

December 16, 2012 by Steve Brandon



Expectations For the End

Mark 13:9-13

1. What to Expect

a. Persecution (verse 9, 11, 12, 13).

b. Spread of the Gospel (verse 10)

2. How to Respond

a. Be On Your Guard (verses 9-10)

b. Trust the Lord (verse 11)

c. Endure to the End (verse 13)

In my office I have a book about marriage written by Paul Tripp. The title of the book is, "What did you Expect?" He begins the book by telling of a married couple that he was counseling. They had been married for 15 years and were facing some major problems in their marriage. She was disappointed with the state of their marriage. "Fifteen years -- fifteen years! -- and this is what I get?" He was frustrated with her constant complaining and daily criticism, even though he worked very hard to provide for her all of these years.

Paul boiled the major problem of their marriage down to one thing: unrealistic expectations. Paul Tripp then comments, ...

I am persuaded that it is more regular than irregular for couples to get married with unrealistic expectations.

Again and again I have sat with couples who simply do not seem to be taking seriously the important things the Bible has to say about what every marriage will encounter in the here and now. Unrealistic expectations always lead to disappointment. [11](#)

Think about it. Marriage is the coming together of two sinners. Dave Harvey wrote a book entitled, "When Sinners Say I Do". The title alone says it all. What do you expect in marriage, but sparks to fly? What do you expect, but conflict to arise? What do you expect, but deep disappointment in each other? What do you expect, but trouble in your marriage? That's why at the heart of every Christian marriage, the gospel needs to be forefront.

Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Through faith, God had graciously forgiven us of all of our transgressions. Because of that, we must extend grace to others, especially our marriage partner. We need to trust that God will do His work in the life of our spouse.

And when we don't trust the Lord in these things, problems erupt, arguments ensue, resentments follow, and rather than moving toward each other in marriage, we drift apart. Much can be solved, says Paul Tripp, by having the right expectations.

This concept applies to marriage. But, there are also a myriad of other spheres where this applies as well. Having right expectations is important for business. If you purchase a product, you expect the product to work as advertised. If you agree to have someone come in and do some repair work on your house, you expect their repairs to be done correctly. If you sign a contract with someone or some company, the expectation is that each side of the contract will fulfill their end of the deal. If expectations aren't met, then there is conflict.

We recently switched our telephone service and internet provider. In the transition, there have been a few surprises. So, I was on the phone this week with representatives from Comcast to try to iron out the differences between my expectations and the bill that just arrived in the mail. Right expectations could have resolved these issues.

This applies to many other things as well. You sign up for the boy scouts, you want to know what to expect in terms of expenses and time commitment. You sign up for the softball team, you want to know what to expect in terms of expenses and time commitment.

The same is true for the Christian faith. When Jesus was preaching to the large crowds, He gave the conditions for following after Him, thereby setting His expectations for all who would follow Him. He said, ...

Luke 14:26-33

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Jesus here sets the expectations of what it means to follow Him. It means that we must give up everything. We must renounce our life. We

must give our all to Him. Such are His expectations.

The same is true for future events. When it to anticipating things in the future, it's extremely important to have the right expectations. It's important to have right expectations of what will take place at the end. It's important to have right expectations of what we will experience at the end.

My message this morning is entitled, "Expectations for the End." Open your Bibles to Mark 13. For the past few weeks, we have been looking at the Olivet Discourse. Those words that Jesus spoke to His disciples when upon the Mount of Olives. They deal with matters of the end. In verse 4, Jesus was asked, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled? And Jesus responds with the longest answer to a question in the entire gospel of Mark--some 33 verses telling us what we need to know about the end times.

Our focus this morning is upon verses 9-13. They describe the incredible difficulties that disciples of Christ will face before Jesus comes. Paul wrote this in 2 Timothy 3:1, "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come." And Jesus is describing these difficult times.

Consider what He says, ...

Mark 13:9-13

"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Again, there is the big question of interpretation: Have these things been fulfilled? Or, are these things yet to be fulfilled? Or both?

