

Love Or Fear At The Second Coming

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[0 : 00] How many of you love to wait? You really? Let me ask it the flip way.

! Maybe husbands in the car on Sunday morning waiting for your wife to come out of the house so that you can go to church.

How many? Do you ever struggle with that? I learned a lesson early on with my wife when we were early on dating. I said something really stupid.

If you want to find out what that was, you can ask me about it later. I said something really stupid about waiting for her. And I have been learning for 40 years since how waiting for my wife is worth it.

She's worth it. Okay? Just, there you go. Wives sometimes waiting for husbands to get home from work or that kind of thing. How about, how many of you have ever had to wait on the plane for takeoff?

[1 : 22] Or wait on the floor, on the deck, on the ground in your plane waiting to get to dock at the thing.

And you're just sitting there waiting for someone else to pull out so you can get in. Waiting in traffic. Now, granted, around here we don't have that much of this.

But if you ever travel south, there are times where something's going on and you're either coming into a big city or out of a big city or whatever it is. And there's a traffic jam waiting.

How many of you love to wait in the traffic jam? And you begin to realize that our culture is built to try to eliminate that. The rise of fast food is because we don't want to wait.

We don't want to wait for microwave ovens. We don't want to wait for a regularly cooked meal. And that's regularly cooked meal.

[2 : 21] A traditionally cooked meal is becoming more of a, you know, a rarity. You know, like a special treat. Oh, you actually took the time to cook a meal.

That's amazing. Credit cards. Have become huge. And I don't have to tell you that. I mean, they're huge because we don't want to have to wait to save up enough money.

The sexual revolution. We don't want to wait for God's timing in marriage. So we're just going to do it our own way. And so we are a culture that's based on doing things our own way and doing it in such a way that we don't have to wait anymore.

Now, what's interesting is when we get into the text, waiting is something that the faithful follower of Christ is called upon to do.

We're called to be waiters. We're called to wait on God. We know that he's coming again, but we're told to wait.

[3 : 25] And as stewards, stewards is the household manager, and he's called us to be stewards of all that he's given us. And we're called to be servants.

As stewards and as servants, we're told to be faithful in the way that we wait. There is a certain quality to waiting well.

And this is what we're going to spend at least the early part of our time talking about today. Now, I was tempted today to talk about, to title my message, Fun with Bible Study.

Because we're going to have some, you're going to look at me and you're going to think, well, that rich guy is pretty weird. You're right. And this is one of the reasons why, because there are some really fun things to do in Bible study.

And you may equate fun things to do in Bible study together, but we're going to have some fun. I promise you that today. But the real title of our message today, and you can see it on your notes, is love or fear at the second coming of Jesus.

[4 : 32] So we're talking about the second coming today. But we're not getting into some of the details about when it's going to happen and all of those kinds of things. Sometimes you say you're going to talk about the second coming and people's ears perk up because, oh, we're going to do that.

We're going to delve into that subject. And there is a lot of stuff in the scriptures to understand about that. But that part of it is not today. What we're looking at today is how to wait well, because we're called to wait until his second coming.

So to do that, we're going to dive into the text, and we're actually going to spend some time talking about what it means to wait well. So here's our text, beginning in verse 35 of Luke chapter 12.

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 feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes back and knocks.

So Jesus is going to use parables to talk about the second coming and to talk about our waiting for his second coming.

[5 : 42] And he does that by using some illustrations here in this first parable. And there are three of them here that we're going to talk about. The first one is dressed for action, and then keep your lamps burning, and then waiting for the master.

But it's interesting how the modern translations have kind of changed the text a little bit to help us to modernize our understanding. Because if we just translated this word for word, we would like, oh, that's interesting.

So stay dressed for action is the one thing. Keep your lamps burning. These are both in verse 35. But this dressed for action is kind of amusing.

And if you read it from the King James Version, it actually reads this way. Let your loins be girded about. Men, have your loins been girded about.

And what's fun is that you can go online and how to do this is you could learn how to gird your loins right here, just as the Bible talks about.

[6 : 56] So you guys would have to get your tunic. How many of you guys wear a tunic? Anybody? Anybody? Any guys wearing?

