

Be Ready

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again now to Luke chapter 12, and we're going to look at this section from verse 35 to the end.

Stay dressed for action, and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding. And at verse 40, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect, and so on.

As you know, this is a large section, and of course, as we're going through Luke, we're not going through verse by verse, but trying to highlight some of what Jesus is saying to pick up the relevant parts of it.

And remember how last week we had been looking at how Christ, well, a four-minute ago had been warning against hypocrisy. And then last week we saw how he had been warning against covetousness and warning against anxiety.

And Jesus was warning against becoming too preoccupied with the things of this world, with the things either having things or wanting to have things.

[1 : 1 3] And remember how we quoted, saying that it's all right to own things as long as things don't own you. And that's really what the Lord, that was, if we were to sum up what the Lord is saying, that's what he's saying.

It's all right to have things as long as things, it's all right to own things as long as things don't own you. And again, in the context of all the possessions and all the things that we have in this world, there is a danger that all these things will take our mind off eternal realities, and the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.

And so Jesus, in this section, is really highlighting how we should live and how we should be and what will be as he is going to return.

And that's really what this section is all about. Now, it must have been quite hard, and I'm sure we often try and put our own mind back into Jesus' time, and to try and figure out how the people reacted at that time.

And I would think, if I was trying to think about it, it must be quite hard, it must have been quite hard for them to understand what Jesus was saying, because there he was with them, and they hadn't grasped his mission of coming to die and to be a sacrifice for sin.

[2 : 4 0] And he's talking about coming suddenly, coming back suddenly. So I'm sure that some of these things were quite difficult for them at that particular point to understand. They would soon understand them, but at that particular point, I'm sure it was quite difficult for them to understand.

It's not for us, because we are living in this period. Jesus has died, he has risen again, he has ascended, and all the truths that he taught about his return, we are now in the place where we are ready for his return.

And he's going to come when we do not know. But Jesus is making the point that he could come any time. And Jesus is highlighting how this, about us being in a state of readiness.

And in verse 35, he says that we should be dressed for action. In other words, you are to be at the ready, so that the picture would be that you are called to go out at any particular moment.

And I'm sure as Jesus spoke these words, in his mind would be how they were to be or how they were at the time of the Passover. Remember when the Passover was instituted in Egypt?

[3 : 55] The night the angel of death passed over? And all the firstborn in the land were slain, apart from the houses where the blood was on the doorposts and the lintel?

Well, remember, they were to eat of the land that had been slain, but they were to eat dressed. They had to have their coats on and they had to have everything at the ready.

Because in a moment, they didn't know exactly when the call was to be given and they were to leave Egypt. They were dressed for action. And that's the idea that the Lord has here.

It's that kind of picture that he wants to put in their mind. That this is how people are to live. That at any moment, the call could come so that you have to move on.

And any moment, there could be the reappearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he says, keep your lamps burning, I believe that that is simply being ready at night time, just as in the day.

[4 : 54] That doesn't mean, of course, that we've got to wake up every hour of the night and check that everything's all right, that we're still spiritually vibrant. It is simply trusting in the Lord and committing ourselves to the Lord as we go to sleep.

And then he highlights it that we should be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

Now, of course, in ancient times, wedding celebrations went on for a long time. And for us, we have our wedding and the celebration and the reception and everything, and it's over in one day.

There it used to go on for a long, long time. It could go on for a week. So the return was always uncertain. And so this is the idea that Jesus, again, is using, drawing the picture from the custom of the time, that the servant at home who was looking after things, he had to be ready for at any moment the master may come back, or the groom may come back from the wedding, and he had to have everything ready.

I've seen it likened, if we were to put it into a modern-day equivalent, to a babysitter who has come to look after a child or children in a home for parents who've gone out their way out for the evening.

[6 : 23] And that babysitter is to look after the children and look after the home. And when the parents return, it's expected to hand over everything just as they found it, so that the children are fine and that the house is fine.

And the parents will come in and take over the house just as it was when they left, that everything is in its place. And that this is what the Lord is looking for, that we are looking after and that we are vigilant, that we are being faithful to what he has given to us here.

