Who then is the faithful and wise manager?

Luke 12:35-48

Key Verse 12:42

**The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?”**

From the last Sunday message we learned to persevere in our spiritual race, following Jesus’ example by faith. Now from today we go back to Luke’s gospel again. If you look at Luke chapter 12, today’s passage is continuation of Jesus’ teaching for his disciples started in verse 22. From verse 22 to right up to before today’s passage Jesus taught his disciples not to worry about their life or body or what to eat or what to wear. He encouraged them to sell their possessions and give to the poor. So, five weeks ago, the messenger of the passage, sh. William, sold his Friday evening time to serve young disciples’ meeting. I also made a decision to sell my 8 pm to lead evening prayer meetings.

Now in today’s passage Jesus wants his disciples to be ready for his second coming by becoming faithful and wise manager. Jesus wants them not only to sell their possession and give physical food to the poor but also give spiritual food to the poor.

To have someone who can give proper food allowance at the proper time is so essential to men and animals. I have one cat in my house. Usually Maria feeds him. But when Maria went to Korea I fed him twice. I could feed him because I could notice a very special tone in his voice when he cried out. Living together with the cat for 7or 8 years including two years inside of our house I could notice the difference in his voice when he is desperate. The first and second day when Maria was away I heard his desperate voice. I could distinctively recognize his different tone of voice and fed him twice. To me, he was saying something like this, “Master John Kwon. Have mercy on me. I don’t know what happened. But Maria did not feed me. I am so hungry. Please have mercy on me and feed me.” Come to think of it, to me to give the food to the cat was just one choir. But to the cat it is the matter of life and death. What if I am merciless and do not give food to the cat? He could starve and eventually lose his life. Indeed to have someone who can give proper amount of food at the proper time is so essential for men and animals.

So in today’s passage Jesus wants his disciples to be the faithful and wise manager who can give food allowance at the proper time to other servants. Let us see how Jesus taught them.

My message has two parts. Part I. You also must be ready (v.35-40) Part II. From the one who has been entrusted much, much more will be asked (v.41-48)

**Part I. You also must be ready (v.35-40)**

Look at verses 35-38.

**35“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36like servants 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. 37It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. 38It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak.”**

Jesus called his disciples ‘servants’ and himself as ‘master’. Does he do so in order to honor him? No, he did so so that he wants to teach the importance of serving. He will still serve for his disciples when he comes again even though he is their master.

He described his disciples as servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet. So they were watching and ready to open the door immediately whenever their master comes and knocks the door. What would be their reward? The master would serve them in return. It shows that Jesus was very fair. **Luke 6:38b reads, “For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”** They served Jesus as servants. Now Jesus will serve them as their servant when he comes back. This is a glorious blessing and reward for those who serve Jesus. The only trouble is that the servants do not know when their master would return. He could return in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. One thing is for sure. He will come when they do not expect him. So the only way for them to welcome him is to keep watching and be dressed ready for service all the time.

The main character of our spiritual life is to keep watching and being ready for service. There is no time of being lazy. If we want to take life easy and become lazy, we will fail to welcome Jesus when he comes.

Look at verses 39 and 40.

**39But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”**

In these verses Jesus directly told his disciples that he was talking about his second coming and his people should be ready for his coming all the time because he will come at an hour when they do not expect him. He made it clear that the only way to welcome him is keep watching and being ready for him.

Jesus described the life of his disciples as the life of waiting in hope of his return.

Now in verse 39 Jesus talks about the owner of the house and the thief. The owner wants to guard his house against the thief. But he cannot do so because he does not know when the thief is coming. Figuratively speaking, Jesus can be compared to the thief, and the owner of the house represents all people. The owner of the house represents people who think that they are the owner of their houses. To them, Jesus’ coming will be like a thief.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2** reads, **“For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”**

For the man who is not ready for Jesus, his coming will be like a thief in the night. To him Jesus will be like a thief because his house will be broken into. He thought he was the owner of his house. But when Jesus comes he will know he was only a tenant and Jesus is the real owner.

Those who think their houses, their lives, talents, money, gifts and blessings, are theirs will be greatly surprised at Jesus’ coming.

God does not want his people to know the time of Jesus’ coming because it helps them to be faithful. If they know the hour of Jesus’ coming, they may be lazy and abusive. If they know the time of Jesus’ coming there is no way to distinguish the faithful servants from unfaithful ones. So God in his wisdom, sealed the date and hour of Jesus’ coming for the benefit of his people who will be able to demonstrate they are faithful servants. There are wicked servants, and their true color will be shown when Jesus comes.

Jesus’ conclusion for his disciples is “You also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” Jesus’ teaching applies to everyone although he gave today’s teaching to his disciples. When Jesus said, “You also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” it means his disciples were not exception. Although they were privileged and honored as twelve disciples of Jesus, they also should be ready like the other believers. No one knows when Jesus will come again. Therefore, everyone including Jesus’ twelve disciples must be ready.

The promise of Jesus’ second coming is one of God’s major promises to his people. **Hebrews 11:13** reads, “**All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.”**

**Hebrews 11:39-40** reads, “**39These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”**

So all believers lived by faith so far, and none of them had received what had been promised, and one of major promises is Jesus’ second coming. Only after full number of God’s people has been saved together with all of us, all believers ahead of us and behind us would experience Jesus’ second coming. He will come as the master. But as today’s passage reveals, to his disciples who faithfully waited for him he will serve as their servant as he did when he first came to earth.