I have a burden this morning. I have a burden for those who take these words as entirely to be fulfilled in the future. There are many who think about the end times and have a perspective that God will rescue them out of the earth before it gets too bad. There are many who believe that Christ will come and rapture them--take them out of this world--before any tribulation or trouble takes place upon the earth. They believe that they will be taken up to heaven -- up, up and away from all of their trials and difficulties. And then, things will really get bad upon the earth. Praise the Lord that they aren't going to experience any of it!!!!

And such people, I fear, are facing some false expectations. I fear that many who believe this aren't prepared for the things that are coming in the future. Because the picture that Jesus paints isn't the picture than many paint regarding the end times.

Think about it this way: What were the expectations of the disciples for their future? Jesus tells them to expect something far different than a bed of roses. Let's look through these verses at what Jesus told them to expect. Here's my first point:

1. What to Expect

Let's begin in verse 9, ...

Mark 13:9

"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

Let's continue to the first half of verse 11,

Mark 13:11

When they arrest you and hand you over, ...

And then verses 12 and 13, ...

Mark 13:12-13

Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, ...

These are some pretty heavy words. Notice that they are words of certainty. Jesus told His disciples that they would be arrested for their faith in Christ (verse 11). Jesus told His disciples that they would be brought before the civil authorities to account for their faith. And in the process, Jesus warns of the physical abuse that would come.

He warns of "flogging." Literally, it means that they would be "beaten." It may be with clubs. It may be with whips. This is what they did to Jesus. He was scourged with a whip (Mark 15:15). He was beaten on the head with a staff (Mark 15:19). He is saying that this would happen to them.

And it's not merely the local magistrates that would hear their case. It would go to the top. They would stand before governors. They would

stand before kings.

Why? Jesus says, "as a testimony to them." This is what Peter says, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15).

What Jesus said came to pass. You simply need to read the book of Acts and you will see the troubles that these men encountered. Because of their faith in Jesus, the disciples appeared before the authorities. Because of their faith in Jesus, they were scourged in the synagogues.

In Acts 4, you find Peter and John preaching in the temple after they healed a poor, lame man. They were "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2). They were jailed for their actions (verse 3) and called to give an account before the religious leaders. In giving the account, Luke is very specific regarding who was presiding over them: Ananias and Caiaphas and John and Alexander. All of these men were of high-priestly descent (Acts 4:6). Ananias was a high-priest and remained in great power for years. Caiaphas was once high-priest. He is the one who presided over Jesus' religious trial. John became high-priest after Caiaphas was finished.

These men were the most powerful religious leaders in the land, and the apostles stood before them. Peter testified that it was in the name of Jesus Christ that the lame man was made well. Peter identified Jesus as the rejected stone that has since become the chief corner stone and that salvation only comes in the name of Jesus. The council then decided that they should warn Peter and John and let them go (Acts 4:21).

In the next chapter of Acts, they didn't get off so easily. In Acts 5, you will find Peter and John ignoring the order of the courts. They knew that they must obey God, rather than men (Acts 5:29). So, they were again out and about teaching and preaching about Jesus.

They were imprisoned once again by the high priest and his associates (Acts 5:17-18). This time, at the end of their trial, the religious leaders "flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them" (Acts 5:40). Because of their faith in Jesus, these men appeared before the authorities. Because of their faith in Jesus, these men were scourged in the synagogues.

These words set the trajectory for the rest of their lives. Every single disciple was eventually killed for his faith in Jesus Christ. John was the only exception. Rather than being killed, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. That meant a lot of preaching and teaching. That meant a lot of standing before authorities. That meant a lot of scourging in the synagogues. That meant a lot of suffering. But, they knew that Jesus said, "The gospel must first be preached to all the nations" (verse 10). If the message of Jesus was going to spread, it was going to begin with them. They took the message out. They spread the message.

Historic Tradition tells us about where they went. Peter went to Rome. Andrew went to Greece and Russia. James was killed in Israel before having much time to preach abroad (Acts 12:2). John was exiled on Patmos. Thomas went to India. We don't know where Matthew went. Philip went to modern day Turkey. Bartholomew went to Armenia and later to India. James went to Egypt. Thaddaeus went to Persia. [\[2\]](#) And their work has continued to propagate to more and more nations.

