

Masterclass – Faithfulness

Luke 12:35-48 – Watchfulness

³⁵ *“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. ³⁹ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”*

⁴¹ *Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”*

⁴² *The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? ⁴³ It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. ⁴⁴ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.*

⁴⁷ *“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸ But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

Remember the group Jesus is speaking to – His followers.

Our masterclass has been about: Integrity, Freedom, Trust, Faithfulness

What do they summarise? The character of God. The life of Jesus. The world of His disciples. The call of the church. The life of a Christian.

Faithfulness - be ready, avoid the tyranny of time. Reliable. Watching, waiting, prepared. Involved. Follow through.

This passage is in the context of the coming of the Son of man. The return of Jesus! Will He find us faithful?

Servant – doulos, bond servant, one who gives themselves up to another's will, one devoted to another and able to disregard their own interests.

The servant is not condemned for evil done, but for good not done. There are things we know we should be doing, and we are not to be lulled into inactivity by the fact that the Lord has delayed His coming.

One day while St. Francis was hoeing his garden, he was asked, “What would you do if you knew you only had one day to live?” “I would keep on hoeing my garden,” was the reply. Our longevity or Jesus delayed return ought not to determine our day-to-day agenda.

V 35-36 'Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

Jesus calls on the disciples to be ready. Your is emphatic and there is an emphatic 'you' with 'you be ...'. Whatever others do, you must be ready.

The girding of the loins is a step towards preparedness. The long, flowing robes of the Easterner were picturesque, but apt to hinder serious labour, so when work was afoot they were tucked into a belt about the waist.

Jesus goes on to picture servants whose master has gone to the marriage feast and who expect him back at any moment. They will not be found unready, but will open the door as soon as he knocks, and show themselves prepared for whatever service he wants.

V37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

Any master who finds his servants in such a state of readiness is pleased.

They will be blessed. God's hand will be on their lives. The master is so pleased that he reverses the normal roles and has them sit at table while he serves them a meal.

This a dual challenge. Be ready for any conflict situation that is coming. Be ready to meet our God when He comes for us. Watching. Faithful. Being aware of dangers and distractions.

V 38-40 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.'

The importance of being ready, whenever the Son of man comes, is now stressed. Jesus pronounces a blessing on the servants who are ready when the master arrives in the second watch, or in the third.

The Romans divided the night into four watches, but the Jews into three (cf. Judg. 7:19). Thus Jesus is speaking of servants who watch throughout the night for the coming of their lord. They do not know the time of his return, but they know that it may well be long delayed.

A change of imagery reminds us that no householder would suffer loss if he knew when the burglar was coming. The house in mind is one of mud brick which could be 'dug through' (broken into). The householder must be ready: that is the only way he can be secure from such robbery.

Jesus rounds off this section with the explicit statement that the disciples do not know when the Son of man is coming. That coming is certain, but the time is not known; it will be at an unexpected hour. They must therefore live in constant readiness, as the whole of the foregoing section makes clear.

V41-44 Peter asked, 'Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?'

The Lord answered, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.'

Only Luke tells us that it was Peter who asked, but the question is quite in character. As he often did, Jesus countered with another question to make his questioner think.

The steward was a slave (he is called *doulos* in v. 43), to whom was given the task of managing the whole estate. This freed the owner from routine administration and it meant that the steward necessarily had considerable freedom of action. If he was faithful and wise he would see that the estate was properly run, which included making sure that all members of the household were duly fed.

It is in service to others that we prepare for the parousia. So "to watch" means an active, laborious, responsible service'.

Jesus speaks of a situation wherein the master is absent but returns unexpectedly (43). A diligent steward, whom his master found working efficiently when he thus returned suddenly, would be promoted.

V45-46 But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

Beat - wound the conscience of another. Unbelievers - those who are faithless. The context is discipline rather than eternal punishment. As if they were unbelievers.

But the master's prolonged absence might lead a careless steward into a false sense of independence. There was nothing to stop him from indulging his whims; after all he was in charge. When a steward abused the trust reposed in him the master's return would surprise him. The result would be the punishment and downgrading of the unreliable manager.

The evil servant, who uses the privileges of leadership in the church for personal power and status, manipulating persons who are his brothers and sisters, will be held accountable and answerable to the Lord of the church!

The Message

But the servant says to himself, 'The master is certainly taking his time,' begins maltreating the servants and maids, throws parties for his friends, and gets drunk, the master will walk in when he least expects it, give him the thrashing of his life, and put him back in the kitchen peeling potatoes.

V47-48 The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Jesus rounds off this section with a warning of the certainty of punishment for those who fail to do their duty.

Responsibility rests on those who have received much (cf. Amos 3:2). Notice that people are punished not simply for doing wrong, but for failing to do right (cf. Jas 4:17). It is important that Jesus' servants be active in doing his will.

We are apt to be disturbed by the thought that one who sins in ignorance will be punished (48). But we must bear in mind that 'there is no such thing as absolute moral ignorance (Rom. 1:20, 2:14, 15)' (Farrar), and again, 'Our very ignorance is part of our sin' (Ryle).

How do we view injustice in our world?

The emphasis is on the fact that the beating is light, but we should not minimize the importance of doing God's will. God's servant must make every effort to find out what God's will is and do it. All are accountable.

There's an old story of three apprentice devils who were coming from hell to earth to serve their time. Before they left, they told Satan what they proposed to do on earth. One said, "I'll tell men that there is no God."

"That won't do," Satan said, "because they already know in their hearts that there is."

"I will tell them," said the second, "that there is no hell."

"That," said Satan, "is still more hopeless, for even in life they've experienced the remorse and the regret of hell."

"I'll tell them," said the third, "that there is no hurry."

"Go," said Satan, "tell them that, and you'll ruin them by the millions."

My story - In the twinkling of an eye. 1 Corinthians 15:52 Book published 1911 by Sydney Watson

The Publisher wrote in 1991 - 'MULTITUDES in all parts of the world have expressed their approval of this imaginative, yet true-to-Scripture account of what will transpire on this earth at the coming of the Lord. It is written in a style so fascinating that young and old will read it with almost breathless interest from start to finish.

Already many thousands who would never have studied their Bibles, or looked at an ordinary book or pamphlet to learn the precious truth of the Second Coming of the Lord, have been awakened, quickened and even converted by reading "In The Twinkling of An Eye."

Convincingly true, terrible and beautiful in turn, this book is one of the most startling in the annals of Christian literature-just the book to solemnize and awaken careless, ill-taught, professing Christians to a complete realization of the fact that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'

While we wait for Jesus, will we be known as people who are faithful?

Jesus says, Coming, ready or not!