This is why this kind of language doesn't hit us, right? Because we don't – I was actually kind of tempted to get one of our young guys to model a tunic for us. Any of you interested in modeling a tunic?

No, I didn't think you would be. And thankfully, since none of us wear a tunic, we don't really have to worry about this. But it's basically gathering it up and then shoving it down.

This is what they would do. This is real time what they would do back in the day. And it actually kind of looked like they ended up looking like they were wearing a diaper. But in the process, they could go to battle or they could do hard labor, and this is what they would have to do.

So thankfully for us, we just have to, you know, do that. We don't have to worry about messing with our drawers to get everything figured out. But – so stay dressed for action fits, okay?

[8 : 05] All of that said, just to help you to understand that staying dressed for action means you're ready. And keep your lamps burning. This is the idea of – remember the parable of the wedding, the ten virgins in Matthew 25.

It's keep your lamps trimmed, the wicks trimmed, the oil filled so that your lamps keep burning through the night so that they don't go out. And if they go out, then you'll fall asleep and you'll miss the coming of the bridegroom.

You don't want that to happen. So you have to keep your lamps trimmed and filled and ready for action and be like men who are waiting. So what we're going to do to start with here is talk about three characteristics of a good waiter.

Now what's interesting is this is good for us as believers because we want to be good waiters as believers, right? But this is also good counsel, for instance, if any of you are ever going to get a job at a restaurant as a waiter.

If you would follow these three things, you're going to be an excellent waiter and you're going to get better tips. Okay, so this is real practical information here, even if you're not a believer in Christ, because you could use this when you go to the restaurant.

[9 : 22] But as believers, if you would say, yes, I'm a believer in Jesus Christ, then definitely these characteristics ought to mark your waiting, the way that you wait for his coming.

So the first thing is preparation, and that is to be dressed and ready. And as a good waiter, you're ready to go. You're not just, you know, going to, you know, show up in your underwear.

You're going to be ready, dressed. And if you're working at a restaurant, you're going to wear the uniform of the restaurant, and you're going to be ready to go before your shift. Okay, you're ready. You have not only your clothing ready, but your supplies that you need for providing good service before the meal.

That's all part of it. And then maintenance. Keep your lamps burning. So a good waiter keeps focus on the tables that are theirs, and they're also maintaining things.

Make sure their drinks are filled. Make sure they have napkins. Make sure if someone drops a utensil that you've got one ready to go for them. All of that kind of stuff, or you bring the food out when it's warm. So keep your lamps burning.

[10 : 32] And then finally is the anticipation or expectation. You're standing by the ready, always watching, always waiting, so that you're ready to take action when the master appears.

So that's just three real quick lessons on what it means to be a good waiter. Now, as Jesus continues on with these parables, you're going to see he's going to mix his pictures.

He's going to start with a picture of one thing, and then he's going to go to a picture of another thing. And in doing that, he is going to talk about promised blessing for those waiters, those believers, those servants, those stewards, who are faithful, promised blessing for them, and then a word of warning for those who are not faithful.

Okay? So let's get into the text once again. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes, because this servant, this steward, this waiter, is someone who's prepared and ready to go.

So then when his master comes, and that's a surprise, they don't know when he's going to come, but when he comes, he's ready to go. And so blessed is that person. Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table.

[12 : 02] And he's talking about himself here, that when Jesus comes again, that he himself will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

The master will serve those who served him well, those who were faithful in their waiting. We'll talk about that in a moment. If he comes in the second watch or in the third, this is like in the middle of the night, and he finds them awake, blessed even more so, if you will, are those servants, because it's easy to stay awake and prepared in the middle of the day.

But to do that in the middle of the night, even more so, is that servant blessed. Now here comes the warning, but know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, notice the switch in imagery, because the faithful servants, he's talking about them as stewards, as servants waiting for their master to arrive.

Now he's not talking about servants waiting for their master to arrive. He's talking about the master of a home, not knowing when a thief was going to show up.

So notice the difference here. The similarity between the two is neither of them know when the one who is coming is when he's coming.