The twelve (minus Judas) were persecuted, and used of God to bring the gospel to many nations, just as Jesus had said. Not only was this true of the twelve, it was true of the apostle Paul as well. Later in the book of Acts, you can read of Paul standing trial before governmental authorities (Acts 24, 25, 26).

He was beaten for His faith in the synagogues -- "Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes" (2 Cor. 11:24) He stood before Felix (Acts 24) and Festus (Acts 25) and Agrippa (Acts 26). He was eventually sent to Rome to stand before Caesar. Furthermore, Paul did his part in bringing the gospel to the nations.

Paul preached all throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete. He went as far as Italy, and may well have made it to Spain. In Romans 16:26, Paul says that this gospel "has been made known to all the nations." In Colossians 1:23, Paul said that the gospel was "proclaimed in all creation under heaven."

Now, does that mean that everyone in Paul's day who walked the planet heard the gospel? Certainly not. Does it mean that Jesus' words in verse 10 have already been fulfilled? I doubt it. But, it does mean that the gospel had advanced far and wide in the generation after Jesus; perhaps much more than we commonly think.

But, as the gospel went out, the persecution came along with it. In verses 12 and 13, Jesus spoke of the extent of the persecution. It will come from family (verse 12). It will come from society (verse 13).

Mark 13:12-13

Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

This ought not to surprise us. The first two children ever born were at odds with each other. We read in Gen. 4:8 that "Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." The issue in this case was not simply sibling rivalry. It was an issue of righteousness and wickedness that clashed in the home. Abel offered up a sacrifice that God accepted. Cain offered up a sacrifice also, but we know that God had no regard for it. The writer to the Hebrews said that Abel's offering was accepted because it was offered "through faith" (Heb. 11:4), which testified "that he was righteous" (Heb. 11:4). The first murderer killed his brother out of religious interests. The first martyr came from within the family because of Abel's faith in God.

If you take a look at the accounts of Abraham and his descendants, you will find members of his family in constant conflict with each other: Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. In each of these cases, the issue of contention between them was a religious issue: who would be blessed by God?

The Bible gives examples of conflict among families because of the faith of family members. Jesus tells us of conflict among families. These conflicts happen. We ought to acknowledge that this will take place.

The gospel is offensive. The gospel does divide! When you come to the knowledge of the truth and find your hope in Jesus Christ alone, you come into direct opposition to all of the humanistic thinking in this world. There is only one way to God, and it is in God saving you. He saves by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. There is no working your way to heaven. There is no being good enough to get to heaven. "Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust to bring us to God" (1 Peter. 3:18). God hates and disapproves of sin. Repentance from your sins is required to enter the kingdom of heaven. When Jesus calls us to faith, he calls us to forsake our former manner of life, and to embrace a life of faith toward God and love towards man. Our good deeds "adorn the doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10) and "are fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

When you begin to proclaim this message to your family, there will be hostility. There will be hostility among your family when you say to your father, "Dad, I know you go to church and profess to know God, but the things that you are watching on television are detestable in the sight of God. By your deeds, you are denying the master that you claim." I guarantee you that dad will not like that.

There will be hostility among your family when you tell your mother, "Mom, your only hope of getting to heaven will be through faith in Jesus Christ. Your yoga and new age philosophy books will not get you there. If you do not believe in Jesus, you will spend an eternity in hell!" I guarantee you that mom will not be enjoying that conversation.

There will be hostility in your family when you are straightforward with the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have known of families that have disowned their children after they have converted to Christianity. I have heard of families having funerals for their children after they convert to Christianity, because they consider them to be dead. They are ostracized and alienated. I know that some who are estranged from some of your family members because of your faith.

Families are often hostile to Christianity because our society is hostile to the gospel. Look at verse 13, "You will be hated by all because of My name, ..." Followers of Jesus Christ face a hostile world. Let us rid ourselves of the notion that being a Christian will give oneself a good reputation in the community. There are plenty of business people in this world who would like to have a reputation of being a good, family-oriented, church-going man. They go to church on Sundays so that they would be known as being religious and righteous and trustworthy. Does this type of attitude match what Jesus said in verse 13, "You will be hated by all because of My name"?

