

# A WORD ON WORSHIP

MARCH 10, 2013

BY PASTOR ANDREW KIKKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

*Mark 13:35-37*

“Therefore, be on the alert — for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning — in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”



Christians today continue to ask the same question as the disciples: When will these things happen? They want Jesus to give them the key to identify exactly when the end will come.

History is riddled with predictions, and when they are proven to be as foolish as the last, self-proclaimed experts revise their calculations based on some obscure biblical passage they failed to take into consideration. Others compile their rapture index, charting out the latest earthquake, civil war or cosmic disturbance to gauge the probability of the nearness of Christ’s return to the delight of an audience seeking to escape rather than persevere.

We turn on the television to see pastors identify the Antichrist from their list of those they do not like and then preach fear to audiences that he is set to pounce and devour his prey. Others fall into extremist groups that quit their jobs, sell their homes and turn their backs on the world as they wait for the appointed time for Jesus to take them away from their earthly woes. Jesus specifically warns against such end-times hysteria, deliberately providing no sign or event that is helpful for fixing a specific date. Yet false teachers continue to pop up and reduce Christianity to simple answers to exploit the fears and the weaknesses of the saints for a handsome profit.

The temptation of end-of-the-world hysteria is to lead the saints astray from the very counsel of our Lord Jesus: Be alert. The life of the saint, whether in the first or twenty-first century, is full of painful paradoxes, tensions and uncertainty. Yet the Lord requires His saints to walk by faith, not by the comfortable security of sight. And so we fall prey to those who speak about what is next to happen on the world stage and we are told nothing about living in the light of such news, except to send in more money. Unlike Jesus, they provide no ethical implications for how this affects the way we live our lives, no urgency to share the gospel and no command to find ourselves to be ready.

Do not be a victim of Last Days entertainment. The most important thing we as Christians have been called to do is preach the gospel to all nations. When the Lord Jesus returns, He will not quiz us on whose prediction was accurate but rather will want an accounting of what we have been doing. Were we proclaiming the gospel? Were we enduring suffering faithfully? Did we love others as we have loved ourselves? Those who have been asleep on the job will not just be embarrassed when the Lord returns, they will be judged.

*Sunrise Community Church*

*Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst*

**EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.**

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MARCH 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
24	25	26	27	28	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6



## What's Happening at Sunrise March 2013

Mar. 10	8:45 a.m.	Mark13: 24-37 <i>The Dark Side of the Second Coming</i>
	10:30 a.m.	Corporate Prayer during Second Hour
Mar. 12	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study in Galatians
Mar. 15	7:00 p.m.	Game Night in the Sanctuary
Mar. 17	8:45 a.m.	Mark 14: 1-11 <i>Working Like the Devil to Serve the Lord</i>
	10:30 a.m.	Second Hour
Mar. 19	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study in Galatians
Mar. 22	6:30 p.m.	Friday Night Fellowship
Mar. 24	8:45 a.m.	Sunday Service
	10:30 a.m.	Second Hour
Mar. 25	7:00 p.m.	Church Sanctuary Open for Prayer and Listening
Mar. 26	7:00 p.m.	Church Sanctuary Open for Prayer and Listening
Mar. 27	7:00 p.m.	Church Sanctuary Open for Prayer and Listening
Mar. 28	7:00 p.m.	Westminster Maundy Thursday Services
Mar. 29	6:00 p.m.	Sunrise Good Friday Services
Mar. 31	8:45 a.m.	Resurrection Sunday Services
	10:30 a.m.	Community Pot Luck Brunch

### Muslims pressure Pakistani Court to uphold Christian's death sentence

By Aidan Clay, International Christian Concern 3/8/2013

The High Court in Lahore, Pakistan is scheduled to announce whether it will uphold the death sentence of a Pakistani Christian condemned for blasphemy in the coming weeks. After more than seven years behind bars, advocates are hopeful that the Christian will soon be released, but they fear that outside pressure by extremists may alter the court's decision.

On Sept. 10, 2005, Younis Masih was arrested for making derogatory remarks about the Muslim prophet Muhammad in the Chunghi Amar Sadu area of Lahore. Masih denied the allegations, claiming he did nothing more than ask a group of Muslims who were holding a religious service in a nearby house to turn their music down late one evening. The next day, the Muslim cleric leading the service accused Masih of blaspheming Islam. After more than a year behind bars, Masih was sentenced to death by the Sessions Court in Lahore on May 30, 2007 under Section 295-C of Pakistan's Penal Code, which states, "Whoever... defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life."

Masih's appeal is now under review in the High Court in Lahore. On Feb. 27, the final day of his hearing, a group of Muslims, known as Anjuman Tahaffuz Khatme Nabuwat (the Association for the Protection of the Prophethood), gathered outside the courthouse demanding that the blasphemy law be upheld and that Masih be executed. It was not the first time the group had tried to

influence the court's decision. Masih's hearing had been adjourned on several occasions in the past because the association and other extremists had caused disorder in the courtroom.

"When the case was called for hearing, there were about 20 Muslim clerics inside the court and many more were standing outside the courtroom," Joseph Francis, Director of the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance, and Settlement (CLAAS), told ICC after Masih's Jan. 17 hearing. "It was just to put pressure on the judges because today the lawyers were going to give the final arguments. But due to the mullahs' pressure, the case was adjourned without hearing."

According to Naeem Shakir, Masih's attorney, the association uses intimidation tactics to persuade the court to reach a verdict based on religious, rather than legal, grounds.

After the evidence was presented on Feb. 27, sitting Justices Khawja Imtiaz Ahmed and Ali Baqar Najfi announced that a decision would be reached in the coming weeks. Masih's advocates believe the extremists were responsible for the delayed verdict.

There is still hope, however, that Masih will be acquitted. According to Shakir, the prosecution had failed "miserably" to support their allegations of blasphemy.

Masih's wife, Ameena, and four children have lived in impoverished conditions throughout his imprisonment and Masih has yet to meet his seven-year-old son, who Ameena was pregnant with during his arrest.