

The Wisdom of Watching for the Lord's Return

Luke 12:35-48

by R.A. Torrey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of watching for the Lord's return and being ready to serve Him, as well as the consequences of unfaithfulness and the blessedness of watching servants.

Scripture: Luke 12:35

Topics: "Watchfulness", "Faithful Stewardship"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the importance of being vigilant and prepared for the Lord's return, urging believers to maintain a watchful attitude and to actively serve in their roles as stewards of God's household. He discusses the necessity of being ready at all times, as the Lord may return unexpectedly, and highlights the blessings promised to those who are faithful and the severe consequences for those who neglect their duties. Torrey warns against the complacency of thinking the Lord's return is far off, which can lead to unfaithfulness and self-indulgence among servants of Christ. The sermon calls for a commitment to spiritual readiness and faithful service, reminding listeners of the eternal implications of their actions.

Transcript

(Compare Matthew 24:43-51)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Watching for Their Absent Lord, vv. 35-40 What is the proper attitude of mind of disciples of Jesus Christ toward their absent Lord? (2 Peter 3:11, 12, R. V.; Titus 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:8.) Why do the faithful servants watch for Him? If He should come today would all His professed disciples be ready to "open unto Him immediately"? Would you? In order to be looking for Him what must at least be possible? Why is it that there are so many who are not looking for Him? Does He come and knock at any time besides at His second coming? (Rev. 3:20.)

In order to hear His knock and let Him in, in what attitude of mind must we be? Suppose we are not watching and do not respond promptly to His knock, what then? (Solomon's Song 5:5, 6.) How are we to show that we are looking for His return? What is the object of having the "loins girded about" (v. 37)? (1 Kings 18:46.) What "loins" are we to gird? (1 Peter 1:13.) With what? (Eph. 6:14.) How? (John 17:17; 2

Tim. 3:16, 17.) What are the "lamps" (R. V.) which are to be kept burning? (Matt. 5:16; 25:1, 3; 2 Tim. 3:5.)

What is necessary in order that the lamp be kept burning? (Matt. 25:3, 4, 8.) Of what is this oil a symbol? (Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20, 27; Ps. 45:7.) What word describes the experiences of Christ's watching servants when He comes? In what will their blessedness consist? Will that be a feast worth having a part in? Will all Christ's servants have a part in it? How many times are we exhorted in the Bible to watch? If our "loins are girded" to serve Him what will He do? Does it make any difference in the blessedness of the watching servant at what hour He comes?

What is it more important to have a care to than in what particular watch He comes? In what watch is He coming? (Mark 13:35.) By what illustration does He enforce this teaching about the necessity of constantly watching? What is the point of this illustration? Is the coming of Christ elsewhere compared to the coming of a thief? (Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 2:3; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.) Where is the similarity? In what manner will He come? (Acts 1:11.) In what way can we prevent that day overtaking us as a thief? (1 Thess. 5:4-6; 1 John 2:28.)

If He should come today would you be overtaken by surprise and dismay or not? What is the lesson our Lord draws from this parable? When should we be ready? What will those who are "ready" when the Lord comes do? (Matt. 25:10.) What will happen to those who are not ready? (Matt. 25:10-12.) Are men, or the church as a whole, looking for His coming today? Is that any evidence that He is not coming? 2. Faithfully Serving Their Absent Lord, vv. 41-48 What was Peter anxious to know?

Is it necessary in order to correctly understand the Bible to know to whom any particular promise, warning, exhortation or commandment is addressed? What is the best way to find out? To whom was this parable and its lesson addressed (v. 42)? (Mark 13:35, 37.) To what are teachers compared? Is this figure found elsewhere? (Matt. 24:45, 46; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 1 Peter 4:10.) What is the steward's business? What is the pastor's and teacher's business? (John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:2; Jer. 3:15.)

