

Be Ready The Son of Man Is Coming

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[0:00] You can be turning to Luke chapter 12.! Luke chapter 12.

Jesus has been teaching his disciples many things in this chapter. It seems to be like a stopping point or at least a gathering of things that are going on.

And in this chapter, Jesus has been teaching topic after topic. He's mentioned such things as beware of hypocrisy, fear God, God cares for you, be willing to acknowledge God before men, do not be anxious about what to say before authorities, because the Holy Spirit will give you the words, do not be anxious about your needs, because God has promised to meet them, lay up your treasure in heaven, and seek his kingdom.

And the next thing that Jesus teaches is what we're going to be looking at today. He speaks about the coming of the Son of Man. Now, there's a lot that said about the coming of the Lord.

There's a lot said in society and in the church about when the Lord will return. Of course, the Bible says no one knows the day nor the hour.

[1:47] The word of God speaks of being ready. Not so much trying to figure out the time, but making sure we're faithful to the responsibilities.

He gave. He gave. Well, make sure that we're faithful to the responsibilities he gave while we wait. And be ready at any moment. So my question to you that comes from this text this morning is, are you ready for the Son of Man to return?

Let me read Luke chapter 12, starting with verse 35. Verse 35.

If he comes in the second watch or in the third watch and finds them awake, blessed are those servants.

[3:17] But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You must, you also must be ready.

For the Son of Man is coming and an hour you do not expect. Peter said, Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?

And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom his master will set over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time?

Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

But if that servant says to himself, My master is delayed in coming and begins to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him.

[4:17] At an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will will receive a severe beating.

But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating.

Everyone to whom much was given of him will much be required.

And from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. Let's pray together. Father, as we come to this passage, we find it both amazing and terrifying.

And I pray that, Father, this question that we ask, a question that you seem to be asking throughout this whole section, are we ready for the coming of the Son of Man?

I pray, Father, that you would work in our hearts today and show us where we are with this. And I pray that you would use us in the work of the kingdom.

[5:33] May we be found faithful waiting servants in Jesus' name. Amen. We come to this passage, and I'm convinced as I've been reading it that the disciples just didn't see this coming.

It was like out of the blue. Jesus had already mentioned to his disciples that he will be arrested and killed and raised, but they didn't even understand that.

Luke 9, 22, saying, The Son of Man, this is Jesus speaking, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

And a little further down in that chapter, he says, Let these words sink into your ears. The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, but they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so they might not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about what he was saying.

So he had already told them about things that were coming, his arrest and crucifixion and death, even that he would be raised. But he speaks about something that, in my mind, sounds like, to them it must have been totally out of the blue.

[7:01] He speaks of how the Son of Man is coming at an hour they do not expect. Not only his arrest and crucifixion and death and eventual rising from the dead, not only did that not make sense to them, this certainly didn't make sense to them.

Put yourself in their shoes as they listened to Jesus speaking, talking about the Son of Man coming. And I can picture them standing there saying, he's already come.

He's right in front of me. What is he saying? Or even going further and saying, how could he be gone? How could he be anywhere but here?

This is the Messiah. This is the Son of David. He's the one who will come and rule on David's throne forever. He'll throw off the Romans and he'll set up his kingdom and he'll be on that exalted throne and no one will be able to throw him off.

How can we say the Son of Man will be gone? We even get a sense of Peter's confusion or the disciples' confusion in Peter's statement in verse 41.

[8:17] We'll get to this again, but let me read it. He says, Peter said, Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all? It's like he's looking at the situation and saying, I don't understand.

I mean, we know that you're here. Are you trying to get the rest of these people to know that you're here? This doesn't make sense. How could Jesus speak of a time when they would be waiting for Jesus' coming?

Well, Jesus was arrested. He did suffer.

He did die, was buried, rose again, remained on the earth for several days, 50 days, and then ascended to, or 40 days and ascended to heaven.

So now we are in a time of waiting. But he's coming again.

[9:26] I love the disciples. If you look at the end of Luke and some of the things that are said there, and you go on into the book of Acts and some of the things that are said there, and the things that Jesus said, things like this, began to click in their mind.

Don't we remember that when he was with us, he said, and they spoke of these things, they spoke of his death, burial, and resurrection, and they watched him ascend out of their sight.