The world in which we live is hostile to God. The world in which we live is in rebellion to God. Romans, chapter 1, speaks about how God has made Himself known in the world through His creation, yet the world has chosen to reject God. Instead, they have embraced their own sins.

This was nowhere better exhibited than it was when Jesus walked the earth. There was no reason for anybody to hate Jesus. When Peter summarized His life, he said, "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). The clear testimony of Scripture is that Jesus never sinned against anybody. ^[3]

And yet, the world hated Jesus. John writes, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:10-11). Jesus said, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Jesus said, "You know the world hated Me. ... They hated Me without a cause" (John 15:18, 25). The reason why people hated Jesus (and put Him to death), is because they hate God. And Jesus is every bit God. Jesus continued on by saying, "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). That's what Jesus is getting at here in verse 13.

What Jesus said would take place indeed did take place. Are we surprised? We shouldn't be. Jesus always speaks the truth, even when it pertains to predicting future events.

Now, the big question at this point is this: Is this talking about some future event for us? We know that it was a future event for the disciples. And we know that they experienced exactly what Jesus said would come their way. Is it future for us as well? Many in America will simply say, "Yes. This is for the future, when things get really bad."

We say this because none of us have appeared before the religious or governmental authorities because of our witness for Jesus Christ. At least, I don't think so. And none of us have been beaten and imprisoned for our faith. Have we? And we can give great praise to God that we live in a nation that has been founded upon religious freedom.

We can, and do, preach the exact same message that the apostles preached. They preached, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). They preached against the sin of those who put Christ to death, saying, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:30-31). When the apostles preached these things, they were jailed and beaten for it.

We can preach this same message without incurring punishment because we have been given constitutional freedom to do so. Aren't you glad? Now, if we lived in a different country, this same message could land us in prison! Perhaps we would even be tortured or killed for such a message!

At the end of every year, World Magazine honors their person of the year, much like Time Magazine does. However, being a Christian magazine, they honor the person as "Daniel of the Year." Daniel 6:5 is their key verse, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God." The often focus their attention upon a person who has stood strong for

his Christian convictions, and has suffered for it.

This year, the award goes to "China's outspoken, imprisoned Christians and their long-suffering, long-distanced families." The magazine highlights the stories of three men in particular -- Gao Zhisheng, Liu Xianbin, and Guo Quan. On the one hand, their stories are very different. And on the other hand, their stories are very much the same.

Each of these men has come to faith in Christ. Each of these men has spoken against the Chinese government and its corruption. Each of these men has been arrested by the Chinese government and have spent time in prison, where they have been interrogated and tortured and beaten with rods. All are in prison today, as I speak. Each of their families has escaped to America, where they are free to tell their stories, in hopes that it might make some sort of difference.

Gao Zhisheng was born in a poor, rural village in 1964. He enlisted in the People's Liberation Army. Eventually, he began taking classes to be a lawyer. In 1995, he passed the bar exam. And now, I quote from World Magazine (December 15, 2012), ...

He initially handled medical malpractice suits and economic law. He was a Communist Party member, and the Chinese government lauded his work. But Gao's interests soon broadened: The attorney began taking human-rights cases and defending property owners harassed by government officials. A local pastor offered spiritual support to some of Gao's oppressed clients. He offered the same gospel message to Gao, and eventually the young attorney embraced Christianity.

Gao began defending pastors against government harassment, including a minister sentenced to three years in prison for printing and distributing Bibles. He joined a legal defense team for a house-church network in Beijing, but he also advocated religious freedom for others, including the Falun Gong—an outlawed and heavily persecuted sect in China whose members have faced torture and imprisonment.

"As a Christian attorney he represented the weak," his wife says. "He represented freedom."

Gao also represented a threat to the Chinese government. Officials directed him to stop taking Falun Gong cases, and security agents began following him and his family. Instead of retreating, Gao wrote an open letter to China's prime minister and called for greater religious freedom. Chinese officials suspended his law license in 2005.

Later that year, Gao formally broke from the Communist Party. In a letter dated Dec. 13, 2005, he said the Party tries to "torture people out of their conscience," and he declared: "Today, I, Gao Zhisheng, a Party 'member'... formally withdraw from this inhumane, unjust, and evil Party." He concluded: "This is the proudest day of my life."

