INTRO. We know Jesus promised to return to this earth. I believe it will be in two stages: the Rapture, when the church rises to meet Christ in the air – (John 14 – “I will come again and receive you to Myself”; I Thess. 4:13-18 – we’ll be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. I believe this could happen at any moment. 7 years later will be the Second Coming, which will be at the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus will come back to this earth, set foot on the Mt. of Olives, and set up His throne in Jerusalem and rule for the 1,000 years we call the Millennium.

It’s important to realize the Bible never teaches the “_____________” return of Christ in the Rapture. It teaches the IMMINENT return of Christ – that He could come back AT _______________ MOMENT. II Tim. 3:1-5 (LB) You may as well know this too, Timothy, that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them, and thoroughly bad. They will be hardheaded and never give in to others; they will be constant liars and troublemakers and will think nothing of immorality. They will be rough and cruel, and sneer at those who try to be good. They will betray their friends; they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride, and prefer good times to worshiping God. They will go to church, yes, but they won’t really believe anything they hear. Don’t be taken in by people like that.

Jesus is the _______________ and we are the servants. Our Master has gone back to His Father, and He promised to come again. We don’t know _______________ (v. 40). Jesus tells us how to live in the meantime.

I. STAY ALERT – v. 35-41
   A. Dressed and ready for ________________ – v. 35a
      1. When a servant was ready to serve his master he got his robe out of the way. The NT writers applied this concept to our alertness in light of the coming of Christ.
      I Peter 1:13 – gird up the loins of your mind – NIV: “prepare your minds for action”
      Eph. 6:14 – loins girt about with truth – “the belt of truth buckled around your waist”.

      2. A traveler gathered his robes about him as he went on a journey, so nothing hampered him. What’s tripping you up on your way to heaven?

   B. Lamps burning – v. 35b
      Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and this shows the importance of Him in our lives.
      Eph. 5:18 – “be filled with the Spirit” can literally be translated “keep on being filled with the Spirit.”

   C. ________________ – v. 37,38
      Second watch – 9pm – midnight Third watch – midnight – 3 am
      Matt. 25:13 – watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man comes
      I Thess. 5:6 – let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober
      Rev. 16:15 – behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that who stays awake…

II. BE ________________ v. 43
   Luke 19:13 – KJV – occupy til I come. The word “occupy” doesn’t mean “fill up ________________”. It means “do business, use what you have.”

Does your life show you expect Jesus to return today?