



[Mark 13:37](#)

(37) And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

A Faithful Version

In [Mark 13:37](#), [Jesus Christ](#) commands us to watch: "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" The Greek word here, *gregoreuo*, translated as "watch," is in the imperative mood, expressing a command by the order and authority of the one commanding. Thus, it is an unequivocal command *to all* by the order of our authority, Jesus Christ, that therefore requires strict attention and obedience by us all.

Are we obeying His command to watch? Do we know what Christ is commanding us to do? Many do not. Because this is a direct and emphatic command by our Savior, it is vital that we *know*.

Christ uses this Greek word for "watch" fourteen times in the Gospels. To get a clear picture of what He means by it, notice the context each time that He commands us to watch (*gregoreuo* is in bold in the verses that follow):

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have **watched** and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ([Matthew 24:42-44](#))

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. ([Matthew 25:13](#))

It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to

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watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—inthe evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest,coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!** ([Mark 13:34-37](#))

Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find **watching**. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have **watched** and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ([Luke 12:37-40](#))

Two clear thoughts run through all these examples where Christ uses “watch.” First, we do not know when He will return. Second, we should be watching so that we are ready no matter when that happens.

Watching is serious business and is necessary to our being ready for His immediate return in our lives. While in these verses He commands us to watch as the way we prepare for His return, He does not tell us what that means.

Thankfully, Christ practices what He preaches. By His example, He shows us what He means by watching, and we are to follow that example ([I Peter 2:21](#)). Notice the remainder of the fourteen uses of “watch” by Jesus in the Gospels (again, *gregoreuo* is in bold in the verses that follow):

Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and **watch** with Me.” He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, “What? Could you not **watch** with Me one hour? **Watch** and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ([Matthew 26:38-44](#); an

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additional three usages appear in [Mark 14:34-39](#))

Here, we see that Jesus is watching and asking the disciples to watch along with Him. Just as He commands us to watch to be prepared for the biggest event in our lives, He watched to be prepared for the biggest event in His human life.

Conversely, His disciples did not watch but instead slept! Learn the lesson. They did not watch. They did not prepare. As a consequence, they failed miserably ([Matthew 26:56](#), 69-75; [Mark 14:50-52](#)).

What did Jesus do while watching that His disciples did not do? *How* did He watch? We see here that watching is about spiritual preparation that, in this case, consists of intense prayer. On a broader scale, He spent a lifetime watching His human nature so closely that He never sinned ([Hebrews 4:15](#)). In these last hours, He intensified His watching in the extreme, as recorded in [Luke 22:41-44](#):

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

By His example, Jesus shows us that watching is about spiritual preparation. He also stresses that same point the last time in the Bible He uses the word "watch," *gregoreuo*: "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who **watches**, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" ([Revelation 16:15](#)).

Just as He does in the many verses we saw above, He warns us that He comes as a thief, in a day and hour we know not. Here, He emphasizes *what* we are to watch—our garments, our character. We are to be removing every spot and wrinkle from them ([Ephesians 5:27](#); [II Peter 3:14](#)). We want to be sure there are no holes in our character ([James 5:2](#)) when He returns.

Therefore, here in [Revelation 16:15](#) and by His example, we see that watching is all about spiritual preparation. He consistently links watching with His return. There is no hint of anything else in Jesus' use of the word "watch" (see also [Revelation 3:3](#), where He underscores watching as required spiritual preparation for His sudden return). Thus,

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we see that when Christ says “watch,” He is commanding us to be spiritually prepared for His return no matter how sudden and unexpected it may be in our lives.

— Pat Higgins

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