

Faithful Servanthood
Luke 12:35-40

Each day as I ponder and enjoy these precious words given in these scriptures I am captivated by the richness of their meaning, so rich in meaning that many sermons can be preached from some of the very same words. That's because our Lord has interwoven many different and precious truths within each of these words, more than we could ever begin to comprehend.

And I believe that to be especially so within these words that are given to us here in this passage that we'll study today, that while yes, within these words, the Lord Jesus is telling us about His blessed return, that moment in time when He will begin to call all the things of this earth to a close. But also here within these words, we can see where God is also taking the opportunity to express His pleasure when He finds His servants to have remained faithful as they waited for His return.

Listen to those words given to us here in Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 35.

³⁵ Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like men 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. I tell you the truth, 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 second or third watch of the night. ³⁹ But understand this: If the head 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." (Luke 12:35-40)

Again, I do love the richness of these precious words of scripture. At first glance this parable would appear to be describing servants who are simply sitting in a house waiting patiently for their master's return. But as we know from other instructions within these scriptures, the "waiting and watching" that the Lord Jesus would have us to do is far more of an active involvement. As we wait, we are to be about carrying on forward His ministry to the world, that of the giving of the gospel and of making disciples, and that of being a loving servant to all the people we encounter along our way.

That is the “servanthood” that the Lord Jesus is expecting of each of us as we watch and wait for His return to fulfill His promise to take His faithful bride to be with Him in His “Mansions of Glory”, And here in these words, we see how it pleases the Lord greatly to know that His servants have been faithful in their calling as they have watched and to waited for Him to return.

Here in these words, we are given a sense of anticipation about His return, saying that our Lord may come in the “second or the third watch”, words that tell us that while we won’t know exactly when He will come, and that there will be a season of waiting, that we need to remain faithful to our calling as we wait for Him.

This same manner of waiting with anticipation is spoken about in the words given in 2 Peter 3 where the Lord reminds us that we must remain patient, that He truly is not slow in His return, but has purpose in His timing, not desiring that anyone should perish. Listen to those words beginning in verse 9 of 2 Peter 3,

⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:9-13)

Note carefully the question given here asking, “What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord?”

Folks, we really are a very important part of God's answer to that question. He doesn't desire that any should perish. And while yes, He could just speak and multitudes of people would suddenly be saved, He has chosen not to do it that way. He has chosen instead to use you and me, His servants, to be His hands

and His voice, to reach out and to do most all of the needful tasks within His kingdom, the first of which is to draw the souls of men into His great salvation.

And no, we can't do that by ourselves. It is not our clever presentation of the gospel that causes men and women to be drawn into God's kingdom. He has sent His Holy Spirit ahead of us to bring about that special "drawing" of men's souls to Himself.

But our efforts, our voices are an absolute necessity within all that takes place. God tells us about that in Romans chapter 10. As He speaks about the salvation that He gives, God poses some questions. Listen.

¹³ . . . "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:13-15)

And then God tells us in verse 17 of Romans 10,

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

And then, with this newfound faith,

⁹ . . . if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

Folks, this is our part! This is what you and I are to be about as we wait for our Master's return. We are the ones who are sent to give the good news so that people can hear and have faith and be saved. And this is the answer to the question posed by our Lord there in 2 Peter chapter 3. Listen.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. (2 Peter 3:11-12)

As faithful servants of God, this is what we are to be doing during those late second and third watches of the night mentioned in our scripture passage. We are to be giving His gospel to anyone and everyone who is willing to listen.

This is the way that salvation begins and is brought to other men and women's souls. Faith comes by their hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. And as God's servants, you and I are to be busy about giving His gospel to anyone who will listen. And as we give His gospel, the Holy Spirit uses our words to draw their lost souls to the Lord Jesus for salvation.

And as His servants, the Lord Jesus wants us to know that "He is a rewarder of those who by faith, diligently seek to serve Him".

There is a parable that the Lord Jesus gave that especially conveys how He will reward those of us servants who are found faithful at this return. That parable, the "Parable of the Minas", is given in Luke chapter 19, and it speaks about a Master of a house who went away to be crowned King. And as He left, He gave His servants a "mina", a small amount of money, but enough to invest and get a return. And He expected His servants to use the gift wisely until His return.

Then upon His return, the newly crowned King, asked His servants how they had fared in their use of the gifts He had given to them. Listen.

¹⁵ When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. ¹⁶ The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' ¹⁹ And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' (Luke 19:12-19)

These words of this parable are a precious reminder to those of us who truly desire to be the kind of servants that the Lord Jesus wants us to be. It's my understanding that this parable represents the Lord Jesus as He ascended into heaven. And as He did, He gave His Holy Spirit to live within each of us who have received His blessed salvation.