Less than a year later, Gao would disappear.

In an out of prison he went. At one point, "he wrote a harrowing account of interrogation and mental torture by secret police, and said agents severely beat his naked body with electrified batons."

Liu Xianbin began his political activism in 1989 during the Tiananmen Square demonstrations.

In 1998, he co-founded a local branch of the China Democracy Party and established a branch of China Human Rights Watch. He advocated for greater liberties, including religious freedom. A year later, Chinese authorities convicted Liu of subversion of state power, and sentenced the activist to 13 years in prison.

Officials released Liu after nine years, and the activist immediately returned to his advocacy: Liu was one of the first signers of Charter 08, a document by Chinese activists calling for sweeping democratic reforms. The charter includes a call for freedom of religious practice, and abolishing laws that require churches to register with the government.

Liu continued to write articles for international media criticizing the Chinese government and human-rights abuses. In May 2010, he spoke with Radio Free Asia about a government raid on a house church in Sichuan province: Authorities had detained eight church members, including a 3-year-old child.

A month later, authorities detained Liu. By February 2011, Chinese officials convicted Liu of subverting state power, and they levied a crushing sentence: Another 10 years in prison.

One of the sad things about his plight is that his daughter, Chen, who was 13 at the time, was summoned by the police from her school classroom and was interrogated about her father. "What did he do in his free time? What did he write on the computer? What did they talk about?" After a barrage of questions, she was sent back to school. By the time she arrived at home, her father was already arrested and sent to prison.

It sounds a bit like verse 12, "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death." Now, we don't know all of the circumstances about this. But, his daughter barely knew him, having been in prison for most of the early years of her life. They spent only 20 months together. Only when she escaped to the United States did she become a Christian.

Finally, Guo Quan's story. He was a professor at Nanjing Normal University. He began speaking out for greater freedoms in China in 2007. He primarily did so through writing. He wrote open letters and published articles. Some were political in nature. Others dealt with Christian thinking.

Authorities raided their home several times in the middle of the night. They smashed locks on the doors. They confiscated computers. They installed surveillance cameras at the apartment complex, and monitored the family's phone, internet use, and mail. [His wife] says Guo's Christian conscience compelled him to continue: "He's a Christian and professor. He thinks he has some responsibility for the society, so he never stopped writing." On Nov. 13, 2008, authorities stopped Guo by arresting him for subversion of state power." Nine months later, [His wife] was stunned when she learned her husband's sentence: 10 years in prison.

Now, it's not everyone in China who is persecuted in these ways. They have 70 million Christians in China. And they experience many freedoms. But, it is the few that stand up and speak out that are punished by the government. It's the pastors. It's the leaders. It's those who are seeking to change society. It's the people to whom Jesus was talking in the Olivet Discourse.

But, in our country, we can do much the same thing. We can write letters to the newspaper to be read by the entire city. We can send emails to our public officials. We can protest in front of Capitol Hill. And as long as we are peaceful and respectful, in all likelihood, we won't be arrested or thrown into prison.

So, have these words been fulfilled in the disciples? Or, will they be fulfilled in the future? Or, are they being fulfilled now? I believe that such things have always been a part of history -- just like wars, just like famines, just like earthquakes. Now, toward the end of time, before Jesus returns, I have reason to believe that it will get worse. But, I urge you not to think that such things remain only for the future. They are very much the reality today. From the statistics that I hear, more people were killed for their faith in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined!

Things are escalating. Let us expect them to do so. Let us be prepared for the day when it comes to us. What to Expect? Persecution (verse 9, 11, 12, 13) and Spread of the gospel (verse 10).

2. How to Respond

I have three points of application as we wrap things up. Again, I remind you, if we get the application right, we get the passage right.

- a. Be On Your Guard (verses 9-10)
- b. Trust the Lord (verse 11)
- c. Endure to the End (verse 13)

Each of these come straight out of our text this morning. First of all, ...

a. Be On Your Guard (verses 9-10)

That's what Jesus says in verse 9, "Be on your guard." In other words, be prepared for it. Let us not think that such things remain only for those in some tribulation period. No, the disciples faced the reality of these things.

