

Waiting For the Master • Luke 12:35-40

I. INTRODUCTION

A. 2nd Opinion

1. To start a discussion on values, a youth pastor asked the teens:
“What would you do if your doctor told you that you had only 24 hours to live?”
2. As they went around the room, some said they would spend it with friends & family.
3. Others said they would patch up broken relationships.
4. The pastor was pleased with the direction the discussion was going till one 13-year-old, said, “I’d get a second opinion.”

B. 24 Hours

1. What would you do if you found out you only had 24 hours left to live & then you would stand before God?
 2. Are there things left undone in you life that ought to be taken care of?
 3. Are there things left unsaid that need to be spoken before you go?
 4. Friday morning I left the house knowing that I wouldn’t be back till late Saturday night.
 - a. I had a men’s retreat to do Friday & Saturday.
 - b. So when I left Friday morning I hugged & kissed my wife goodbye,
 - c. But I failed to do so with my daughter.
 - d. As I was driving down our street, I realized my omission.
 - e. What if something were to happen to me on the drive up or back to the retreat?
 - f. What if Karesse never had a chance to see her father again?
 - g. What would her last memory of me be?
 - h. I want it to be of me hugging her & telling her how proud of her I am.
 - i. I missed that opportunity Friday.
 5. Are there things left undone & unsaid in your life that need to be taken care of?
-
6. This last Monday evening, one of our brothers here at Calvary made the journey from his kitchen to heaven – and found it was a very short trip.

7. Ken & Barbara Nordin were talking in their kitchen when Ken had a heart attack, then opened his eyes in glory.
8. No warning. No 24 hour lead time.

C. Be Ready

1. Jesus spoke about the urgency that we be ready for His return in the passage before us today.
2. Whether He comes for us individually in death, or collectively in the Rapture – we must be watchful & ready for His return.

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. Let's set the context for what we read here. It's the last months of Jesus' mission.
2. He's in Jerusalem, teaching on the grounds of the temple & any other place people gather to hear Him.
3. Word has gone out from the religious leaders warning people not to listen to Jesus.
4. They threaten excommunication from the synagogue to any who follow Him.
5. Despite the warnings, Jesus remains popular with the common people.
6. As the opposition becomes more hostile, Jesus' message becomes more *urgent & decisive*:
 - a. He makes it clear that people must decide about Him.
 - b. They must take a stand.
7. It's in this context He says -

B. Vs. 35-36

35 "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;

1. This is a picture of *readiness*.
2. Their garments were robes that reached to mid-shin.
 - a. They were too constricting when they needed to move quickly,
 - b. So they would gather them up, & stuff them into their belts, *freeing* their legs.
 - c. A girded waist was a symbol of *freedom*.
3. What Jesus means is that we must keep ourselves *free* of those things that would weigh us down & distract us from Him.
 - a. We must not allow ourselves to become *entangled* in those

things that would pull our hearts away from God.

b. As we read in Hebrews 12:1-2 -

1 . . . since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith . . .

c. In Gal. 5:1 Paul says -

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

d. Be careful of anything that would slow or hinder your response to the Lord when He speaks to you.

e. When the start of a race draws near, the runner doesn't attach ankle weights.

1) She takes off the warm up suit and lays aside any extra weight that would slow her down.

2) The swimmer doesn't put on a tuxedo.

3) Football players don't take tubas into the game.

4) The soccer athlete doesn't play in wooden clogs.

f. We must make sure we are encumbered with distractions that would hamper our readiness to meet the Lord & respond to His call.

-
4. Their lamps were small clay bowls that held olive oil & a wick.
- a. To keep a lamp burning brightly, constant attention was needed.
 - b. The wick had to be kept trimmed or it would start to smoke,
 - c. And the oil had to be kept at the right level.
5. Jesus had told them as they followed him they would be the light of the world.
- a. He also told them the parable of the 10 virgins; 5 who were foolish & 5 who were wise.
 - b. Their wisdom being determined by who kept their lamps filled with oil.
 - c. Oil is a strong symbol of the Holy Spirit in scripture, and that is certainly what Jesus means here.
 - d. The way to be ready is to be filled with & walking in the Spirit.

³⁶ 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.

6. Jewish wedding celebrations were parties that went on for days.
 - a. Guests came & went as they pleased.
 - b. So the servants of a master who'd gone to a wedding never knew when he'd return.
 - c. Not knowing the time of his return, the best posture for them to take is one of always being ready.
-

7. Has someone ever knocked on your door at an inconvenient time?

8. Pastor Richards was doing visitations & dropped by one of the member's homes.
 - a. The car was in the driveway and she looked like she was home, but no one answered the door.
 - b. So he took out one of his cards, turned it over and wrote, "Dear Maggie, Rev. 3:20. Pastor Richards" on it.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.

- c. The next Sunday as he stepped into the pulpit, he saw a little note waiting for him. It read, "Dear Pastor – Gen. 3:10. Maggie"

I heard Your voice . . . and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.

