Mark 13:37)
2. Staying awake means being faithful under all circumstances.
3. Times of heightened danger elicit alert behavior, but times of boredom and apparent lack of danger demand the same alertness though it may take more energy to do so.
4. Daniel had developed a habit of prayer when the moments didn't press him hard, and when the moment of threat came, he continued what he had been disciplined to do.
5. Esther had to be pressed into service but took up watch in order to preserve her people.
6. The prophets of old spoke about the promises of God through the same ups and downs of life though the salvation predicted didn't happen for hundreds of years.
7. They and many others remained watchful

I. Obadiah, Faithful and Alert (1 Kings 18) – Put yourself in his position

A. Beginnings

1. You are an important official in a corrupt government
2. The king has turned to lawlessness and doesn't adhere to the country's constitution and laws
3. His wife has encouraged such behavior and she is treacherous and ruthless
4. You have watched society around you turn to immorality and idolatry
5. You have remained faithful and awake to your duties to God
6. Yet your faithfulness has been hidden, but for the sake of a small band of prophets, you have found a way to sustain them (essentially you are betraying the policy of a corrupt administration)
7. You are Obadiah, the ruler of Ahab's household affairs (1 Kings 18:3-4)

B. Conflict

1. During famine, you and your master have set out to find water and food for the livestock, 18:5-6
2. You are confronted by Elijah, the man your master considers an enemy of the state, but you secretly have taken his side
3. You fear that Elijah will not show up and that Ahab will take it out on you
4. You remind Elijah that you have kept some prophets of the Lord safe by hiding them and sneaking food to them
5. A confrontation between your way of life and that of the king (and most of the society) is coming to a head
6. Are you willing to be faithful no matter what?
7. The meeting between Elijah, Ahab, and the prophets of Baal is set

II. A Man on a Journey: Servants, Faithful and Awake (Mark 13:33-37)

A. The master leaves on a journey

1. In those days a journey couldn't be shortened by a plane trip back home
2. The servants are put in charge of the house
3. The story doesn't focus on the master (prince, king, etc) and his exploits

B. This story centers on the servants

1. Servants and the idea of service takes center stage in Christianity
2. Jesus washes the disciples' feet to drive home the image of being a servant
3. Servants are privy to Christ's first miracle (John 2:9)
4. We only do our duty, Luke 17:7-10
5. When Paul says, "Woe to me if I don't preach the Gospel," he reflected his sense of being a responsible servant to what God had given him to do
6. Servants and service become the identity of who the Christian is and what he does

### III. The Master Will Return

- A. The servants in charge
  1. They are not the owners
  2. They care for the property and affairs of the master
  3. It could be that he might send them information to guide them
- B. Each has an assigned task ("each with his work," 34)
  1. Tasks were divided up
  2. None was more important than another
  3. Each was expected to fulfill their role
- C. Stay awake (33, 35, 37)
  1. A job given first to the doorkeeper
  2. But all the servants had to stay awake
  3. And all disciples must stay awake (37)
  4. There would be moments of heightened danger (like with Obadiah) and moments of boredom or even despair
  5. Can you stay awake in times of despair?
- D. Assurances of the master's coming
  1. Jesus assures the disciples that he will return
  2. However, he will likely be delayed
  3. And no one will know the time for sure

### Conclusion:

1. The prophets knew the Messiah was coming.
2. John, the Baptist, knew he was coming.
3. We know that he has come and will come again.
4. Are you an Obadiah or a sleepy doorkeeper?
5. Do your work. Stay awake.
6. Join the work party by obeying the Gospel.