The early church faced the reality of these things for several hundred years. Do you realize that it wasn't until the Edict of Toleration in 311AD, that Christians experienced a favorable reception with the governmental authorities? For well over 200 years, the early Christians were persecuted. They were burned at the stake. They were fed to the lions. They were the laughing stock of society. People viewed Christians as fools, who believed in fairy tales.

Jesus didn't say these things only for the sake of some far-off culture, some 2,000 years in the future. These things have always been. Let us expect that they will be the reality of our lives.

Although we have experienced great freedom in America, let us not be surprised when we lose our freedoms.

President Obama's HHS Mandate is a case in point. It requires companies to provide abortifacients to their employees. Whether they come in a pill or in a device, these contraceptives attempt to keep a fertilized egg from implanting. The Roman Catholics have staunchly opposed this mandate. So has Mark Taylor, president of Tyndale House Publishers, a Christian publishing firm. Mark Taylor put it well when he said, ...

I've always thought—in a theoretical way—that I might someday face a situation where the government was asking or telling me to do something that was counter to God's law as I understood it. If such a situation arose, I hoped I would have the backbone to stand tall and disobey the government mandate. Well, that day seems to have come. [\[4\]](#)

And Mark Taylor is standing tall and seeking to fight the legislation. But, such is only the tip of the potential iceberg.

Let us heed the advice of Peter, ...

1 Petre 4:12-16

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

So, let us Be On Your Guard (verses 9-10) Let us also, ...

b. Trust the Lord (verse 11)

I get this from verse 11, ...

Mark 13:11

When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus gives us counsel for the day when the government comes and arrests us and calls us to give an account for our actions. Jesus says, "Do not worry." "Do not worry about what you will say to them." Because, at that moment, you will have an encounter with the supernatural.

The Holy Spirit will be present with you. The Holy Spirit will give you what to say. The Holy Spirit will help you say it. He will help so much so that Jesus says that, "it is the Holy Spirit [who will speak]."

Imagine the scenario. You have lived according to your Christian convictions. Because of some law or because of some threat you pose to the government, you are arrested and thrown in prison where you spend the night. At 9am the next morning, you are going to stand before the judge. Don't spend the night thinking about what you are going to tell the judge in the morning. Don't try to go through all of the different scenarios.

Get some sleep and sleep like a baby. You don't have to worry a thing about the words that you will use. The Holy Spirit will be present with you in that hour.

Trust the Lord. He is faithful. He is trustworthy. He will give you strength.

Finally, ...

c. Endure to the End (verse 13)

I get this from verse 13. It's not really a command, but it's clear.

Mark 13:13

You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

"The one who endures to the end, he will be saved." This isn't talking about the end of time. This is talking about the end of your life. We will face difficulty in this life. We can give up, or we can endure.

Jesus here promises future reward for our present sufferings - we will be saved! In other words, suffering now will be rewarded by salvation later.

The reality is that not all will endure to the end. Do you remember the parable of the sower and the seed? (Mark 4). Seed was thrown upon four types of soil. The seed that is thrown upon the path is eaten up by the birds. The seed that is thrown upon the rocky soil grows up, but then withers as it has no root. The seed thrown among the thorns grows up, but is choked out by the thorns. The seed thrown upon the good soil yields a crop thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

When Jesus explained the seed upon the rocky soil, he said, ...

Mark 4:16-17

... these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

This is directly applicable to our text this morning. The context is affliction and persecution. Many hear the word and receive it with joy! But, the affliction and persecution are the things that demonstrate the quality of the soil. The seed on the good soil will persevere until the end. The seed on the rocky soil will fall away.

As you think about the end times, and as you think about the difficulties that may come at the hands of our own government, I encourage you to have the proper expectations. Don't think that we are going to miss it all. To the church in Smyrna, Jesus said, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Jesus promised difficulties that will come when we hold fast to the word. May the Lord grant all of us strength to endure to the end.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 16, 2012 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Paul Tripp. What Did You Expect, p. 16

[2] <http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN500APOSTLES%20FATE.htm>

[3] see 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:22; Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27

[4] http://www.worldmag.com/2012/10/what_s_a_christian_business_owner_supposed_to_do