Parable of Watchful Servants

Luke 12:35-48
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Texts:

Luke 12:35-48,

35. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;
36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.
37. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.
38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.
39. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.
40. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.
41. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?
42. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?
43. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.
44. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.
45. But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken;
46. The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.  
47. And that servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.  
48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Commentary:

Luke 12:35-38, Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

I. Disciples, servants of Christ, are to be dressed with lights burning as people watching for their Lord.

   A. When the Lord returns from the marriage feast and knocks on the door, the servants, disciples are able to promptly open the door and welcome their Lord.

   B. Those servants who are ready and watchful for their Lord’s return are blessed, happy.
C. The Lord will honor his faithful servants by preparing a meal for them and serving them himself.

D. Those who are watchful at all hours of the day and night are the ones to be particularly blessed.

II. Parabolic representations:

A. The Lord – Jesus Christ.

B. The marriage feast – Jesus’ ascension to glory.

C. The Lord’s return – second coming of Christ.

D. Loins girded, lamps burning – faithful Christian service.

E. Second, third watches – indefinite time of second coming.

F. Lord’s blessing faithful servants – eternal joys of the saved.

G. Watchfulness of servants – faithfulness of Christians.

H. Unfaithful servants cut in sunder – eternal destruction of the wicked.

III. Lessons from this parable.

A. The time of Christ’s second coming is uncertain. We are to be constantly watchful. Jesus may return today or a million years from today.
B. Christ is now at the marriage feast in heaven. He is now enjoying the “marriage feast,” his presence with the Father.

C. Customary long flowing robes would hinder some forms of activity. Therefore, Christian servants are to have their “loins girded about” ready for work.

D. The second and third of the Roman watches fell in the dead of night. The Jews divided time into three watches. The point is that our Lord may come unexpectedly at anytime. We are to always be ready and watchful!

Luke 12:39, 40, And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

I. Another view, metaphor is now presented teaching the same need for readiness and watchfulness.

A. If the householder, master of the house had known when the thief was coming to rob him, he would have watched and not left his house unguarded to be ransacked.

B. We are to be constantly watchful because, when we least expect the second coming of Christ, he may well without notice appear.

C. Be ready! 1 Thessalonians 5:2, For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
Luke 12:41, Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

I. At this point Peter interrupted with a question, “Are you talking just to us apostles or are you talking to everybody?”

A. Jesus elsewhere told everyone to watch.

B. Mark 13:27, And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

C. Here the answer was somewhat different.

Luke 12:42, And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

I. Jesus answered Peter:

A. “Who is the faithful and wise steward whom his Lord will set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season?”

B. Steward, one entrusted with the property and responsibility of another, refers to those who are in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. The apostles and all others who are committed faithful servants of Christ are included in the command, “Be ye also ready . . .”
Luke 12:43, 44, Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

I. Jesus says the servant who is found faithful and watchful at the coming of the Lord will be blessed.

II. The servants found ready and watchful when Jesus returns will be elevated to great honor, responsibility and glory.

   A. They will be set over all the returning Lord owns which is everything.

Luke 12:45, 46, But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken; The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

I. If, on the other hand, the servant is not vigilant, thinks his Lord’s return has been delayed, and shall mistreat other of the Lord’s servants, while being selfish, gluttonous and drunken, totally irresponsible . . .

II. The Lord when he comes unexpectedly will cut asunder the unfaithful servant, give to him what he deserves for his wickedness.

III. Lessons:

   A. Some first century Christians believed Jesus would return during their lifetimes. Passages such as these in this lesson did not teach this.
B. Jesus did teach he would, for a definite fact, return! When? He didn’t say. We must constantly be ready for his return!

C. If we act as if we do not believe in the second coming of Christ or if we do not remain faithful and watchful, we will, at the return of the Lord, be condemned at the judgment and cast into hell.

D. The Lord will return to judge the living and the dead!

1. Daniel 2:5, The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

2. Daniel 3:29, Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort.

3. Cutting asunder refers to the severest of punishments.

4. None will be punished more than is deserved.

Luke 12:47, 48, And that servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto
whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

I. That servant who knew his Lord’s will, made not ready for the Lord’s return, and did not do his Lord’s will shall be beaten with many stripes.

II. That servant who did not know his Lord’s will and inadvertently did things worthy of stripes will be beaten with few stripes.

III. Any person to whom much is given will have much required of him. The person who has much entrusted to him will have much asked, required of him.

IV. Will there be degrees of reward and punishment in eternity?

A. H. Leo Boles said, “The punishment will be proportioned to the powers, gifts, opportunities, and knowledge of the offenders.”
Parable of Watchful Servants

Questions

1. Representations in this parable are as follows:
   The Lord – ________________________________________________;
   The marriage feast – _______________________________________
   The Lord’s return – _________________________________________;
   Loins girded, lamp burning – ________________________________;
   Second, third watches – ____________________________________;
   Lord’s blessing faithful servants – ____________________________;
   Watchfulness of servants – _________________________________;
   Unfaithful servants cut asunder – ____________________________;

2. List four lessons this parable teaches. __________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. Who is that faithful and wise steward whom his Lord shall make ruler
   over his household?________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. What will happen to us if we think the Lord is delaying his coming
   and fall back into sin? ______________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
5. In view of Luke 12:47, 48, will there be degrees of rewards and punishments in the world to come?