Can you imagine a babysitter who thinks, oh, well, they're away for ages. I'm going to ask a few of my friends around. We'll have a wee party and I'll get everything cleaned up by 11 o'clock. And for some reason the parents come back at 9 o'clock.

Can you imagine the shame and disgrace? Music blaring, things bouncing off the wall. And it'll be caught and say, oh, no. So this is the kind of idea that Jesus is saying.

Look, he said, I could come back at any time and I want everything to be as it should. And that's what the Lord expects from us.

[7 : 37] Not that we're frantically trying to sort out everything. And then Jesus highlights something quite remarkable from verses 37 to 38 and 38. Because if Jesus returns, that's what he says, and Jesus returns and he finds his servants faithful, he does, Jesus himself does something quite amazing.

Now, if we go back to the picture of the wedding, keeping that picture in our mind, at a Jewish wedding, and I suppose it's true always, for the day a bridegroom is treated like a king and a bride is treated like a queen.

It's their day. It's their big day. And they're almost, for that day, treated like royalty. So here we have the picture.

Here is a groom who, it's his day or his time, being treated like a king, and you would expect that everybody will be dancing attention on him.

What do we find that the groom actually does? Well, the last thing that you would expect would be for the groom to take off his special clothes that he has for the wedding.

[8 : 48] Put on the clothes of a servant and serve those who are in the house looking after. Serve the servants. You would say to yourself, don't expect that to happen.

And yet, that is exactly what Jesus is going to do. It's quite an amazing picture. But that's what he says, those who, when I return and I find them faithful in service to me, I, that's what he says.

Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table. And he will come and he will serve them. They are blessed.

It is good for them. Now, what that entails, I don't know. But it is going to be quite remarkable where the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be, this is what we find, that he will be serving his people.

That is, of course, where he came. He came as a servant. And Jesus has continued to highlight the importance of service. And that the one who will be greatest in the kingdom of God is the one who is going to be the servant.

[10 : 06] We don't grasp it because it goes against natural thinking. It goes against our way of understanding. But throughout an endless eternity, Christ is going to be leading.

And he's going to be feeding. He's going to be, as we're giving, from living fountains of water. And then Jesus goes on to again highlight the importance of being ready by giving the picture of a thief.

And he was saying, if the person whose house it is, supposing into your house or my house, whatever, whoseever house, if you knew that a thief was going to come at a particular time, you would be ready.

You would be prepared. You would be on guard. So that you would prevent the thief from doing what he's intended to do. Here's the thief, and he's going to come and burgle. You're on guard because you have an idea that he's going to come, and you're watching, waiting, and you'll prevent that burglary.

The thief's success is down to the fact, by and large, that the thief strikes when we don't realize. When we're off and off our guard, when we're vulnerable, when we haven't taken any precautions.

[11 : 23] And you come back, and you realize, oh no, I've been burled. If I had only known, if I had... And that's the thief's success. It's striking when we're off guard.

And Jesus is using that very picture. And he's saying, be ready. Be alert. Don't find yourself in an unprepared state.

Because my return, not that Jesus is likening himself to a thief. He's likening his arrival. His unexpected... The unexpectedness of the arrival.

Just in the way that a thief will come unannounced and unexpected. Now, in case people think that, right, if Jesus is going to come any time, I better just sit down and watch.

And I'll sit with my Bible, and I'll watch, and I'll prepare. Because this seems to be what it's saying. That I've got to be on guard, and I've got to be vigilant, and I've got to be...

[12 : 28] I must have to spend the rest of my time praying and reading my Bible. That's not what Jesus is saying. Yes, we're to be vigilant. We're to be watching. But Jesus highlights something else.

We are to be working. Working away faithfully. Wherever we've been put in this world. That's important for us to take. You remember the church in Thessalonica.

They fell into the very same problem. When Paul was talking about Jesus' return, they decided to give up work. And Paul said, no. You're not to become lazy in this world.

You're not to just down tools. Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, whatever you're involved in, carry on doing it. This is what the Lord expects. He expects us to be working away faithfully.

And that's what Jesus then is highlighting. And then Peter asks that question in verse 41. And in response to that question, Jesus then tells another parable.