9. It will happen at times that a knock will come at the door & we dare not open!
 - a. Not because of fear who's there -
 - b. But for **embarrassment** for what's on **our side** of the door!
 - c. Maybe it's something we're trying to keep secret.
 - d. So when the knock comes – we hesitate, then rush like mad to dispose of the evidence.

10. That's precisely the picture Jesus is giving here.

11. We must be living in such a way that when Jesus comes, there's no hesitation, no shame, no regret at how He finds us.

12. Let's stop right now & face these words honestly.

13. **IF** Jesus were to return this evening at 6 PM PST – how would He find you?

- a. Ready & eager to go?
- b. Or surprised, embarrassed & regretful?

14. There ought to be *no surprise* at Christ's return for us.
 - a. After all, He said He was coming again.
 - b. If we're ready & waiting like we're supposed to, then there's no room for surprise.

C. V. 37

37 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.

1. Did you catch that? This is an amazing, stunning verse!
 2. In the ancient world, masters did *not* serve their slaves – wasn't done!
 3. So what Jesus is saying here is a uniquely kingdom truth – this is what will happen when the Lord comes for *us*.
 4. He will take us to the glory of heaven, then wait on us! God will serve His people!
 5. What Jesus says here means that we must not think that Jesus' role as servant *ended* when He reassumed His heavenly throne after His ascension.
 6. Jesus did not just play-act at being a man & servant – He was one *fully*, completely - & **HE CONTINUES TO BE** a servant for all eternity!
 7. We serve → a God who serves!
-
8. What Jesus did when He washed the disciples feet wasn't merely a momentary object lesson for them to do to one another.
 - a. It wasn't a one-time thing Jesus lowered Himself to do to teach them.
 - b. It was a profound revelation of the nature & character of God.
 - c. He isn't just some august deity Who sits on a massive throne demanding all creatures worship Him.
 - d. In the midst of all His glory & power He serves, gives, blesses, & bestows.
 9. Heaven is not going to be one long boring church service folks.
 10. It's going to be a fantastic, holy party were life as God intended it for us is finally realized.

D. V. 38

38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in

the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

1. The 2nd watch was from 9 to midnight; the 3rd watch was from midnight to 3 am.
2. Because they didn't have street lights, the streets usually cleared shortly after dark.
3. It was unusual for someone to be out after 10 PM.
4. What Jesus means here is that the *good servants* are those who are ready for their master's return, no matter how late it is.
5. 2,000 years have passed since Jesus came. And for many it seems very late.
 - a. Some have given up on the hope He would come again.
 - b. Others think His return is way off in the future.
6. Jesus spoke these words with a sense of *urgency* – that we must not grow weary in waiting & watching.
7. Even though it's late, or even though His return may seem far off – the fact is – He could come at any moment.
8. The only way to be ready is to live as though He could come today!
 - a. Because even if the Rapture is still years off –
 - b. None of us knows the number of days left to us.
9. A few years ago, Jeanne Calment was the oldest living human whose age can be verified.
 - a. On her 120th birthday, she was asked to describe her vision for the future.
 - b. Her reply was = “Very brief.”
10. Another woman was asked the *benefits* of living to the age of 102. After a pause, she answered, “No peer pressure!”
11. No matter how old we may get, no one escapes the end of this life.
 - a. Whether it's through death or the Rapture, our end is coming.
 - b. **WHEN** it comes, no one knows.

E. V. 39-40

³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour

you do not expect.”

1. Jesus switches the image here a bit & speaks of a burglary.
2. If the homeowner knew when & where the thief was going to break in, he'd be able to stop him.
3. But it's the *nature* of a burglary that it comes at a time least expected.
4. So what does the smart homeowner do?
 - a. He secures his house as best as he can,
 - b. And stays attentive to any evidence of a thief's intention to rob him.
5. Jesus applies that to us. We must take action to make sure we're ready no matter when Jesus comes.
6. How can we do that? As William Barclay said, “The best way to prepare for the *coming* of Christ is never to forget the *presence* of Christ.”
7. The way we can be watchful & ready for the Lord's return is not by staring at the clouds for signs in the heavens.
8. It's by walking in the Spirit & being so close to Him *now* that when He comes, it's no real surprise.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Grisham

1. Before John Grisham became the well-known author he is today, he was an unknown, small-town lawyer.
2. Though Grisham has become a super-star, he still makes a concerted effort to focus on things that have lasting meaning, including his faith in God.
3. He remembers, as a young law student, the advice of a friend.
4. Grisham writes,

“One of my best friends in college died when he was 25, just a few years after we graduated from Mississippi State University. I was in law school, and he called me one day and wanted to get together. So we had lunch, and he told me he had cancer. I couldn't believe it.”

“What do you do when you realize you are about to die?” I asked.

“It's real simple,” he said. “You get things right with God, and you spend as much time with those you love as you can. Then

you settle up with everybody else.”

Finally he said, “You know, really, you ought to live every day like you have only a few more days to live.” I haven't forgotten those words.

5. Actually, Jesus narrows that even further. We ought to live as though He could come today.