**Faithful as We Wait for Christ’s Coming**

Matthew 24:45-25:13

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Kingdom Come! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

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**livinghopechurch.net**

The fact that Jesus Christ is to come again is not a reason for star-gazing, but for working in the power of the Holy Ghost.

**~ C.H. Spurgeon**

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pen your Bible to **Matthew 24**.We are getting back to our series in the book of Matthew entitled “Kingdom Come.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “Faithful as We Wait for Christ’s Coming.”

**Proposition**: Because Jesus could come at any time, you need to be faithful with what He’s given you.

**“I’m Ready Lord!”**

With our studies in the Olivet Discourse, and all our talk of the Second Coming, it’s having an effect on the people at Living Hope.

Just the other day, Jonathan Klikas was on the bus coming home from school, and he was explaining to a friend that Jesus could come at any time. It was a cloudy day and they saw a break in the clouds. Suddenly the brightness of the sun poured through the sky. Someone in the back of the bus started playing a trumpet salute, and Jonathan stood up and shouted, “I’m ready Lord!”

Have you ever felt that way? Jesus could come back at any moment.

**Introduction**

I love this passage because Jesus gives **four parables** to illustrate how we can faithfully wait for His coming. The stories He tells identify four areas of our life that we need to manage well while we are waiting.

* Your heart
* Your worship
* Your stuff
* Your church

These are four treasures God has given you to use wisely. They are precious to Him. He wants you to pay careful attention to how you use these treasures for His glory. We will look at two of them today.

1. Be faithful with your **heart**: Guard your **Heart** Well, Mt 24:45-52.

**Why This Parable is Different**

This parable is different than others because instead of comparing two distinct people, Jesus compares two types of living – the wise or wicked servant. Or we could say the one who has a wise or wicked heart.

Which kind of heart do you have? If you have a wise heart, you will be faithful in all you do. This doesn’t mean you are perfect, but you will have a practice of faithfulness in your life.

**HE WISE SERVANT IS TRANSFORMED BY HIS MASTER**

**The Parable of the Wise Hearted Manager**

**Matthew 24:45-47**, “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.”

**The Wicked and the Wise**

What makes the evil servant wicked is that his **values** are set upon himself and upon this world – he thinks that he has ownership over the things of this life. Anyone who thinks that is wicked. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” – if you want to be wise you must not see your life is your own – you must not see this world is your own – this world is passing away and one day Christ will reclaim it for himself.

**The Difference is the Heart**

The point of this parable is that **this man was not a good manager** of all of his master’s ***possessions*** and his Master’s ***people***, **because he didn’t manage his own heart well**. He was ***wicked*** servant, not “the faithful and wise servant.” What makes the difference? His own heart.

***Explanation*: Knowing that Jesus is Coming again will Transform You!**

The point of the Bible’s teaching on the second coming of Christ is not to help us find that great day. It’s not how we will find the great day, but how that great day will find us. The point of the teaching of the Bible and the second coming is always ethical in its force. The Bible is saying, “Don’t worry about when it’s coming. Just know it can come any time and consider what kind of lifestyle, urgency, joy, optimism, and energy will be the life characteristics of anyone who lives in the light of the second coming of Jesus Christ.” That’s how we’re supposed to live.

The Bible says some amazing things. First John 3 says, “We do not know what he is like, but we know when he appears we will be like him. Anyone who hopes for that purifies himself as he is pure.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

***Illustration*: Longing for Something Transforms You**

It’s a hilarious thing. Erma Bombeck says in her book,[[2]](#footnote-2) “I can just look at certain kinds of food, and I see my hips growing.” She says, “Why should I even eat this spaghetti? Why not just apply it to my hips?” She says, “Just looking at certain chocolate makes your face break out.” I’ve heard those kinds of jokes. In other words, here’s a chocolate so powerful you just want it and it gives you zits. Here’s spaghetti that’s so fattening just wanting it will make you fat.

Actually, the Bible literally says, ‘Here’s a day so glorious that just yearning for it will transform you into its likeness.’ It says in Colossians 3, “… your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

***Application*: The Faithful Heart is Diligent**

What’s the difference between the wise and wicked steward? The wise steward is transformed by the thought of his Master’s coming. He was surrendered to his Master. He took his Master seriously.

***Application*: Who are You?**

Who are you? The more you look to Christ’s coming, the more you will understand your identity. Why are you spending so much time and money trying to figure out who you are? I don’t know who I am. I’m one way with my family, I’m one way with you, I’m one way … That’s not what it is. Who am I? I know this. I’m never going to completely figure that out until the day I see him face to face, and the more I yearn for that day, the more I live in light of that day, the more I order my life toward that day, the more even now I come to find out who I am, and the more my life is filled with purpose, power, and peace.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Transformation Changes What You Do Now**

Notice how diligent the wise servant is when he sets his heart on his Master’s business. Mt 24:46, “Blessed is that servant whom his master will find **so doing** when he comes.” What is your heart set on? Are you set on your Master’s business? This is the secret to wisdom. The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh 8:10). What you DO comes out of the overflow of your heart.

The fear of the Lord – the realization of God’s presence – is the beginning of wisdom. You are never alone. He is always with you. You ignore that truth to your own peril.

Knowing God is with you will keep you wise and holy.

**REWARDED AT HIS COMING**

**Transformation Changes What You Do After Jesus’ Comes**

**Mt 24:47**, “Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.” There are rewards when Jesus comes. When the Master comes, He will reward you openly.

