

THE BOOK OF LUKE
STUDY TWENTY-TWO (LUKE 12:41-48)
THE FAITHFUL SERVANT, PART 2
JUNE 15, 2008

MEMORY VERSE

Be dressed and ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding.” Luke 12:35-36

INTRODUCTION

All of the Old Testament points to the coming of Christ—Genesis set the foundation for Christ, the books of history prepared us for Christ, the Psalms hoped for Christ, and the books of prophecy predicted Christ. Moreover, *God’s people*, the Israelites, held knowledge of the coming of Christ and were entrusted by God with His Word, His Law and His Message. They were the stewards over God’s riches and would have been the first to recognize the coming of the Son of Man. However, most of God’s people did not recognize Christ as the Messiah when He came. Only a few were found vigilant; among these were Simeon who was characterized as “righteous and devout, *waiting* for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25b) and Anna the Prophetess, who devoted her time to fasting and praying continuously (Luke 2:38). Jesus picks up this idea of *waiting* and readiness in Luke 12:35-48, and applies it to the religious leaders and to His disciples.

In Luke 12:35, Jesus begins the Parable of the Waiting Servant with the exhortation to be dressed and ready for action as men waiting for their master’s return. Having diligently waited, the faithful servant is invited to recline at the master’s table and is blessed by his presence. The context of this parable is crucial to its meaning. To understand the full impact of the second half of the parable, we must visit Luke 11:37-53—the six woes to the Pharisees. In this passage, only a short while before the Parable of the Waiting Servant, Jesus begins rebuking the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and their failure to rightly manage the nation. In that day, the Pharisees were one of the primary religious leaders who were revered by the people but who also, as we mentioned above, were the stewards of God’s riches. However, Jesus rebukes them for their unfaithfulness. When we finally get to Peter’s question in Luke 12:40, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” we notice that Jesus does not directly answer him. Jesus proceeds to ask a rhetorical question, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household...?” The question you must ask yourself is “Who, at the time of Jesus, were the managers over God’s household *and* were they faithful?” The answer is clear from the previous passages in Luke 11:37-53 that the religious leaders were not the faithful and wise managers over God’s household and furthermore were unaware of Christ’s coming. The verses following Peter’s question, of the unfaithful servant, paints a clear picture of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God’s household.

Although Jesus is addressing the religious leaders at the time, He powerfully exhorts the listening disciples. The lesson to the disciples is this: if Israel, who was given the riches of God’s Word, Law and Message had ceased waiting and who were unable to recognize their messiah when he came, how much more should we be careful that Christ finds us waiting when He returns again? Let us heed the lesson of the Israelites and be found as Simeon and Anna, actively waiting faithfully for the coming of our Lord and King.

GOING DEEPER

- 1) As bondservants of the Lord, we have been given the riches of His Kingdom, His Word, His Gospel message, and the promise that He will one day come again—all similar things which were given to the Jewish nation. However, the religious leaders proved unfaithful in this task. Throughout the New Testament, we are exhorted to live lives worthy of the Lord and are strongly urged that we live lives faithfully so that we may be found pure and blameless at the coming of our Lord. How do we faithfully and expectantly live for the return of our Lord so as not to make the same mistake? What does that look like practically? In this week's parable, the word awake is used in Luke 12:37 and 1 Thess. 5:6. The word, awake, literally means watch or refrains from sleep but spiritually it means attention to God's revelation. Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5. How does this passage tell us to be ready for the coming of the Lord and the importance of staying awake?

SERVING AND BEING SERVED

There are many distractions in this world to living our lives for the Lord. While still here, we are called to live lives of holiness and purity and in expectation of Christ's return. So how do we stay undistracted in these matters? One way, Paul often tells us, is to encourage one another. 1 Thessalonians 4:18 says, "Therefore encourage one another with these words." We need one another's encouragement to keep on pressing on in this walk of faith. To encourage literally means to "put courage into". This week, find one person in your small group to "put courage into". Write them a letter or give them a call.

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
THE FAITHFUL SERVANT, PART 2
STUDY TWENTY-TWO - JUNE 15, 2008

CONNECT25 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Questions:

1. What is your biggest distraction in life?
2. When a loved one is away for an extended amount of time, what do you like to do for them when they return?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group)5 MINUTES

Be dressed and ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding.”
Luke 12:35-36

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING30 MINUTES

1. As a small group, commit to encourage one another and hold each other accountable to continuously “press on” in living your lives in purity and holiness in expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Continue to pray for the leadership of RCC as they seek direction and guidance from the Lord regarding the future of our church.
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group