

Our new mission statement is: Building Bridges to Connect Everyone to the Dynamic Life in Christ. But what does being connected and living that life look like and feel like? This spring we will be going through the Book of Mark to discover what it means to live the Dynamic Life in Christ. These discussion guides will follow along with the sermon series by using passages from the book of Mark.

These guides will be organized using the acronym HEAR as a way to teach people to read the Bible. HEAR stands for **H**ighlight the passage, **E**xplain the passage, **A**pply the passage, and **R**espond to the passage.

Each week, there will be a page to print off for each member of your group. The printed sheet will have the Bible passage you'll discuss and some questions in the margins to guide them in examining those verses.

Additionally, there will be a leader's guide that will give you helpful notes on the passage (i.e. background information and definitions) as well as discussion questions to lead your group. These don't need to be printed for each member of your group.

These guides are designed to be discussed BEFORE the sermon, so the group can discuss the passage before the pastor shares his insights. However, they can just as easily be used after the weekend message.

Our hope is these tools will (a) help your group members learn to study/read their Bibles outside of the group and (b) give you a helpful outline for facilitating the group discussion. If you have comments or questions about the discussion guides, we'd love to hear your constructive feedback. Send your feedback to us at [groups@foresthill.org](mailto:groups@foresthill.org).

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### *How to Use This Discussion Guide*

- Print off the "Life Group Member Guide" for each member of your group – or email it to them in advance.
- Use the summary statement for each week to quickly understand the text's theme. You can use that as a reference point to help guide your discussion or bring it back if your group begins to get off topic.
- Use the prayer prompt at the end of each guide to help you close in prayer.

Additionally, here are some tips and guidelines to help you lead these discussions:

1. **Choose the questions that best fit your group and your time constraints.** There are a lot of questions in this guide and your group may not be able to discuss them all. That's okay! You don't have to ask all of them. Before your group begins, choose the questions that are most likely to help your group understand what God is saying in the text and how to apply it to their lives.
2. **Prepare for your group time by reading the passages and the notes in a study Bible.** A good study Bible can give you some insights into the passages and how they connect to the whole book or the whole story of the Bible.
3. **Begin every group meeting with prayer.** We can only understand and apply God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, invite the Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He says to His people.
4. **Keep the conversation focused on Scripture as much as possible.** Some people may want to bring in their opinions or continually refer to what the teaching pastor said during his message. This is helpful in small doses, but the goal of this discussion guide is to help you determine what God is saying in His Word. Encourage the group to continue to return to the Scripture. One way to do that is by saying, "That's a great insight! Where do you see that in the Scripture we're studying?"
5. **Encourage participation, but don't let anyone dominate.** Encourage everyone to share insights, ask questions, and read aloud. But don't allow any one person – even yourself, the leader – to monopolize the time. Some people are just unaware of themselves and how much they speak, so gently encourage them to listen and make space for others to talk.
6. **Help your group members to be specific in the application of Scripture.** It is easy to generalize when we talk about the Bible and how to apply it. So ask your group members specific questions – for example, "What part of the world do you sense God wants you to pray for? How will you do that? How will you make that a habit?"

We pray that you will hear God speak through Scripture and that His Spirit will move you to obey Him. The Word of God – the Bible – lets us know the God who loves us and saves us. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more immersed in His Word.

**Date of Sermon:** June 14

**Topic of Sermon:** Signs of the End

**Main Passage:** Mark 13:3-13, 23, 32-33

**BEFORE your group meeting:**

- Look up the main passage in a study Bible and read the study notes
- Print off or send the “Group Member Guide” (page 4) for your group members
- Review the “Group Member Guide” for yourself
- Have enough pens for each group member.

**Topic of Life Group Meeting** People living the Dynamic Life live with expectancy and an eternal perspective that informs how they move through life and its circumstances; they are alert and sober aware of the place of this life in the larger scope of the next

**Icebreakers (optional)**

- Do you know any first responder? How do they prepare to respond, and what is their mind set and routine while on call?

Leader’s Note: Introduce the next part of the group meeting. You can read this introduction or put it in your own words:

*“Today, we’re going to spend a few minutes studying the focal passage on our own before we discuss it as a group. I’ve printed out a copy of the Bible passage for you. There are some questions in the margins to help you. Spend most of your time on the Highlight and Explain questions. Feel free to mark up, underline or highlight the passage. I’m going to give us about 5 minutes to do this. Let me begin by praying that God will open our minds and hearts to His Word.”*

When you come back together, use the questions below to guide the discussion.

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**HIGHLIGHT** the Passage

- What key ideas, words or phrases stood out to you from the passage today? What is the significance of those?
- Did this passage raise any questions for you?
- How would you summarize this passage in your own words? Would anyone else add or emphasize something to that summary?

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**EXPLAIN** the Passage

- What are some things this passage revealed about people?
- What do the disciples want to know? (v 3-4). Do you also want to know the same thing?
- What is Jesus warning the disciples from? (v 5-6)
- Why does he tell them not to be alarmed and calls these events “the beginning of birth pains”? (v7-13)
- Who will be with them when the moment to testify comes?
- How would v13 encourage the disciples?
- According to v 32, when will the end of times come?
- How many times is Jesus calling them to be on guard and alert? Why do you think he does this?
- What are some things this passage revealed about God? His nature, His work, or His character?

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**APPLY** the Passage

- What truth from this passage do you need to cling to? What makes that truth significant to you?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to change in how you think, speak, or act?
- How does v13 encourage you today?
- Given the current events, where should our sight be fixed to experience a Dynamic Life in Christ?

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**RESPOND** to the Passage

- Finish your time in prayer, thanking God for the promise of salvation and the call to be on guard, asking him to help us be alert and sober aware of the place of this life in the larger scope of eternal life with Him.