Saint of God, aren’t you glad you are a co-heir with Christ? If you are, it will show with what you do here and now. One day you will inherit the cosmos. The meek shall inherit the earth. The sign that you will one day have all things in Christ is that you are living for eternity here and now.

**Aging Calvin**

Toward the end of John Calvin’s life, when his friends wanted him to work less for the sake of his declining health, he would often reply to them, “Would you have my Master find me idle?”[[5]](#footnote-5)

**THE WICKED SERVANT IS TRANSFORMED BY THE WORLD**

**Mt 24:48-50**, “But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know…”

**The Selfish / Wicked Heart**

A wicked heart is focused narrowly on self. It is the selfish heart that forgets God. “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (**Psa 14:1**).

“Believing that the master is long gone, this slave’s **true nature** takes over. The imagery of violence and carousing was a common picture of depravity in the ancient world. There are stories of Nero going out with armed guards and beating strangers to death at random just for R and R.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Out of the Heart Flows the Fountain of Life**

You must understand that out of your inner heart life, your thoughts, your desires, etc, flow your whole life. Who you are when no one else is around is who you are.

**The Bad Servant**

Not much is said about the good servant, only that he gave the other servants their food at the proper time. Jesus may be thinking of spiritual food and of the service of ministers in teaching the Bible. On the other hand, a great deal is said about the bad servant. His service is marked by three vices.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Three Vices of the Lost**

1. *Carelessness*. He neglects his work because, he says, “My master is staying away a long time” (v. 48).

2. *Cruelty.* The second vice of the wicked servant is cruelty to his fellow servants, because he began “to beat” them (v. 49). This is like the Pharisees whom Jesus said would pursue, flog, kill, and crucify his servants (Matt. 23:34), only here it is not merely the apostles and missionaries who are beaten. The underservants are beaten, and the one doing the beating is a person who claims to be a servant of the Lord. Think of the Apostle Paul before he was saved. This is exactly the kind of person he was. He was cruel.

3. *Carousing.* Finally, the Lord denounces the wicked servant for his carousing, noting that he has begun “to eat and drink with drunkards” (v. 49). He is behaving like those living in the days of Noah who were “eating and drinking” and “knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away” (vv. 38–39).[[8]](#footnote-8)

**JUDGED AT HIS COMING**

**Mt 24:51**, “But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In Luke’s Gospel, we hear additional interpretation of this parable. Look over at **Lk 12:27-28**. There are levels of punishment in eternity.

**Luke 12:47-48**, “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. **48**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 much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.”

**BE FAITHFUL WITH YOUR HEART**

Set your heart on Christ – it will transform your heart!

1. Be faithful with your **worship**: Celebrate **God** Well, Mt 25:1-13.

Now we have another parable about faithful waiting for Christ. It’s not about your heart, but about your worship. How are you going to celebrate God while you wait?

**The Parable of the Prepared Party Planners**

**Matthew 25:1-4**, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.”

**Context**

So the context of this parable is that you have a big party that starts out at the bride’s home with just her relatives there. That’s in the morning. But as the day goes on, the party shifts to the groom’s home where not just family but friends are invited.

Often this party when long into the night, so you needed your torches with oil flasks. You would have a stick with a heavy cloth or rope wrapped at the top dipped in oil. And of course you needed flasks of oil.

**The Midnight Cry**

The Bridegroom was delayed, and so everyone fell asleep. Nothing wrong with this. The fact that everyone falls asleep shows it’s a ***surprise***. It’s ***unexpected***.

It’s normal. We all get tired. There is no spiritual application. It’s just a normal part of the story. We are all going to be surprised by Jesus’ coming. That’s the point. But there is a difference between the virgins who had oil and those who didn’t. One group was not expecting the Bridegroom to be so long delayed. The others didn’t know, but loved him enough to prepare for his coming.

**Mt 25:6-10**, “As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.”

The idea is that there were those who were ready to celebrate the Bridegroom. The five unprepared virgins were not part of the bridal party. They didn’t know the Bridegroom so well that they thought it important to prepare for anything.

But the true children of God prepare for the Bridegroom. We always have oil in our lamps, ready to celebrate the Bridegroom.

**How Sad for the Unprepared Virgins**

**Mt 25:6-11-13**, “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

**HOW CAN WE CELEBRATE JESUS WHILE WE WAIT?**

Celebrate Him **personally**. Private devotion is where the heart is transformed and filled with His love and power. Take time to be holy in your personal life.

Celebrate Him in your **privately** (in your family).

Celebrate Him **corporately**. Be with other bridesmaids as it were. Join with the church. As Augustine said, “If the church is not your mother, then it is sure that God is not your Father.” Seek Him on the Lord’s day. Celebrate Him with your ***time*** and ***treasure***. Celebrate Him by your ***service***. How are you celebrating Him by serving Him?

Celebrate Christ **publically**. I don’t mean like a Pharisee where you wear your religion on your sleeve. I mean speak of Him. Yes persecution will come, but be bold for Christ.

1. Keller, T. J. (2013). *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*. New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church. Sermon on Luke 12:35-46. When He Comes. April 8, 1990. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Erma Bombeck, When God Created Mothers. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Keller, Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Keller, Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Calvin, quoted in J. C. Ryle, *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1993), p. 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Osborne, G. R. (2010). *Matthew* (Vol. 1, p. 910). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Boice, J. M. (2001). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 520). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Boice, 520-521. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)