And now some of these words would make sense to them. And they make sense to us in the respect that we now understand that Christ is not walking on this earth.

He is seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us. And so we know that he has left. And now we know that he is coming again, and we're waiting for that.

So as Jesus has been speaking here, how are we to be ready for the Son of Man's coming? And Jesus starts out with a parable.

[10:41] And the parable is verses 35 to 38. Actually, there are two parables here and a saying.

And we'll look at the first parable here first. He says in Luke 12, 35 to 38, stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from a wedding feast.

We'll stop there for the moment. Jesus is telling these disciples here that as he's gone, we need to be people who are waiting like faithful servants.

He says, dressed for action and keeping your lamps burning. Now, we say something like that, but what they're getting at is that idea of girding up your loins.

Remember that their clothes were often long robes and hard to run in. Can't make a big gate in a long robe.

[11:49] And so they would grab that long robe. I've heard it described different ways and I won't illustrate it, but they would grab that robe and bring it up and they would tuck it into a belt that they wore for this purpose.

And this would bear their legs to the knees or just above the knees in such a way that they could run easily, work, bend over, do all the things that were necessary to be able to have this kind of action.

And Jesus tells people, these people to be dressed for action, stay dressed for action. The word is, it carries very much the idea of get ready for action and stay ready for action.

So be ready to move, be ready to work. And he says, keep your lamps burning. And he takes these two phrases and he bears out more what's going on here in this parable that we'll look at.

But he wants his people to be always prepared to do what the master desires. Always ready to run that errand.

[12:54] Always ready to do that work. Always ready to serve that person. And he's talking about how we as Christians should be always keeping up with our responsibilities.

And remember, we're talking about the coming of the Lord. In light of the coming of the Lord, we're looking for him to come back. And our responsibility, one of the chief things that he would have us to do is to be faithfully active.

Keeping up with our responsibilities. What kind of things would that be? Watching for one another. You know, taking care of one another in our difficulties.

Praying over one another. Encouraging one another. Exhorting. Keeping people from falling into sin. Watching over one another. We're to keep active in being participants with one another.

We're to watch out for one another. We're also to carry out the Great Commission. That idea of going out and making disciples in all the world. Part of having ourselves dressed for action and keeping our lamps burning is to carry out the Great Commission while we're waiting for the Lord to come back.

[14:21] Part of our responsibility is to be out there. To have everything ready for when he comes back. Busy about sharing the gospel. And I'd apply it also in a way of walking daily with the Lord.

Always ready. Knowing him better. In his word. To know him more. Know him better. Understand what he's teaching. What he's calling us to do.

Walking daily with the Lord. Also, not only in the word but in prayer. Fellowshiping with him. He didn't go away and leave us unconnected to himself. He's given us his word.

He's given us the opportunity to pray to him and to seek the things from him that we need. And this dress for action involves keeping up our responsibility. And so, Jesus gives this parable to show what waiting looks like in Luke 12, 36 to 38.

And he says, Be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from a wedding feast so that he may that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

[15:32] Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch or the third and finds them awake, blessed are these servants.

Now, it helps to know a little bit about weddings. You go to a wedding here today and it may start in the evening and you may go to that wedding and that wedding may go, you know, into the wee hours of the morning.

And that's a lot like what their weddings were. The only difference is often their weddings were not one day or half day or quarter day events. They were often maybe week long events.

And so, when the master left, he would leave the house and he would be going to this thing and he had no idea when he was coming back. He could be gone into that night.

He could be gone for two days. He could come back the next day or the next night. He could just come back at any time. But before he would go, he would have the servants continue their regular responsibilities.

[16:43] And so, while the master was gone, the servants would have to keep up with their regular responsibilities. the animals would have to be fed, the house would be taken care of, meals prepared for those who had to eat.

All those things had to keep going on while the master was gone. But there was also this idea of the servants watching for him.

You'll find he talks about knocking. He would come back to the door and he wouldn't just have a key and walk in. At night, the door would be barred. Even the master wouldn't be able to walk in.

He'd have to have someone let him in. Can you imagine what it would be like if you owned this great house, many rooms, many servants, and you'd gone to a wedding because you were an important guest and you'd been there for two and a half days.