And the "Minas", the money, in this parable represents the "Spiritual Gifts" that the Holy Spirit gives to us as He comes to live within us, "Spiritual Gifts" like that of teaching and preaching and serving and giving and evangelizing and on and on. And we are expected to use those "Spiritual Gifts" wisely until the Lord returns.

And yes, as His servants there will surely be a day of accounting, a day when the Lord Jesus will ask each of us, "What did you do with the gifts that I left with you?" Will we be found to have been "good and faithful servants"?

That is what the Lord Jesus is speaking about here in our scripture passage for today. Listen again!

³⁵"Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; ³⁶and 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. ³⁷Blessed *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. ³⁸And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. ⁴⁰Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Luke 12:35-40)

Folks, most everyone we know fears dying. And many fear the day that the Lord will return, knowing that yes, there really will be a final judgment and a final accounting for all that they have done during their lives, their behaviors, their lifestyles, their sins.

But for us who have the Lord Jesus as our Savior, this is what we have to look forward to. Verse 37,

³⁷Blessed *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.(Luke 12:37)

So then, while these words might on the surface seem to present the Master's servants, you and me, as simply waiting behind closed doors for the Master to return. To the contrary, from these other scriptures we have observed today, we can see clearly that as faithful servants, we are to be out and about, fervently giving the gospel to others and humbly serving the other servants of God.

Here, when the Master saw that His servants were watching and waiting, He was so pleased by their faithfulness that He girded Himself about, had His servants sit down at the table, and He came and He served them, the Master, "serving the servants". What a precious and loving reward!

These words are able to tell us so many things that the Lord intends for us to know. First, that this will be the "Royal Reception" that He has planned for us, His faithful servants, as He seats us at that "great banqueting table of the Bride", that "banqueting supper" that will take place in those "Mansions of Glory" in the heavens that Jesus has prepared for us, His "Bride".

But also, may we please not miss out on a very simple truth that the Lord Jesus is also demonstrating for us within these words. The message here is strong and it is directed to you and to me. A message that tells each of us how we should always respond, both within our own role as a servant, but also, and especially in our consideration and behavior towards those other people who spend their lives as humble servants.

As we consider these words, may I remind us that it should be, it must be, one of our most important goals in life to be as much like the Lord Jesus as we can possibly be, to have His character and His loving demeanor towards every other person that we encounter in our day.

And yes, as we mentioned a moment ago, it is always of the most importance to give people the gospel. But here, we see also that our Lord is going beyond those deeper spiritual matters of the gospel to the simple, but profoundly needful matters of humble servanthood.

And the Lord Jesus is here intimating that you and I should always do likewise, to ourselves be willing and quick to "serve the servants".

And so, may I ask each of us, "Are you, am I, a servant? Do we have a servant spirit, a true servant spirit? It does not matter whether we are a "master" or a "servant", a worker on an assembly line, or a "boss man" in an office, the President of the bank or the janitor. Do you, do I have a "servant spirit"?

In the Book of 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the Lord tells all of us who have given our hearts to Him in salvation that we have become a very distinct and very important part of what He calls "the Body of Christ", an integrated and interwoven part of a "Christian Body", a "Body" that is both dependent upon the other parts of the Body for most everything that takes place, and also a part of the Body that other members can depend upon for our help to them.

Folks, this is where those “Spiritual Gifts” that I spoke about a few moments ago, have their usefulness. And again, yes, each of us who have the Holy Spirit living within us, have one or more special Spiritual Gift that we are to use daily as we serve and to bless the other members of the Body of Christ.

And no “gift” is more important than any of the other gifts. Each “gift” is specifically designed for and suited to each individual by the Holy Spirit. Those words in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 11,

¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

As I consider these precious truths of the Lord, I am continually amazed at His provision to us. He doesn’t leave even the smallest matters of life unattended. He provides everything.

He first gives us new life as we are born again in Him. He then draws us to Himself so that we can receive His blessed eternal salvation. And as He does that, He fills us with His blessed Holy Spirit, enabling us to begin our lifelong journey of growing in our relationship with Him.

And now here in these words that we are studying today, we see how our Lord enables us with His Spiritual Gifts to give His precious gospel to anyone and everyone who will listen, while at the same time placing us within a Body of other believers where we can humbly serve together and serve each other until He returns for us. What an amazing plan!

So then, with all of this being said, the question that was posed to us in 2 Peter chapter 3 comes back to the forefront. “What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God?”

These truths that we have considered today give us that answer. As servants of our Lord, we are to humbly take our position within the blessed “Body of Christ”, whatever that position might be. Whether we be the Pastor of the church or the janitor, the “boss man” in the office, or the “worker” on the assembly line. In Colossians 3 the Lord tells us,

²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from

the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24)

And we are to do as these words of our passage tell us,

³⁵“Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; ³⁶and 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. ³⁷Blessed *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. ³⁸And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

. . . ⁴⁰Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Luke 12:35-40)

May we pray!