[13 : 29] And he's highlighting here the importance of the servant feeding the other members of the household and working away faithfully in that household until doing what the master expects to do.

And so that's what Jesus is highlighting here. The importance of us being faithful to whatever we have been given to do. Now when we look at that ourselves, look at our own lives, we may say to ourselves, well, you know, I don't feel very successful in life.

And maybe as you look at yourself, maybe that's how you feel that you don't feel that you're very successful. As a Christian, you may, even other people may not think.

It's not up to other people to make that judgment. And at the end of the day, it's not even you who makes that judgment. It's the Lord. What he calls of us to be is faithful.

And that is how the welcome is given at the end of the day. Well done, good and faithful servant. Faithfulness. It's a beautiful word. To be faithful.

[14 : 43] You just see it. I think it's one of the things that people love about their dogs, isn't it? It's how faithful a dog is.

There's a natural instinct towards faithfulness in your dog. And it's a quality that we admire.

And it's a quality we admire in people. Where we see people who are faithful to other people. Faithful to a cause.

Who aren't moved by other people's opinions. They're not moved or influenced by the particular atmosphere of the time.

But they continue faithful. It doesn't matter how it is. They don't change. And people look and say, you know, it's a great quality. It's a great virtue. Well, it's one of the things that characterizes God.

[15 : 41] His faithfulness. He's never, ever not faithful. And it's what he looks for from us. To be faithful. To be faithful to what he has given us.

And what he requires of us in this world. And then Jesus warns against wrong behavior when in light of his return.

And I think one of the things that we see here is that if people take their eyes off the Lord. That their behavior can go all wrong. And how true that is.

Because Jesus goes on to say, he talks about the blessing that will be for the servant who is faithful when his master comes. Truly, I say to you in verse 44, he will set him over all his possessions.

But, if that servant says to himself, my master is delayed in coming. And begins to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

[16 : 45] The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him. And at an hour he does not know. And will cut him in pieces. And put him with the unfaithful.

You see the importance of keeping our eye fixed upon the Lord. Because if we take our eye off the Lord. Then our behavior is liable to become irrational.

And certainly not in keeping with what Christian behavior should be. It is so important that the Lord is the focus of our life. And Jesus is highlighting here.

Here's a servant. And he becomes abusive. He begins to beat. And this servant is in for a shock.

Because he's gone into party mode. Into a totally carefree life. His master has been relegated right out of the thinking. There's no thought of the Lord. No thought of his return.

[17 : 46] These things aren't doing his thing. And he becomes just living like as anybody. We find that something.

People have a bit of a problem here. With what exactly the Lord Jesus Christ is saying. Now remember Jesus is talking here to the church. The church in its wideness.

In its entirety. And people have difficulty with this idea. About the abuse of drunken servant. Where it says that he will cut him. In pieces.

And put him with the unfaithful. Because the argument that people use is. And they're saying. Well. I thought. That if a person. Was safe in Jesus Christ.

That the Lord would never. Cut in pieces. Somebody who was faithful. Who was. Somebody who was a believer. Well.

[18 : 44] That is true. The Lord will never. Will never cast off. Those who are his own. But it's obvious. From what has been said here.

That this person. Who is going to be cut off. Remember. This is a church in its entirety. Is a person. Who is making their profession. That they are servants.

That they are followers of the Lord. That they are Christians. But they're not. That is very obvious. From this. They are people. Who are involved in the church.

Who have been accepted. By the church. I find it one of the most solemn. And challenging bits. In scripture. But this is tied in. With other parts of scripture. Here is somebody.

Somebody like Judas. Judas. Worked for Jesus. Judas. Walked with Jesus. Judas. Went out preaching. Judas was involved.

[19 : 41] In healing ministries. Judas had a very. Elevated place. In fact. Within the church. He was treasurer. In the early church. He was the one. Who had the bag. So you can see.

That in all ways. Judas. Was just like. All the other disciples. In fact. None of the other disciples. For one moment. Questioned.

Or thought. That Judas. Was not one with them. Jesus knew. Jesus said. At one occasion. One of you. Is a devil. And Jesus knew.