It's now two in the morning and you've walked back to your house and you start and now you're the master of the house. And for 15 minutes you beat louder and louder on the door until someone woke up and go, oh yeah, I think the master's here.

[17:56] How aggravated would he be? Now, please don't transfer that to the Lord because this is emphasizing the fact that this kind of servants should be watching for their master to come.

and if they were diligent, they would make sure that they were still girded so that they could work and they would keep lights burning at night so no one would have to fumble around to delay the master coming in in any way.

They would be watching. There would be someone always close by the door or even outside the door looking for the master's coming and even as they saw him coming a ways away, they could be doing the knocking and getting the door open and ready so that the master would just walk right in and the servants would be awake and alert and they'd be able to say, come on in and he'd be able to come in and sit right down and oh here, I know it's two in the morning but you've walked from a long ways from the neighbors, maybe you want some figs, maybe you want a little wine before you go to sleep and they're just meeting his need.

Those kinds of servants are there to do their responsibility and those are faithful servants. keeping watch so that he could be welcomed.

They're doing their jobs faithfully out of love and service to the master. Now, there's a sense I want to make sure this, there's not a one-to-one correlation here.

[19:33] Jesus is not at the mercy of his servants. sometimes some people look at Revelation 3.20 and said, where Jesus is, behold, I stand at the door and knock and they think that Jesus can't do anything until we open the door.

His hands, that's not the case. These are pictures. He won't be at the mercy of his servants but Jesus will be pleased if we have been people who have been faithfully watching, carrying out our responsibilities when he comes back.

He will be pleased with us if he finds us waiting for him, working for him, making sure all the ministry, all the work, all the things are continuing to progress.

And this parable talks, it's an odd situation. This is not what happens usually. A master didn't come home. In fact, Jesus makes reference to this in an opposite way.

I think he speaks this way in this parable because it relates to him. But it wasn't normal that a servant would wait up and let his master in and his master would be so pleased that he'd take his royal robe off, gird himself with a towel and sit down and serve the servants.

[20:58] That's just not how it was done. But this is speaking about the kingdom of God and how Jesus, when he finds us faithful, he will be pleased and he will serve us.

Think of the marriage supper of the lamb. You can even think of while he walked on this earth before he was crucified, he at one point removed his robe, gird himself with a towel and went

around and washed his servants' feet.

And so as we think about this parable and think about waiting for our master to come back, let's be faithful to him in the things he's called us to do that he might be pleased.

priest. And then when we're brought to be with him, the master will serve his servants, there will be a great marriage supper of the lamb.

And we won't be the slaves of the supper, we'll be the guests of the supper. We'll be sitting down with our Lord.

[22:08] Now this passage goes into, it talks about keeping our lights burning, and he mentions part way through the parable, even into the second and third watch of the night.

Romans and Jews divided the night up differently, and everybody thinks that this was the Jewish way of doing it, so I'll just explain that, that the night's watches were divided up in the night, in the Jewish mind, was divided into three watches, from six, six to like eleven or ten, from ten to three, and from three to six, somewhere in that area.

And when he's talking about the second and third watch, he's talking from like, from midnight to sunrise. Now, I hate being up late.

I am not good at being up late. late. My eyes get real fuzzy, and I don't think so good anymore. And so it's easy for me to fall asleep before, like, New Year's Eve is just a waste for me.

I'm in bed long before midnight. But, but Jesus is saying these servants sometimes had to be up all night to make sure that they were ready for their master's return.

[23:38] And he's saying, that's pleasing to him. Now, don't think that Jesus is trying to teach us that we as disciples should never sleep. That's not what he's talking about.

But in this situation, at least some of the servants had to always be awake, ready for the master's return. And it's signaling to us the kind of mentality that never in our lives do we say, well, I don't have to do as much right now.

I don't have to worry about the Lord's return and the responsibilities I have. Blessed is the servant that he finds faithful even into the difficult hours of the night.

Now, you think, well, how can that relate to us? Well, it's been 2,000 years since Christ went to heaven. Is this the second or the third watch of the night?

second Peter three, three and four says knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires.

[24:46] They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continued as they were from the beginning of creation. God is not slack concerning his promises.

