

**Talking Points: “Are You Ready” by E A Terry; Delivered March 08 2020**

Scriptures: Jeremiah 18: 1 – 11; Hebrews 11:1-2 & 8-13;  
Matthew 6: 19 -24; **Luke 12:32 - 48 (Sermon)**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Luke is entitled “*Warnings and Encouragements*”.

Verse 1 tells us Jesus is addressing His disciples. Today's scripture lesson can be subdivided into three discrete parts.

In the first part, verses 32-34, Jesus commands us not to fear the future and Jesus encourages us by telling us that God is pleased to give us The Kingdom.

Then Jesus talks about selling our possessions and giving to the poor in our preparation for the coming kingdom.

Verse 33 should not be taken out of context.

Verse 33 is not a command to sell all of our possessions and give the money to those in need.

The Apostle Paul's words to Ananias in Acts 5 make it clear that the decision to sell our physical possessions is optional.

Verse 33 reminds us that our security is not in physical possessions but rather our security lies in spiritual treasures.

When we stand before Almighty God to give an account of our lives we will be stripped of all physical possessions.

We are spiritual beings and we will be judged on spiritual matters.

Verse 34 clearly tell us the priorities in our life are where our treasure is.

The second part of our lesson is in verses 35- 40 and is *The Parable of The Watchful Servants*.

These servants are alert and watching for their master to return from a banquet.

Notice these servants are dressed for service, they are prepared, and there is a sense of urgency to wait on their master.

When the master finally arrives, the master commends and rewards these servants for their readiness

The third part of our lesson is in verses 41 – 48.

This is another parable but this parable is about a single servant who is the manager of many other servants.

Again, the master is away and the date of the master's return is uncertain.

This servant must decide whether to faithfully discharge his duties until his master returns or to neglect his duties and misuse his master's property.

This servant is not expecting his master's return so he decides to do what he pleases.

Also note that this servant is not concern about his fellow servants and he mistreats his fellow servants.

This servant ignores his master instructions to use the master's possessions to help his fellow servants.

This is contrasted with the first scenario where Jesus talked about using the possessions entrusted to us to help those in need.

Our text is clear Jesus is the master who has gone away and we are the servants who have been left to manage Jesus' property.

The Bible is crystal clear that one day our master, Jesus, will return to establish His eternal kingdom.

So, the question is how are we to apply this passage to our lives?

Obviously, we need to accept our role as one of Jesus' servants.

We need to acknowledge that everything we have and everything we are belong to The Lord.

We must never forget that Jesus has entrusted the responsible management of His property to us until He returns.

As stewards we are to manage our Lord's possessions knowing that one day we will be required to give an account of how we have managed everything The Lord has entrusted to us.

Our focus should be vigilance, tireless, faithful stewards.

Our daily life should be characterized by total obedience to all of our Lord's commands.!

In all three cases the servants do not know when their master will return so they must choose what they will do with the things their master entrusted to them in his absence.

Therefore, everything hinges on whether the servants will allow their uncertainty about the date of the master's return erode their responsibility or to simply concentrate on the faithful performance of their duties.

You see when there is a sense of urgency about our master's return; our master's values, our master's instructions on managing His property will be strictly adhered to.

However, if there is any uncertainty about Jesus' return ownership and loyalty are quickly forgotten or ignored.

Another aspect of applying this text to our daily lives is for us to remember our responsibility to use the gifts The Lord has entrusted to us to meet our neighbor's needs.

Remember Jesus died for all people; not just those people who look like us, think like us, and / or act like us.

Jesus commanded us to care for the poor, the sick, the disabled just like Jesus did when He was on earth.

The way we choose to use the earthly possessions entrusted to us serve as a test of our stewardship

Another very important aspect of stewardship is to maintain daily vigilance over our own hearts and minds.

We need to be aware of and avoid any thing or any person who pull us away from our Lord and / or living for Jesus.

Faithful stewardship demands keeping a diligent watch over our inward thoughts and speech.

In Philippians 4:7 we are told to guard our hearts and minds.

Another very important aspect of stewardship is sharing the Good News of Jesus with other people.

