

42. Jesus Warned of the Need to be Ready for His Coming

In our last topic, we saw that where our treasure is our heart will be also there. This is important because we want to show our physical and spiritual children, by our example, the importance of developing heavenly values instead of earthly values. As our children see by our choices that our lives are guided by eternal values that result in godly love, the Lord will work in their hearts to develop similar values. Another reason why it is important to have eternal values and to seek the kingdom of God in our lives is the fact that Jesus is coming back for us and we want to be ready to meet Him when He comes.

Jesus shared with His disciples the importance of being ready to meet Him when He returns. Luke 12:35-40 says, “Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Since Jesus knew that the group of disciples to whom He was talking would no longer be on this earth when He returns, they were to pass on this message to us so that we will be ready to meet Jesus when He returns.

The Jews of that day and most people in Israel and the surrounding countries today still wear long robes because of the heat. When these verses talk about having the waist girded, it meant that the long robes were tucked into their belts so that they were ready to work and serve their master when he returned from a wedding or other event. The servants would also have their torches burning so that they could provide light for their master when he returned to his home. Such servants would be ready to open the door and serve their master immediately as soon as their master knocked on the door. Jesus was pointing out the fact that His followers should also be ready for His return from heaven.

However, Jesus also pointed out that His return will be different than that of a master returning to his home after a wedding. Since we are the servants of Jesus, He told how He will respond when He finds us prepared for His return. Instead of us serving Him, He will serve us. Jesus said that He will have His servants sit down to eat and He will serve them. As a result, if we are faithful servants of the Lord, He has said that the day will come in the future when we will be served by Him.

Jesus also pointed out the importance of being ready at all times. We have no idea whether Jesus will come before midnight, very early in the morning or the middle of the day. Then, Jesus gave an illustration to show why it is important for us to be ready for the coming of Jesus at all times. If the owner of a house knew at what time a thief was coming, he would be prepared and would not let the thief break into his house. The thief is able to steal because people do not prepare for

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his coming. Jesus said we need to be ready for His coming because He will come at a time that we do not expect.

Peter asked Jesus a question as he heard Jesus speak about the need to be ready. Luke 12:41-44 says, “Then Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people*?’ And the Lord said, ‘Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.’” Here, we see that Peter wanted to know if Jesus was speaking this parable to just the disciples or whether He was speaking to all of the people. We see in the Gospels that Jesus often spoke in parables to the crowds and then explained the parables to the disciples when they were alone with Him.

Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, Jesus chose to answer by explaining what a faithful and wise steward is like. The word translated “steward” means *the manager of the household and financial affairs of his master*. It was his responsibility to manage the things that belonged to his master in a way that would please his master. Jesus said that it was the responsibility of such a servant to manage the food of his master so that the other servants received the food that they were to receive. By this answer, Jesus taught several things about those to whom He was speaking.

First, a steward is the servant of his master. This meant that Jesus was speaking to those who were His true followers and not to everyone. Second, a faithful and wise steward has a concern for all of the other servants of his master. Jesus showed by this answer that a faithful follower of His is one that is serving other Christians. Third, a faithful and wise steward will be blessed if he continues to do these things until Jesus comes. Jesus will come for each individual Christian in one of two ways. Some of us may have the opportunity to be alive when Jesus comes back to take the church to heaven as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. However, through the years since His return to heaven Jesus has come to take many Christians to Himself through death. Here, we learn a key lesson. We are to be faithful in serving other Christians until the time that Jesus takes us to heaven whether at the Rapture or by death.

As long as we are here on the earth, we are to be faithful servants, because the Lord still has work for us to do. Even if we have poor health, there are still ways we can serve other Christians. One of the key ways that we can continue to serve other Christians even with poor health is by praying for them. James 5:16 says, “Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” This verse tells us that the effective prayer of a righteous person has great power in its effects. Jesus also promises that those servants who faithfully serve Him will be rewarded. The word translated “make him ruler” means *to make or to set one over*. This word is used both in Matthew 25:21 and in 25:23. Those verses say, “His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”” Both verses say exactly the same thing but are spoken to people who have been stewards of different amounts of talents.

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Jesus also went on to warn about those who are unfaithful. These would be people who did not become true followers of Jesus. Luke 12:45-48 says, ““But if that servant says in his heart, “My master is delaying his coming,” and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”” Here, we see that Jesus answered the question with a second half that talked about unfaithful servants that have an unbelieving heart.

The actions of these evil servants show that these servants have unbelieving hearts. First, we see the attitude of an unbeliever. He says in his heart that the master is delaying his coming. This shows that the servant is not preparing for the coming of his master. Second, we see the actions of an unbeliever toward Christians. Because of an evil heart he begins to mistreat those who are true believers. Third, we see the actions of an unbeliever to satisfy his own desires. His attitude is the same attitude that caused God to judge Jerusalem in the Old Testament. Isaiah 22:12-13 says, “And in that day the Lord God of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth. But instead, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating meat and drinking wine: ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’” God called for repentance but the people chose to live to please themselves.

Just as God promised judgment to Jerusalem in the Old Testament, Jesus said that there will be judgment in the future for those who refuse to repent. At the time that Jesus comes, He will find the unbelievers unprepared for His coming. They will not even be thinking about His coming. Then, all unbelievers will receive their judgment with the other unbelievers. We see that the judgment of unbelievers will be in proportion to the amount of truth that they heard. Those who heard the Word of God and continued to reject the Word will have a much greater judgment. Those who never heard the Word of God but did evil will also be judged. However, we see that their judgment will be with few stripes rather than many stripes. The more opportunity that a person has had to hear the Word of God and rejected that Word, the greater the judgment of that person will be. Here, we see that Jesus gave a real warning to those in the crowd who were rejecting the message of Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there is great blessing for those who follow Him and serve others. In contrast, there will be great judgment for those who hear and continue to reject. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand both the blessings and the warnings.