**Be Dressed Ready for Service**

Luke 12:35-48

Key Verse 35

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,”

**Introduction**

 Throughout chap. 12, the underlying theme may be the kingdom of God. There is a great deal of emphasis on Heaven and hell. Verses 4-5 reads, “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.” When we learn about the “Rich Fool” we are encouraged to be rich toward God. Verse 30 reads, “But seek his kingdom,and these things will be given to you as well.” Also verses 32 reads, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” Verses 33-34 reads,

“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

 In today’s passage, heaven is again compared to sitting at the Master’s table. It’s also compared to being put in charge of the master’s possessions. Meanwhile, hell is compared to being cut to pieces, beaten, and thrown into prison. The focus of today’s passage is that Jesus will come suddenly, bringing with him both judgment and the kingdom of God. So in this passage Jesus commanded his disciples to get ready for his second coming. From this we can learn what our role is while we live here on earth. We can also learn what kind of life we should live and the consequences, depending of what kind of life we choose.

1. **Read verses 35-37. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do? (35, 36) What does it mean to ‘keep your lamps burning’? How is ‘being ready for service’ related to Jesus’ 2nd coming? What did Jesus promise to His faithful servants? (37)**

**1-1, Read verses 35-37.**

 35 “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like 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. 37 It 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.

**1-2, What did Jesus tell his disciples to do? (35, 36)**

 ***“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like 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.***

* In the Bible, Jesus clearly tells us that there will be an end to time. Just as there was a beginning, there will be an end.
* This will happen when Christ returns in glory as King and Judge. All of human history is moving toward this one universal event.
* When Christ comes, he rewards or punishes each and every person without missing one, both the living and the dead.

2 Corinthians 5:10 reads,

 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

* We are all destined to meet him for judgment.
* “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning”
* Jesus is our Master. We are his servants.
* Servants are those who live to serve the Master and his will.
* We are servants who are waiting for our master’s coming but still doing the work that the Master assigned to each of us.
* Servants were supposed to be ready to welcome their master by opening the door at once when the Master comes back.
* Jesus told his disciples to be ready for His second coming.
* Jesus’ command was given not just to his twelve disciples but also to all believers who wait for his coming.
* In short, being ready to welcome the Master is our job as his servants.

**1-3,** **What does it mean to ‘keep your lamps burning’?**

* The time of our Master’s return is uncertain. He could come back even after midnight.
* ‘Keep your lamps burning’ means to be ready to welcome the master even at night. It also means that the disciples should be alert at night which is a difficult time for his servants to be alert and ready.
* The disciples should be ready to welcome Jesus any time.

**1-4, How is ‘being ready for service’ related to Jesus’ 2nd coming?**

* Our Master is away from us and will return again.
* His servants are waiting for their Master’ glorious appearing.
* Jesus is coming back as the bridegroom to be united with his bride, his people, and to take them into the eternal kingdom of God.
* He will reward his servants according to whether they were faithful on that day.

**1-5, What did Jesus promise to His faithful servants? (37)**

 ***It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. “he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”***

* Being ready for service’ means to be alert and spiritually awake and serve God’s will, so that we may be found as faithful servants when he comes back.
* The master will serve the faithful servant and let them eat at the table.
* Usually masters don’t serve their servants even though the servants serve them with hard work. But our master Jesus is different. He is willing to serve his servants. He had already served his disciples by washing their feet. (John 13)
* The Lord Jesus will honor the faithful servants when he comes back and let them enjoy the heavenly banquet.
* It is the greatest honor that a mere man can ever receive.
* In this way, Jesus honors his ready servants. Jesus appreciates them, provides for them, and shares his reign with them.
* When we are faithful for few decades before Jesus, we are privileged to recline at the table in Heaven and enjoy a sweet relationship with Him for good!

**2 Timothy 2:2 reads,**

 “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2 reads,**

 “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. **2** Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

* We must live before God, not before men.
* We must pursue God’s recognition, not men’s.

