

INTRO

- When we talk about the end of the world, what movies come to mind? What's your favourite?
- Do you think a lot about the future? why/why not?

READ

Mark 13:1-37

REFLECT

Jesus' prediction that the Temple would one day be destroyed caught his disciples attention. They assumed this event would usher in the end of the age. In Jesus response to them, some believe Jesus was prophetically describing the historic event of the fall of Jerusalem in AD70. Others believe he was mostly describing the end times. And still others believe he was intertwining both of these events, but in a way that makes it hard to distinguish which one he's referring to.

Qu: what do you think and why?

There is much speculation around the end times. Most of it is unhelpful distracting Christians from Jesus' mission. Nonetheless, Jesus is clear as to how he wants us to live in light of what he says about the future.

1. Don't be led astray by rising deception

"For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand." (v22-23)

Qu: how can we safeguard ourselves against being led astray?

2. Don't be alarmed by escalating catastrophes

"And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed.... These are but the beginning of birth pains." (v7)

Qu: how is 'birth pains' a good metaphor for how we are to live in the tension of pain and promise?

3. Don't be anxious by personal adversity

In the West, we tend to avoid adversity at all costs. Yet, adversity can be used of God powerfully in our lives.

Adversity is to be expected.

Qu: how have you experienced adversity because of your faith?

Adversity reveals the idols of our heart.

Qu: in what way/s does adversity reveal the idols of our hearts?

4. Don't be distracted by uncertainty

Jesus makes it crystal clear that we will live in uncertainty of when he will return. He also makes it clear that he expects us to 'stay awake' and remain focused on our God-given responsibilities.

Qu: how do you deal with uncertainty?

In uncertainty of the future, we can hold onto the certainty of:

His Word: "my words will not pass away"

His Spirit: "the Holy Spirit will make his witness in and through you"

His Promise: "I am with you always, to the end of the age"

Qu: how is Jesus the answer to our heart's desire for certainty and security?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged and challenged you the most out of today's discussion?
- How can you practically apply what you're learning to your personal life?