He will come back. So, it's been 2,000 years. Do we give up hope? Do we slack off? Do we sit on our laurels and say, we've done good enough for 2,000 years?

Or, even in our own personal lives, we're young and we serve the Lord. We're middle age and we serve the Lord. And we're old age. Do we keep it up?

Do we continue to serve the Lord? So, blessed are those who are watching under the second and third watch.

Can I say it this way? Blessed are those who are watching even though it's been 2,000 years and we wait many millennia more.

[25:51] Oh, it could never happen. God has brought revival at different times in our history. We don't know.

The Bible's specific, Jesus himself says, no man knows the time or the hour. We need to be faithful whether we think the times look close or don't will be will be because we don't know when the return of the master, the son of man will be.

Now, he goes on to talk about a wise master of the house and this kind of flips. He's gone about talking about servants in a house and now he's going to talk about the master of the house, not in relation to the servants, but in relation to the house.

all he's doing is pointing to this fact that we don't know when the Lord is coming back and we have to always be ready. In verses 39 and 40, he says, no, but know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have not left his house to be broken into.

You must also be ready for the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. So he uses this example of a house and someone breaking into it and people would often break into it by their houses.

[27:20] You could dig through the wall easily. It was mud or something of that sort and they could dig through the wall easily get in and get stuff and get out and no one would even know. How do you protect against that?

Well, you build houses with steel, you know, but that's not the purpose of the parable. The parable is showing us that one has to be watchful. The only way to protect this man's house was to be watchful.

And so he's encouraging us. We just don't know when the Lord's going to come back. That should not be a discouragement. He will uphold us.

Do we want it to be soon? Most definitely. We pray like John did at the end of the book of Revelation. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. But let's be faithful until he does.

Many years, through the centuries, there have been people who've tried to predict when the Lord would come back. And some would fall prey to those things.

[28:31] And when it didn't happen, they would become discouraged. Some would walk away from the faith. Let us be mindful of the fact that we don't know when Jesus will return. But we must always be ready.

Now, the second part of this passage, the first part talks about being ready to serve, willing to serve. The second part talks about faithfulness. In fact, he talks about faithfulness versus unfaithful, faithful versus unfaithful servants. In Luke 12, 41 to 48.

And in verse 41, starts out, Peter asks who this is addressed to. He says, Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all? And again, going back to this mindset that Peter must have had, we've already seen that you come.

Are you trying to tell us something? Are you trying to tell them something? And Jesus doesn't answer them directly. He goes right to another parable.

[29:41] And this parable is meant for everyone to hear and take instruction from, but it is also directed at those who are given responsibility over others in the kingdom. So again, what I'm saying is, in a sense, Jesus is saying this parable that I'm about to speak is for you, Peter, and for the other 11 of you.

But we could see that as he's talking to those who have responsibility over others, he could be talking to pastors and teachers, to elders, to deacons, to parents, and those who have responsibility over children.

Parables meant for them to be careful, to be faithful stewards. And so he gives the parable of what I call the temporary manager. Luke 12, 42-46, And the Lord said, Who then is a faithful and wise manager whom his master has set over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time?

Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. We'll stop there for a second.

So when a master, we've already seen this a little bit, but when a master would go away, he'd give responsibility to servants. But this parable talks about how when a master would go away, he would single out one particular servant and would make that servant make it his responsibility to make sure that the rest of the servants were taken care of.

[31:20] That's what this parable is based on. So he'd give responsibility to one particular servant to watch for the other servant. And so that faithful servant would be careful to care for the other servants, make sure they had their food at the proper time, and probably would be involved in making sure they're carrying out their responsibilities.

This temporary servant would be given access to the master's resources, and he would be charged with using those resources wisely, and he would be in this position until his master came back. And then his master would evaluate his performance and reward with a permanent and greater responsibility if he's been faithful to the things that this temporary servant had been called to. And so he's encouraging Peter and the twelve and all pastors and teachers and deacons and parents and others to be faithful when God puts them in a place of responsibility.

Why? Because the Lord is coming back. And he will evaluate our faithfulness. And he doesn't leave it just as open-ended that, oh yes, I'm going to bless all the people who've done well.