**2. Read verses 38-40. Who will be recognized as a good servant by their master? (38) Why should we always be ready? (39, 40) How can we always be ready?**

**2-1, Read verses 38-40.**

 38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. 39 But 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. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

**2-2, Who will be recognized as a good servant by their master? (38)**

***“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak.***

* Those servants whose master **finds them ready** even if he comes **in the middle of the night or at daybreak.** Such servants will be recognized.
* The old NIV shows that ‘in the middle of the night or toward daybreak’ are the second and third watch of night. It means that they waited until 3 AM.
* The master could come in the middle of the night or toward daybreak which is the most difficult time for people to be awakened and alert. It is the time when most of people sleep.
* A typical Hebrew day and night hours are as follows:



* The middle of the night or day break might be the time of spiritual darkness in which people have difficulty being spiritually alert and awakened.
* Our generation can be compared to midnight or daybreak.
* But still there will be servants who are ready to welcome the master even in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. They are good and faithful servants.

**2-3, Why should we always be ready? (39, 40)**

***“But 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. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”***

* We should always be ready because the Son of **Man will come at an hour when we don’t expect him**.”
* We don’t know when a thief will come.
* It is awkward to think of Jesus as a thief. But Jesus said plainly that he comes like a thief.

**Revelation 3:3 reads,**

 “Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”

**Revelation 16:15 reads,**

“Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

* To those who suddenly lose everything at Jesus’ coming, Jesus will seem to appear to them like a thief. Jesus’ coming will bring them sudden and unexpected loss.
* The rich fool is one example. Such people enter eternity with only their record of sins to be judged.
* We might think that he would not come today or tomorrow or during our lifetime in this world.
* We think that Jesus’ second coming as something that will happen in the far future. But Jesus could come even today, tomorrow, or anytime.
* Being ready all the time is the best way to be prepared if he were to come even today.
* We should live life with the attitude that our Master Jesus could come within the next hour.
* When we have this sense of urgency and readiness, we can live as faithful servants of God and prepare for his coming properly.

**2-4. How can we be ready always?**

* Readiness must come from our daily life with Jesus. It is not something we can do suddenly at the last moment for it is beyond our control.
* Many have speculated about the time of Jesus’ coming. They think that if they know precisely when he is coming, they can take life easy until the last moment, then repent and welcome him like the thief on the cross who repented at the last minute.
* But this is not practical. Being faithful is more practical.
* “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

**Mark 13:32-36 reads,**

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. **34** It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. **35** “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. **36** If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

* We should be spiritually alert all the time through God’s words and prayer.
* We should live as if Jesus will come back today.
* We should live as faithful servants of God who serve God’s will and our assigned duties faithfully.

**1 John 3:3 says,**

 “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

* When we have Jesus’ hope in our hearts we grow in his holy image. We can be ready for his coming no matter how dark the world becomes.

**3. Read verses 41-46. What did Peter ask? (41) Who is the faithful and wise manager? (42) How will that servant be rewarded? (43, 44) What did the other servant think and do? (45) What will happen to that servant? (46)**

 **3-1, Read verses 41-46.**

 41 Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”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? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But 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. 46 The 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.

**3-2, What did Peter ask? (41)**

***“Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”***

* He was an outspoken man. Others could get benefitted only because Peter boldly asked Jesus.
* He wondered who the servants were. He wondered if the servants referred to only the twelve disciples or everyone who listened to his word.
* Jesus’ answer for his questions was direct. Jesus taught that when he comes again there will be two kinds of servants.
* He also taught about the reward or punishment of each. Here we can learn how to carry out our assigned mission as we wait for Jesus to come.
* Jesus had in mind that his disciple would be the managers who would take care of the servants.
* They were also the Master’s servants but they would serve a manager’s role as well, by his grace.

**3-3. Who is the faithful and wise manager? (42)**

 ***Who is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper times?***

* The faithful and wise manager is the one whom the master puts in charge of his servants. They provide the servants with food at the proper times.
* The servants are all believers who are willing to serve the Lord Jesus.
* The managers are those who take care of the servants, especially by feeding them with the word of God so that the servants may do good work for the Lord.
* In this verse, Peter came to know who Jesus is based on his confession. (9:20)
* Thus he is now a manager for Jesus. What is his role as a manager?
* The managers may be ‘ministers or stewards’ in Jesus’ house.
* The managers should be faithful and wise. They have to serve their duty faithfully and wisely.
* Their first priority is to feed the servants with the words of God and they should be faithful and successful in serving their duty.
* Jesus implied that the twelve disciples would be the managers who would take care of and feed the servants who were the flock of God and his people.
* A faithful person(manager) is one who is trustworthy. He is loyal to his master at any cost. He carries out his assigned tasks without fail no matter what.
* This servant is also wise. He sees things from the master’s point of view. He knows how to work effectively and to make the most of every opportunity.