Who that devil was. It was Judas. And so. Isn't it scary. That you can have somebody. Who is so involved. In the church. And nobody else. In the church. Is aware.

And this is the kind of person. That Jesus is talking about here. And that is. That is. One of the most challenging. And in a sense. Frightening things. So at the end of the day.

[20 : 38] What we must make sure. Is that we are. Safe. And secure. In Jesus Christ. This passion. Hasn't lost. In a sense.

Because you cannot. You cannot. Really lose. What you never had. So this passion. Never had. In the first place. Never had Christ. May have appeared to follow.

Adhered in many ways. To the faith. But never had. A personal faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And this passage. Also shows us.

That light. And knowledge. Carry responsibility. And accountability. The more light we have. The more accountable. That we are.

Before the Lord. And so. Jesus then shows us. That the one. Who knew. What God's will was. And did not do it. Or act according to his will. Will receive a severe beating.

[21 : 37] In other words. This passion. Is going to be disciplined. Totally different. To the one. Who was cut in pieces. Here is somebody. Who is living. In disobedience.

To God's will. When Jesus returns. But this passion. Is united to Jesus. That passion. Is going to receive a beating. This passion. Is going to be disciplined. By the Lord. The Lord.

Is going to exercise. Discipline. Upon those. Who are not living. In the right way. Remember the old adage. Trust and obey. For there is no other way.

And you know. Sometimes people say. Oh. That's just. The bottom line. That's it. Trust. Our lives. To the Lord. And obey. What his word is saying. It comes down to that.

If we strip away. All the other things. It just comes down. To this. We are to trust. And obey. And then. Jesus goes on. To highlight.

[22 : 31] And just looking at this. Very briefly. That he has. His coming here. Brings division. Now. When Jesus was born.

Into this world. Remember the angel sang. Glory to God. In the highest. And on earth. Peace. And goodwill. Toward all men. That's a great message. Of the gospel. It's a message.

Of peace. And that's what Jesus does. He brings peace. Into our lives. If you today. Are a believer. You know that peace. In your own heart. Your life. Just now. Might be difficult.

You might be going through. A very trying situation. But there is a deep rooted. Peace. That this world. Cannot shake. And that is Jesus. Because he has given himself. To you.

And he has communicated. Himself to you. Through spirit. It's there. It's rooted. It's deep. Peace is a wonderful thing. And that is the message.

[23 : 26] That Jesus brings. It's a message of peace. And that would be our great desire. Is that everybody. Would come to embrace this message. And discover this peace.

But Jesus tells us sadly. That that's not how it's going to be. Many will embrace it. But not everybody. And in some places. It's going to cause division.

Now. Again. Let me say. That it isn't. This isn't talking. Necessarily about. And we know. That there are loads of homes. Where that one person.

Might be a Christian. That has accepted the Lord. As Savior. And another hasn't. But there's no great division. In that home. In the sense. Is that there's a. A respect. And an understanding.

And these. These are great things. And that's often the way. Within our own Christian. Our communities. Which is still. As gospel influence. And often. When one comes. In due time.

[24 : 23] The other will come. And so on. We often find these things. But. The Lord is saying. There are times. When it will cause.

Real division. Where it's going to cause. Enmity. And animosity. And anger. And bitterness. And we know. That there are communities. Where people are ostracized.

Because they become believers. There are people. Who are. Excluded from their home. They are disowned. They will not admit. The family will say.

I used to have a son. I used to have a daughter. But no longer. Because they've embraced. The Christian faith. And that's what. This is what Jesus. Is prophesying here. That his message.

And he himself. Is going to cause division. And it's caused. So much pain. Often. And then Jesus. When he comes to the end.

[25 : 20] As he comes to the end. Of the chapter. He calls on the people. Waken up. He says. And read the signs. Read. The time. Take note. Of where we are. And where we're living.

And he's saying to the people. Look. You can tell. The weather forecast. You're all good forecasters. Because. You're able to gauge. The weather. That's coming. By the wind. And you're able to.

To tell. Whether rain is coming. Or whether heat is coming. By the direction of the wind. Well. You're good forecasters. But waking up. And read the signs. Of the times. Jesus is saying.