[13 : 37] The servant doesn't know when the master is returning, and the master of the home doesn't know when a thief might be arriving. So that's consistent.

He wouldn't, but if he had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You must also be ready for the son of man is coming in an hour when you do not expect.

And we've heard this before, right? We know that Jesus is coming again, but we don't know when. We will be surprised, if you will, at when he comes again.

And so the key point is to be prepared for when that happens. Now, again, notice the switch in the imagery. And what makes the difference?

Here's the key point. What makes the difference between our view of whether the one who returns is returning as a welcomed master, or if we view the one who is returning as a dreaded thief, who's going to take my kingdom, my stuff, my world apart?

[14 : 54] What makes the difference between the two? Well, the simple answer to that is the gospel. The simple answer to that is relationship.

What kind of relationship do you have with the one who is returning? If you are living in relationship with him as Lord and Savior, then your view of that return is, as a welcomed master, I want him to come to my home.

I'm looking forward. I'm living with anticipation. If you do not have a relationship with the one who is returning, if you're living on your own, if you haven't trusted Christ as your Savior, then you view his return as a dreaded thief to come and take away everything to you that is precious.

So keep that in mind as we make our way through, because this is going to get a little bit more interesting and a little bit more complicated, but we're going to use our Bible study techniques to really dig into this, okay?

So, before we move on in the text, I want to highlight a few things about what it means to be a servant and how we view observations about what we think of serving, how we think of servant, what a servant is, right?

[16 : 23] Even people at restaurants who work waiting tables, do they want to be called a servant? Do I want to be called a servant? Sometimes we maybe kind of lessen the impact of the word by saying server or waiter or wait staff, but what's wrong with saying I am a servant?

I am a servant. I'm here to serve you. That's what we're talking about here. Serving, we see from our text here this morning, serving, first of all, is an honorable task. Serving is an honorable thing to do.

We see that in our text. The second thing is leading is not a contradiction to serving. Matter of fact, the best kind of leader is a leader who also considers himself a servant.

Leading is simply another form of serving, serving, and leaders who recognize that are the kind of leaders that you want to serve, right?

Think of your bosses at work, or if you are a boss, maybe we need to realign our thinking about what it means to lead, and what it means to lead is to be a servant, to serve the needs and the interests of the people who are working for me.

[17 : 51] And if you have that kind of boss, you love that kind of boss, don't you? The kind of boss who puts the needs and interests of the people who work for him ahead of his own.

That's what it means to lead. And then here's something interesting we see in our text today that is not often, we don't often think of it in this way. That serving is something which Jesus will still be doing at his second coming, just as he came to serve at his first coming.

We get that Jesus was a servant at his first coming, right? Because he even said that, right? I came not to be served, but to serve, right? Jesus said that. But I want you to notice in this story what Jesus says.

Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for servant. And he's talking about the one who's coming again. He's talking about himself at his second coming. At his second coming, he will dress himself for service and have his servants recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

This is one of the rewards for those who are faithful in serving the Lord and living for him. There's going to be that time where Jesus is going to be dressed and ready for service himself and will serve us in that moment, in that time.

[19 : 18] We think of Jesus coming in glory, and yes, he will. We see of Jesus coming as the king, and he's coming as the king, and he's coming as this righteous warrior who will put down all wrath, all those who are in rebellion against him, and he absolutely will.

But yet at the same time, to those who are faithful, for those who live according to his ways, there's an aspect of his second coming in which he will demonstrate that service is something that we will continue to do into all of eternity.

Matter of fact, good servants, we know this from a number of parables, that good servants who serve the Lord well are rewarded with what?

More responsibility in service in the kingdom. So understand that serving is something that's blessed.

It is a good thing. It's something that will continue after this life is over. And then here's a bonus one, if you will. Jesus' servants will no longer be slaves but friends.

[20 : 33] And we get this not from our text in Luke but from a context, another one of the Gospels, John 15, 15, where Jesus said, No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing, but I've called you friends.

For all things that I have heard from my master, my father, I have made known to you. Now, notice the difference here between slave and servant. Slave is someone who has no choice in the matter, someone who does not know the will of the father, of the one in charge.