**3-4, How will that servant be rewarded? (43, 44)**

 ***It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.***

* He will put him in charge of all of his possessions.
* If the manager is doing good job to feed the servants, there will be great reward from the master.
* The reward is that the master will put him charge of all his possessions. The good manager will be promoted to be in charge of all the master's possessions.
* It could mean that the Master will make the good servant ruler over all that he has.
* It is a great blessing is to take care of the Lord's possessions
* If we carry out our duties as managers, we will be put in charge of God's possessions in the kingdom of God.

**Matthews 19:28 reads,**

 “Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”

* Taking care of God's possessions will not be burden but will be great joy and honor for us.

**3-5, What did the other servant think and do? (45)**

***But 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.***

* The other wicked and foolish servants thought that the master would take a long time to come back.
* He didn’t prepare to welcome the master.
* Instead of feeding servants and taking care of them, he beat the other servants. He hurt them.
* He drinks and gets drunk. He became lazy and abandoned his duty. He indulged in a pleasure seeking lifestyle.

**3-6, What will happen to that servant? (46)**

***46 The 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 master will come on a day when he does not expect him.
* He will cut him to pieces and assign him place with the unbelievers. He will be punished severely. He will be put in hell where the unbelievers dwell.
* He had the great privilege to work as a manager but he abused and neglected the privilege he was given.
* If the managers neglect their duty, their punishment is severe.
* Death and judgement will be severe for all wicked people, but especially to wicked managers, or ministers.
* It’s a great warning for the servants who are in a manager's position.

**4. Read verses 47-48. What will happen to the servant who does not get ready and does not do what the master wants? (47) What will happen to the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment? (48a) What will happen to the one who has been given more? (48)**

**4-1, Read 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. 48 But 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

**4-2, What will happen to the servant who does not get ready and does not do what the master wants? (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.”***

* The servant will be beaten with many blows.
* Each of us is his servant and will stand before the master individually and receive reward according to what we have done.
* If we know what God wants us to do and we don't do it, it’s a great sin before God because it is willful disobedience against God and against the knowledge we’ve received.
* Knowing God's will and having the knowledge of salvation is a great privilege but there is responsibility for this privilege.
* We have to check if we are doing what God wants us to do.

**4-3, What will happen to the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment? (48a)**

 ***But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows.***

* If someone does wrong thing without knowledge, he will be beaten less because he did it not knowing what he is doing. He does not do it for he doesn’t know what God wants and what is right or wrong clearly.
* But making an excuse is not a good excuse though for God gave us his words to be enlightened.
* God’s way of dealing with men is not democratic but based on his absolute sovereign rule.
* He is our King and we are His subjects. So he has authority to demand.

**4-4, What will happen to the one who has been given more? (48b)**

 ***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***

* From the one who has been entrusted with much, more will be asked.
* If we receive blessing from God we should be responsible for it.
* Those who have more knowledge and capacity have more responsibility and their account will be judged accordingly.
* So whatever we receive from God, instead of being proud of it or abusing it, we have to do our best to serve God and others with what we have.
* To the degree that Jesus entrusts his servants with privilege, he holds them accountable to make a good return.
* We have all been entrusted with something. And we are accountable to Jesus to show a profit.
* Some have been entrusted with one Bible student. They must do their best to prepare Bible study, pray for that person, and give them the right spiritual food at the proper time.
* Some have been entrusted with God-given families. making an atmosphere where they must raise their children in the knowledge of God.
* As a community we have a prayer topic to make North America a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

**1 Timothy 6:18-20a reads,**

 “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19** In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. **20** Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care.”

**Conclusion**

 We are servants and managers who are waiting for our Master, Jesus and His return. We should be ready to welcome him any time, even at midnight. We can get ready by repenting. It’s not merely based on a business relationship between master and servant or a hired manager. Rather it’s based on love and a trust relationship thanks to our Lord Jesus who died on the cross for our sins. Also the good news is that Jesus has not yet come. He may come anytime from now, but he has not come yet, so there is still time to repent. He also put each of us in charge of a certain task. So being ready is not a matter of knowing times and dates; it comes from devotion and loyalty to Christ in an ongoing relationship. Being ready is also an expression of our love for Jesus and our deep desire to meet him and live eternally with him. May God help us be good servants who are ready. May we do what God wants faithfully so that we can be put in charge of God’s possessions, especially after the Summer Bible Conference.

**One word: Be Ready!**