Listen. You are the people. Who have the word. You are steeped. In the scriptures. Waken up. And realize. The Messiah. Is here with you. This is what Jesus. Is saying to them.

And my friends. We ought to waken up. And read the times. As well. And. Nobody can tell. When the son of man. Will return.

[26 : 15] We don't know. Not even the angels. In heaven know. But Jesus was telling us. When we go through the Bible. That there will be certain factors. As these days. Draw near.

And we read about. For instance. In Matthew chapter 24. Although it won't be the end. It will be. As it were. The beginning. Of the end time. And we read about wars.

In all different places. Of famines. Of earthquakes. In all these different things. And we look at it. And we can almost see. A summary. Of where we are today. And as we highlighted.

When we were looking. In the book of Daniel. We have that. Amazing quote. Of what it will be like. In the very end time. Where knowledge.

Will be increased. And everyone. Will run. To and fro. And what a description. Of the day. We are living in. The knowledge.

[27 : 11] That we have today. It is. It is. Extraordinary. Every year. Incredible advances. Little children.

Their knowledge. Today. What they have. Their knowledge. I often think about that. Looking at. The youngest. In our own family. The knowledge. That she has today.

She knows things. I. At her age. That I. I am. She is telling me things. I didn't. I didn't know. She says. How do you do that?

Where. The knowledge. Is quite extraordinary. And. When you think about. The advances. In technology. And all these. It is. Mind blowing. Well.

That is what it says. As we. Come in. To the very last time. Before the son of man. Returns. That knowledge. Will increase. And everyone. Everyone. Will run.

[28 : 05] To and fro. And even the elderly. Are saying today. Oh. Slow down. I have no time. Nobody has time. It is like.

Life is galloping. So. The bible. Is saying. As Jesus. Said. To the people. Then. Waken up. And read. The sign of the time.

The messiah. Is here with you. I believe. He is saying. The same thing. To us today. Waken up. Read the signs. Read. What scripture is saying.

And remember. It is in such an hour. As you think not. I am going to return. Are you thinking about. The return of the lord. Or is that. Way. Way. Down. In your thinking. Something that in fact.

You rarely think about. Well. Jesus is saying. It is in such a climate. It is at such a time. I will return. And then finally.

[28 : 59] He says. He is again. Here. Uses an example. Of somebody. Settling. An argument. Or settling. A dispute. With the accuser. And here are two people.

And they are going to have to go to court. To settle. And there is one person. Is accusing. The other. And Jesus is saying. You know. The best thing you can do. Before you reach the court.

And before the one. Who is accused. Is taken. Before the magistrate. And then the officer. On the way to court. Try and settle it. With your accuser. Try and get this dealt with.

Before you end up in prison. It makes sense. There is the two of you. Walking together. Before you go into that court. Try and deal with it outside. Make up if possible.

Pay what you have to. If possible. Get it dealt with. Rather than getting. Flung into prison. Where you will have to pay. To the very last penny. And Jesus of course.

[29 : 55] Is applying that. Very simply. What he is meaning is. Here you are. You are walking through life. Here am I. The Messiah. One day.

You are going to have to stand. Before the judge. Of all the earth. Make up. Make up with me. So that when. The day comes.

When you have to stand. Before the judge. Then everything. Will be all right. Everything. Will be all right. Because you are made up. Have you made up with Christ.

Are you at peace. With him. That is really what he is saying. To us to do. If not. Then Jesus is talking about prison. And in this context.

It is an eternal prison. You make sure. That you are united. To Jesus. And accept him. By faith. Let's pray. Lord our God.

[30 : 53] We. We give thanks for the word. Which is making us. Stop and think. A word that is showing us. How things really are.

Because we are so grounded. In the here and now. And in the physical. And the temporal. That so often. We do not. We would not know. How it is to be. And so we give thanks Lord.

For the way that thou art showing to us. And highlighting. How things are. And how things are to be. O Lord bless us. Bless us. Throughout this coming week.

We pray for grace. And help. And strength. Give us the faith. Give us to be faithful. In all that we are about. Have mercy on us. And forgive us our sin. In Jesus name we ask it.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 49] Amen. Opine. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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