[32:44] It's more stringent than that. He goes on in verse 45 to say, but if that servant says to himself, my master is delayed in coming and begins to beat the male and female servants 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 in an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.

So the faithful servant takes care of all the responsibilities that's been given and undertakes that task with care and concern, carries them out responsibly.

But the unfaithful servant rather thinks, I've got time. I mean, I've always wanted to enjoy my master's best wine.

I mean, I've always wanted to sleep on his bed. I've wanted to eat some of the good stuff that he eats. And maybe as he's doing some of this stuff, some of the other servants say something to him and he begins to beat the male servants and the female servants.

Shut up. Don't tell me what to do. Don't. I'm in this position because the master put me there.

[34:07] And so he would abuse his stewardship of others. But in that situation, the master would come back when a time he did not know. And that's one of the main things of these parables is we just don't know.

But the master would surprise the servant with his coming, take this evaluation, and would cut off the unfaithful servant. And he would be punished according to what he knows.

Ignorance qualifies the situation, but it's not an excuse for the situation. This unfaithful servant knew that his master would come back.

He didn't know when. He should have been faithful. Sometimes a servant might be in a situation and not know all he was supposed to do. Well, he's still responsible.

His ignorance may make his punishment less, but it won't take away. Christ has given us all kinds of instructions.

[35:20] We should be people who are responsible to seek it out. But the one who did not know and did what was deserving of beating will receive a light beating and everyone to whom much is given of him, much will be required.

And from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. Let me close by asking, are you ready for the coming of the Son of Man?

we ought rightly to be excited and eager for Christ's return. And this message in no way is trying to throw any water on us having an excitement about the Lord's return.

What Jesus is pointing to here is what we're doing while we wait. what's our heart's desire? How are we carrying out our responsibilities?

Are you dressed and ready for action? Are you willing to serve the Lord wherever he calls you to serve? Whenever he calls you to serve? are you faithful to carry out the responsibilities Christ has given?

[36:47] Elder, are you willing to carry out your responsibilities? Speak to myself in this. Deacon, are you willing to carry out your responsibilities?

Sunday school teacher? Parent? Do you parent in light of the fact that Jesus is coming? I'm not talking about being terrified of the Lord, talking about wanting to be a faithful servant.

Servant of Christ, are you carrying out the responsibilities Christ has given you? Sharing the gospel? Serving one another? Watching for one another?

Christian, I'll remind you again, our Savior is coming. We will give an account of how we serve him. This balance, we can't get it off.

We can't misrepresent it. We need to remember that our sins have been paid for and our standing in Christ is secure perfectly. but scripture does talk about giving the account of how we've served him.

[38:10] You and I should rejoice in our standing every day, but it should be our hunger and our thirst to serve him and to be ready for when he returns. Scripture makes plain that our reward, not our standing with

Christ, not our earning of salvation, but there is reward according to faithfulness of service.

Are you ready for Christ's return? If you're without Christ today, the Son of Man is coming again. You say, well, I'm not a Christian, that doesn't matter.

It does matter. The Son of Man is coming again. And that very term, Son of Man, has to do with the fact that he is the judge of all the earth.

He's in a position of judgment. If the Son of Man is serious in respect to the service of those who are his, how much more serious will he be with those who have never trusted him?

don't think, I have time. We don't know when the Lord is coming back.

[39:34] We should be ready for him. Now, he is a judge, but he's a judge who holds out mercy now to any who will repent of their sins and trust in what he has done to pay for our sins.

He provides righteousness for those who trust in him. So, as you think about the Lord coming back, and you don't know what to do with your sins, you don't know how you could stand before a holy God, run to him.

Run to him, because he's lived that life for us, suffered on our behalf, risen again, and is willing to pay for your sins if you will trust him.

Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for your word. Thank you, Father, for being able to see the hope of Christ's return.

And Lord, I pray, Lord, in all this, may the truth of Christ's return not in any way hinder or hamper our joy and our eagerness for that day.

[40:46] But Lord, may we soberly look at our lives, may we be people who are standing fast, who are ready to serve, who are careful to keep our lamps burning, who are eager to be faithful to all that you've commanded.

Lord, I pray that you would be with us. Strengthen us in Jesus' name. Amen.