

## MARK 13:32-37    **THERE IS NO MAGIC CAT**

<sup>32</sup> *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert ! You do not know when that time will come. <sup>34</sup> It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.*

<sup>35</sup> *"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. <sup>36</sup> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"*

As every child learns within the first few times he is left on his own by his parents, there are two motivations for obeying them in their absence. In many ways it is a game of truth or consequences. Although it may appear to be dull and boring, the choice every parent would have a child make is to simply do what he is told. The second alternative is the one we find almost irresistible. Once we have the age and experience to be able to estimate how long the parent will be away, we begin to rationalize that we can watch television, play video games, talk on the phone, sleep in, even have friends over, as long as we save enough time to clean up and finish up any tasks before the parent appears. Dr. Seuss caught the essence of our fallen human nature in his immortal book, *The Cat in the Hat*. The down side is the underlying fear that distracts from all the fun. Like the fish in Dr. Seuss' story, there is a voice in the back of your head saying "this isn't right; you are going to get caught."

Jesus isn't saying that we should post a watch at the door and charge him with looking for the signs of Jesus' return. What he is saying is that we need to be as alert as a good watchman. The watch stays vigilant and awake, obedient to his call, throughout the ordinary and mundane hours of the night. He is ever ready and prepared for an arrival. For the good watchman, the arrival may come at a time unexpected and unannounced, but it never comes as a surprise because he lives every moment in its anticipation.

Likewise, as followers of Jesus, we need to live every moment as if it were the moment of our departure or Jesus' return. Confess your sins as they occur. Forgive whenever you are wronged. Intentionally make your life one of prayer and worship.

**Jesus, your warning about being ready for your return should be enough for me to live in obedience. But, Lord, the days seem long and the future seems to spread endlessly before me. I confess that I would rather not think of such things, but simply live from day to day. Help me to understand that living in obedience to you is answer to my anxiety. Help me make ready for your return, not because of the fear of consequences, but because of the hope that is only found in you. Amen.**