"Who, then, is the faithful and wise steward"? Do all whom Christ has appointed to this office do this? Whom do some whom He has called to be stewards feed? (Ezek. 34:2, 3.) With what does the "wise and faithful steward" feed the "household"? (1 Peter 2:2; 4:10, 11.) Do all stewards give the household this meat? With what do they sometimes try to feed the household? When should the steward give the household their portion of meat? What word is used to describe the experience of the wise and faithful steward at the coming of his Lord?

In what will his blessedness consist? Wherein lies the appropriateness of this reward? Who is placed in contrast with this faithful and wise steward? What lies at the bottom of his evil doing? What is the practical effect upon the church and individual of regarding the coming of their Lord as a far away and unreal event? What is the effect of thinking of it as a most real and possibly imminent event? (Matt. 26:6, 7.) What is the one great cause according to this verse (45) of worldliness and laxness in evangelical enterprise and of oppression and self-indulgence among many professed stewards of Jesus Christ?

What was the great cry of the early church as it pushed the evangelization of the world? (Phil. 4:5; Jas. 5:7, 8; 1 Cor. 16:22, R. V., margin.) Where was it the unfaithful servant said: "My Lord delayeth His coming"? Can one have a head faith and a heart unbelief in the coming of the Lord? How can we show we have a heart faith in it? Is there any step beyond saying: "My Lord delayeth His coming"? (2 Peter 3:3, 4.) Are there any mockers in the church saying this today? How first of all did loss of faith in the near approach of the Lord show itself in the unfaithful servant?

For what is that a figure? Is there a warning against this anywhere else in the N. T.? (1 Peter 5:3.) How in the second place did this loss of faith show itself? Have these faults in the actual history of God's people been seen in those whom the Lord has "set over His household"? (1 Sam. 2:13-16; Ezek. 34:3; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29; Titus 1:10, 11; 3 John 9, 10.) How are these unfaithful stewards to be brought to their senses? Will the day of Christ's coming be a joyful day for all who have been in authority in His church?

What will be done to the unfaithful servant? With whom will his lot be eternally cast? (Matt. 24:51.) Why? (Acts 1:25.) To whom may this solemn and terrific warning be justly applied? (1 Peter 4:10.) Why does our Lord delay His coming? (2 Peter 3:9.) Will all unfaithful servants be punished with equal severity? What will be the measure of the punishment? Will ignorance of the will of Christ avail to deliver one from punishment altogether? What does the greatness of our opportunities increase? (Matt. 11:21-24.)

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Our Lord

Coming back, 36, 40; may come at any moment, 36, 38; will come when He is not expected, 39, 40; the important point is that we be ready whenever He comes, 38; wishes His servants to be watching for His return, 36; will gloriously reward the faithful at His coming--(a) if we are watching and have girded ourselves to serve Him, He will gird Himself and serve us, 35, 37; (b) if we have been faithful in the use of little power and opportunity He will give us all power and opportunity, 42-44; will fearfully punish the unfaithful at His coming, 45, 46.

2. Christ's Servants

Should always be--Watching for His coming, 36; ready for His coming, 40; ready to open to Him immediately, 36; engaged in the work to which He has appointed them, 43.

Should always have--Their loins girded, their lamps burning, 35.

Should never--Say: "My Lord delayeth His coming," exercise oppression over those under their authority, practice self-indulgence, 45.

Their opportunity and responsibility-- Over Christ's household, the welfare of Christ's family in their keeping, 42.

Their duty--To watch, to open to Christ immediately, 36; to give the household their meat in due season, 42.

Their blessedness--Our Lord Himself will make the watching servant a feast and serve him, 37; dominion given the faithful servant over all the Lord hath, 44.

3. The Unfaithful Servant

(1). His theology:

"My Lord delayeth His coming," 45.

(2). His practice:

Tyranny, self-indulgence--feeds himself, 45; neglect to give the household their meat, 42, 45.

(3). His destiny:

Surprised by Christ's unexpected coming, driven into outer darkness, 46; the more light the greater guilt and heavier punishment, 47, 48.

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