Jesus does not call all of us to go to a foreign country, but Jesus does expect us to tell the unsaved people He puts in our life about Him. (Acts 1:8)

Jesus expect us to teach our children about Him.

In Deuteronomy 6: 6-7 we read these words; *“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*

Jesus expect all of us to openly share what Jesus means to us, what Jesus has done for us, and how Jesus is working in our lives.

Jesus said; *“Go home to your friends and tell them what great things The Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”* (Mark 5:19)

It is important to understand that although all of these aspects of interpreting stewardship differ, they are not mutually exclusive.

Rather all of these aspects of stewardship are mutually corrective.

In our scripture lesson we are given a positive image and a negative image.

Two times we are told the return of The Master will be a blessing to those who are prepared.

But we are also clearly told that The Lord’s return will disastrous for those who are not prepared, for those who are self-centered, and for those who have used the master’s possessions as if their master’s property belonged to them.

So, the questions each one of us needs to ask ourselves this morning are;

- *“Am I using my master’s possessions as if they were mine?”*
- *“Am I investing God’s money the way He has instructed me to”*
- *“Am I using the time and talents God has given me for my benefit or for my master’s benefit?”*
- *“Are my thoughts and actions always pleasing to my Lord”*
- *“Am I ready to give an account of my stewardship?”*
- *“Am I anxiously looking forward to Jesus’ return?”*

In those two parables we see skepticism about Jesus’ return.

This uncertainty results in laziness in conduct and the mishandling of our Lord’s property and authority.

Human nature is to let things slide.

We may even feel that we can get by with things.

But the truth is we never get by with anything.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10 is crystal clear *“we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

Remember Paul wrote 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians to the church at Corinth so *“the we”* in this verse is all Christians.

Our judgment as a Christian will not be to determine if we are saved.

When we accepted Jesus as our Savior we were saved, so our salvation is not the question. (John 10:28)

Christians will be judged on our stewardship.

Christians will be judged to see if we are worthy to receive rewards.

There will be degrees of rewards just as verses 47 and 48 teach there will be degrees of punishment for unbelievers and for unfaithful stewards.

Our scripture is not just a first century version of the Boy Scout motto; *“Be Prepared”*.

You see there is an unexpected twist in our scripture lesson which is common in many of Jesus’ parables.

Look again at verse 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.”*

When the master returns, the master waits on his servants.

As Christians we serve a unique master.

A master who not only loves us, provides for us, protects us, died for us, and does what is best for us, but we also serve a master who will share his kingdom with his faithful servants.

*“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”* (Luke 12:32)

Remember Jesus' warnings to watch and be ready for the master’s return are addressed to the *“little flock”* who have laid up treasure in heaven by faithfully serving him.

It is these faithful servants who are prepared to serve and who anxiously await their master’s return that will be truly blessed.

Those faithful servants have nothing to fear when their master return.

For those faithful servants accountability is a time of celebration because they are reunited with their master.

If we are faithful servants our master’s return will be a time of rejoicing for us because we will be in the presence of our Lord.

Our lesson today is about choices, accountability, and judgment.

It warns us of our human tendency to be self-centered, lazy, and ignore our accountability to The Lord and to our neighbor.

It is a call to live every moment of our lives as every moment were our last.

Verse 40 tells us; *"You must be ready, for the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him"*

- The steward who will be rewarded by our Lord is pictured as a faithful servant who is always ready, willing, able, and wanting to serve their Lord.
- The servant who will be rewarded by our Lord is one who is obedient and prides themselves in keeping themselves prepared.
- The servant who will be rewarded by our Lord is one who manages the material and spiritual treasures God has put in their care for the benefit of others.
- The servant who will be rewarded by our Lord is one who looks forward to being reunited with The Lord. and
- The servant who will be rewarded by our Lord is one who is anxious to give an account of their stewardship.
- God's word to us today challenges each of us to ask ourselves;
- *"What kind of steward am I?"*
- *"Am I ready for Jesus to return today?"*
- *"Am I looking forward to giving an account of my stewardship?"*

AMEN