**Part II. From the one who has been entrusted much, much more will be asked (v.41-48)**

Look at **verses 41-44.**

**“Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?” 42The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.**

When Peter heard, “you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him, his pride was hurt. He thought that he should be exceptions. Jesus’ teaching should apply to others rather than 12 disciples. So although today’s passage was delivered to Jesus disciples, he asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?” Jesus did not answer directly. The truth is it applies to everyone including Peter and Jesus’ other twelve disciples. But in order to answer Peter’s question, Jesus revealed the privilege of his disciples, and the privilege belonged to only his disciples rather than everyone.

What kind of privilege do Jesus’ disciples have? Their privilege is to be entrusted by their master to give food allowance at the proper time to all the other servants of their master.

When Jesus said, “who then is the faithful and wise manager?” Jesus was revealing he was seeking such faithful and wise manager. At the same time Jesus revealed his expectation and hope that Peter would become the faithful and wise manager. Jesus revealed his great reward to such faithful and wise manager that he will put him in charge of all his possessions, meaning all of his people.

The manager has a great privilege because he represents his master while his master is away. He has great privilege because he has access to the storeroom of his master, and use food there according to his master’s will. Other servants of his master would not have such privilege to have access to the master’s storehouse and authority to give food allowance at the proper time. So indeed to give them their food allowance at the proper time is his privilege and at the same time his responsibility. Privilege and responsibility come together. By depending on how we see we can see it as ‘privilege’ or ‘responsibility’ which means ‘blessing’ or ‘burden’.

To feed Jesus’ sheep is our privilege but at the same time it is our responsibility. We may feel more of ‘responsibility’ and think it as ‘burden’. But the truth is it is also ‘privilege’. To feed Jesus’ sheep is privilege because it means we are so privileged to know Jesus personally. We are so privileged to know the word of God personally. We are so privileged that we have healthy body to feed Jesus’ sheep. We are privileged to have time and strength to feed Jesus’ sheep. So we should regard our responsibility to feed Jesus’ sheep as our great privilege. Indeed to be the faithful and wise manager is our responsibility but also privilege. But what happens when we see it only as ‘responsibility’? We will lose our privilege.

Now look at verses 45-46.

**45But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.**

The man understood to be faithful and wise manager only as responsibility and burden. So he was looking for a way to lay down his burden of responsibility. Then he found one good excuse which was his assumption. He said to himself, “**‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’**. He assumed his master would not return soon. Then he began to abuse his privilege. He began to beat other servants rather than providing their food allowance at the proper time. He began to eat and drink and get drunk. He did not want to work. He wanted to forget about all of his responsibilities. So he got drunk. How long could he do so? Not long. His master **would come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He would cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.**

It turned out that he was like unbeliever although he was called as Jesus’ servant. His action and behavior shows he was an unbeliever. So the master assigned him a place with the unbelievers.

Our action shows us what we believe. Even if we call ourselves Jesus’ servants or disciples, our action will show if we are true disciples or servants of Jesus. It will show if we are practical unbelievers.

Look at verses 47-48.

**47“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**

In his judgment the master will be very fair. If someone knows the master’s will and does not do he will be beaten with many blows. But if someone does things deserving punishment without knowing his master’s will he will be punished less. The truth is from everyone who has been given much much will be demanded and from the one who has been entrusted with much much more will be asked. This shows that privilege is given first such as ‘everyone who has been given much’ and ‘the one who has been entrusted with much.” Responsibility comes later in the future. God called us to be bible teachers and we have been given much. We have personal knowledge of God and his words. God also sends us bible students. He gives us the Holy Spirit and much more.

In my case much has been given to me. So much more will be asked. All my responsibility comes as the result of much entrusted to me. So I should see it as privilege rather than responsibility or burden.

To have someone who can give us proper amount of spiritual food at the proper time is a great blessing. Even to provide proper amount of physical food to ourselves requires faithfulness.

Few days ago, Martha and I had a big fat lunch at buffet restaurant. My stomach was full. But to my great surprise I began to eat peanuts as soon as we arrived home. While I was eating I was wondering “why do I eat again when I am really full?” I could not understand. I only felt that I was craving to eat more when I was extremely full. So even though I felt it was strange I kept on eating. It was not only I myself who was surprised but also Martha was. She told me, “Our body is designed to stop eating when we are full. But if we keep on eating it means our body is out of order.” At that moment I realized that I am out of order in eating.

Then I believe next morning God’s insight came to me. God revealed to me that all my diet to loose weight such as not eating when I am not hungry or eating one meal a day or two meals a day or skip dinner or any irregular eating is all against my wish of losing weight. To eat irregular way is to the way to break my own good habit of eating. The best way to loose weight and the best diet is to eat at the proper time, 3 times a day, with proper amount, and balanced meal. So I decided to use a tray to control the amount of food I eat.

One famous Japanese doctor, whose name is **Shinya Hiromi**, has been working in New York and Japan. He wrote a book for healthy living. He is a doctor of stomach and intestines. He is the one who pioneered the use of a colonoscope to remove polyps from the colon without abdominal incisions. According to him he drinks water one hour before meals, and then half an hour before meal he eats fruits and then he eats meals. He recommended his diet to all of his patients and none of them died out of cancer. He claimed that he saw 300,000 people’s stomach and intestines in his 45 years of practice. When I try to follow his diet it requires a faithfulness.

Now if to provide proper amount of physical food for ourselves at the proper time requires such faithfulness how much more faithfulness will we need to provide proper amount of spiritual food at the proper time to others? So Jesus described such a person as ‘the faithful and wise manager.’

One word: who then is the faithful and wise manager?