## COMMENTARY NOTES ON THE MAIN PASSAGE

**Mark 13:1-37**

This great sermon by Jesus is commonly known as the Olivet Discourse because Jesus delivered it on the Mt. of Olives just east of the temple, across the Kidron Valley. Jesus' prediction of the coming destruction of the temple prompted a question from the disciples about the character of the end times. The remainder of the passage (Mar 13:5-37) is His response to their question as He describes His second coming at the end of the present age.

**Mark 13:3-4.** Only Mark, given to detail, mentions the names of the four disciples who questioned Jesus. They want to know about (1) chronology—the time of the fulfillment and (2) circumstances—the sign of the fulfillment. A third question about Jesus' coming is recorded in Mat 24:3. It is answered in Mar 13:24-37. Their question assumes that the temple's destruction will signal the end of the present age and the inauguration of the Messiah's reign. They wonder how near that event may be.

**Mark 13:5**

**Take heed.** This Greek word literally means "to see," but it was often used as it is here with the idea of "keep your eyes open," or "beware."

**Mark 13:6**

**I am He.** Many false prophets would come forward claiming to be messiahs and deliverers, offering themselves as the solution to the world's problems. Some would even claim to be Christ Himself. The number of false christs will increase as the end nears (cf. Mat 24:23-24).

**Mark 13:7**

**the end** .The consummation of the present age .

**Mark 13:8**

**the beginnings of sorrows.** The Greek word for "sorrows" means "birth pangs." The Lord was referring to the pain a woman experiences in childbirth. Birth pains signal the end of pregnancy. They are infrequent at first and gradually increase just before the child is born. Likewise, the signs of verses Mar 13:6-8 will be infrequent, relatively speaking, in the beginning and will escalate to massive and tragic proportions just before Christ's second coming.

**Mar 13:9** The admonition to "you must be on guard" introduces a new perspective in the account. While in the preceding verses attention was concentrated on convulsions throughout the Roman world, in verse Mar 13:9 it is focused upon the prospect of suffering for those who are addressed. The disciples will experience rejection and abuse because of their association with Jesus. His experience will become the cruel prototype of their own.

**Mark 13:10**

**first be preached to all the nations.** Before the end, there will be a worldwide proclamation of the gospel. This proclamation may even refer to the occasion when an angel will supernaturally proclaim the gospel throughout the world before God pours out His judgment at the end of the Tribulation (Rev 14:6-8).

**Mark 13:11-12**

The promise that the **Holy Spirit** will guide one's speech in the hour of trial applies first to the twelve, and only secondarily to others who will experience persecution. But this promise does not assure immunity from trial or even freedom from being **put to death**.

**Mark 13:13**

**endures to the end shall be saved.** This endurance does not produce salvation; it is Spirit-empowered perseverance and proof of the reality of salvation in the person who endures. Christ will eventually deliver such believers out of the present evil system into God's eternal kingdom (cf. Mat 10:22).

## **Mark 13:23**

**take heed.** Jesus issues a prophetic warning to be on guard. He has told the elect refugees of the future all they need to know to avoid being misled and deceived by Satan's emissaries.

## **Mark 13:32**

**that day and hour.** The exact day and time of Christ's return .

**no one knows.** The time of Christ's return will not be revealed in advance to any person. At this time, it was known only to God the Father.

**angels.** While all the angelic beings enjoy intimacy with God, hover around His throne to do His bidding (Isa 26:2-7), and continually behold Him (Mat 18:10), they have no knowledge of the time of Christ's return.

**nor the Son.** When Jesus spoke these words to the disciples, even He had no knowledge of the date and time of His return. Although Jesus was fully God (Joh 1:1, Joh 1:14), when He became a man, He voluntarily restricted the use of certain divine attributes (Php 2:6-8). He did not manifest them unless directed by the Father (Joh 4:34; Joh 5:30; Joh 6:38). He demonstrated His omniscience on several occasions (cf. Joh 2:25; Joh 3:13), but He voluntarily restricted that omniscience to only those things God wanted Him to know during the days of His humanity (Joh 15:15).

Such was also the case about the knowledge of the date and time of Jesus' return. After He was resurrected, however, Jesus resumed His full divine knowledge (cf. Mat 28:18; Act 1:7).

## **Mark 13:33**

The exhortation to vigilance is linked to the fact that the critical moment remains unknowable.

**Life Group Member Guide**

**Focal Passage:** Mark 13:3-13, 23, 32-33 (NIV)

**Passage in Context:** Mark 13



**Bible-Reading Tip:** Begin by asking God to open your eyes and hearts to His Word. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul writes that the Spirit – who lives inside everyone who believes in Jesus – knows the depths of God and reveals Him to those who follow Jesus. So, always begin your time of reading the Bible with a prayer for Him to open your eyes and ears to what He will reveal. This doesn't mean that you will always have an emotional encounter or a special revelation, but you are acknowledging that He is that One through whom all wisdom is revealed.

**Mark 13:3-13 (NIV)**

3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

5 Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

9 “You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

**Mark 13:23 (NIV)**

23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

**Mark 13:32-33 (NIV)**

32 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

**HEAR Bible Reading Method**

**HIGHLIGHT the passage**

- Underline any repeated words or key ideas you see.
- Note any questions you have about what you read.
- In 2-3 sentences, summarize what was said or what happened.

**EXPLAIN the passage**

- What was revealed about God? His character, desires, and/or actions?
- What was revealed about people? What we are/do or what we should be/do?

**APPLY the passage**

- From this reading, what truth do you need to embrace?
- By God's power, how will you THINK, SPEAK, or ACT differently based on what you read?

**RESPOND to the passage**

- Talk to God about what you've seen and learned in this passage.
- Ask Him to help you apply the truth to your life.