

**Message.**

The certainty of Christ's return calls for a life of spiritual alertness and steady obedience rather than speculative fear or anxiety. While historical and future interpretations of biblical tribulation vary, the central command remains for believers to stay awake and avoid the spiritual drift that accompanies the assumption of a delayed master. True watchfulness is defined by everyday faithfulness—repenting quickly, serving others, and resisting apathy—rather than decoding headlines or building timelines. Because the outcome of history is secured by the Gospel, believers can trade the turbulence of the world for an urgency rooted in Christ's reigning power.

*Gospel security produces watchful faithfulness, not fearful panic. #bccBIGidea*

**Prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

Only You, Lord, know what the future holds. You have taken care of all the details. You gave us this life to live, You repaired the broken relationship between You and Your creation, and You gifted Your Spirit to those who believe. I can trust You to handle the future, so I will not worry. I will stay true and obedient to Your commands for this life.

Amen.

**Scripture.**

Matthew 24:15-51

**Engage.**

- In Matthew 24:15-31, Jesus uses intense imagery like the "abomination of desolation" and cosmic shifts. How does the sermon's focus on "staying awake" rather than "speculating" change the way you read these difficult prophetic verses?
- Jesus warns of deception and tribulation occurring before His return. In what specific ways do you see the "turbulence" Jesus promised manifesting in our world today, and how does His warning prepare you for it?
- According to verses 36-44, the timing of Christ's return is intentionally "blurry." If watchfulness is not about decoding headlines or "fear-scrolling," what does a life of "spiritual alertness" actually look like in your daily routine?
- In the parable of the two servants (vv. 45-51), the wicked servant's failure began with the thought, "My master is delayed." Why is the assumption of a delay more dangerous to your faith than the threat of outward trial or tribulation?
- Jesus contrasts the faithful servant who "keeps feeding the household" with the one who becomes abusive or careless. What are the specific "assignments" or people God has placed in your care that require your steady faithfulness right now?
- Gospel security produces watchful faithfulness, not fearful panic. Looking at the promise of Christ coming in power (vv. 30-31), how does the certainty of the outcome help you trade your anxiety for urgency?

**Day 1: The "Right Now" Assignment****Scripture Focus:** Matthew 24:45-46**The Core Idea:** Staying "awake" for Jesus isn't about staring at the sky; it's about doing what He asked us to do right here.

- **The Object Lesson:** Give your child a small task (like folding a few towels or setting the table) but tell them you are going to leave the room and you won't say when you're coming back.
- **The Discussion:** When you return, ask: "Did it matter exactly *when* I walked through the door, or did it matter what you were doing when I got there?"
- **The Point:** Jesus is like the Master in the story. He hasn't told us the exact "day or hour" He's coming back because He wants us to be found busy loving people and obeying Him every single day.
- **Prayer:** "Lord, help us stay focused on the jobs you've given us today—like being kind to our siblings and honest with our words."

**Day 2: Don't Be a "Drifter"****Scripture Focus:** Matthew 24:48-49**The Core Idea:** When we think Jesus is taking a "long time," we can accidentally start acting like He's never coming back.

- **The Object Lesson:** Put a paper boat (or a toy) in a sink or tub of water. Use your hand to create a very slow, tiny current. Point out how the boat doesn't crash suddenly; it just slowly "drifts" away from the center.
- **The Discussion:** The "wicked servant" in the Bible started drifting because he thought, "My master is delayed." He started being mean to others and stopped caring. What are some small ways we "drift" away from being like Jesus when we get bored or distracted?
- **The Point:** Staying awake means checking our hearts every day to make sure we haven't drifted into being unkind or lazy.
- **Prayer:** "Jesus, keep our hearts close to You so we don't drift into being selfish or uncaring."

**Day 3: Security, Not Scare-ity****Scripture Focus:** Matthew 24:30-31**The Core Idea:** Jesus is coming back as a King to gather His family, so we don't have to be afraid of the "scary" news in the world.

- **The Object Lesson:** Find a picture of a shepherd gathering sheep or a lighthouse in a storm.
- **The Discussion:** Jesus talks about "tribulation" and "shaking heavens." That sounds a bit scary! But look at verse 31: He sends angels to *gather* His people. If you are on Jesus' team, is His return a scary thing or a happy thing?
- **The Point:** We don't watch the news to be afraid; we watch the world and remember that Jesus is the King who is in total control. Our "Gospel Security" means we are safe in His hands no matter what.
- **Prayer:** "Thank You, Jesus, that You are the King and You are coming back for us. Help us live with joy instead of fear."

**Commit to Memory:**

"Therefore stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

- Matthew 24:42 (ESV)