But a servant is also friend. There's no contradiction between friend and servant. We can be both. And he considers us both as followers of him.

So we have to kind of rewire our thinking when it comes to being a servant. Now, what happens next in the text is quite interesting in the sense that Peter's going to ask a question here.

And it is an interesting question. Verse 41. So Jesus is teaching about, okay, there's a master who's coming again.

[21 : 51] There's a thief who's going to come in the middle of the night. And you don't know when he's coming. And be prepared is the key point there. Be ready. And Peter says, Lord, are you telling this parable to just us?

Or are you telling it to everyone? And the answer, Jesus doesn't really answer his question.

I don't know if you've noticed that in reading the gospel. Sometimes Jesus doesn't directly answer our questions. But he gives us more information so that we can kind of fill in the blanks for ourselves.

But I think maybe the implied answer here is yes. Jesus, which is it? Are you telling this to us or are you telling this for everyone to know? And the answer is yes. It is just for us.

But it's also for everyone to know as well. And so Jesus goes on to clarify and to give us more information.

[22 : 52] The Lord said, who then is the faithful and wise manager or steward is the word. And this is the, of all the servants in the household, this is the one who has the highest rank, who is put in charge of all the other household servants or the servants over the whole farm or the whole industry or whatever it is that the master is running.

Who then is the faithful and wise steward, manager? This is who we want to be, correct? Right? This is who we want to be. Whom his master will set over his household to give them their proper portion of food at the proper time.

So this one is in charge of all the other servants and is also in charge of making sure that they're properly cared for. In this instance, he's talking about their feeding. So making sure that everyone gets their proper portion and all of that, taking care of all of the household duties.

Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. So that when his master returns, he's just faithfully doing everything he's been doing for the last few days, weeks, months, years, decades.

However long it's going to be until his master returns, he's just faithfully doing day after day what he's been called to do, to serve in the way that he's been called to serve.

[24 : 19] He's just been doing that. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all of his possessions. Okay? This is the reward part of it. Right? Whatever you've been faithful in doing, you will be given even greater responsibility when he comes again.

Okay? So keep that in mind. Now as we get into verses 45 and 46, there's an interesting question. And I thought I might ask you this last time we met, ask you this ahead of time to give you a little bit of a head start.

But I was going to perhaps say, okay, who does the servant in verses 45 and 46 represent? Because you've got to answer this question. Okay? Who's he talking about?

So verse 45, here it is. But if that servant, this servant who is the master, the steward, if the master gives the steward, the house manager, this charge of providing for all the other servants in the house, if that servant says to himself, okay?

Okay? So this is an opposite reaction to the faithful servant in the previous verses who will be blessed with even more. If instead, if that servant says to himself, if he is the servant, if he is the servant, if he is the servant, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.

[26 : 06] So who's that servant? So who's that servant? Who does that servant represent? How do you answer this question?

And it's a tough question because there's a lot of stuff at stake with this question. If this servant is someone who was truly a servant of God, but then started to live in a different way, in a way that dishonored God and acted in rebellion, is this servant then someone who loses his salvation because he ends up getting cut in pieces and put with the unfaithful?

Or is this someone who was never a Christian at all? Or is it something different altogether that maybe we haven't thought of? How do we answer that question?

And that's what we're going to talk about. But let's finish the rest of this thought out that Jesus is teaching. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or did not act according to his will will receive a severe beating.

Okay. So is this servant maybe a little bit different than the previous one? Or, or, or, verse 48.

[27 : 32] But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating, but he never, never heard the instructions.

Never, never heard the teaching. But he didn't, and he didn't do the things that were honoring to God because he didn't hear it. And instead he did the things that deserved a beating.

He will instead receive a light beating. Huh? Well, what do we do with this? How do, how do we handle this kind of a text?

And then the last portion of our text for today, everyone to whom much was given of him, much will be required. We've heard this before, right? We've heard this phrase before, but here it is now in the context of the second coming of Jesus and how well we are waiting.

As his servant, as his steward of all that belongs to him, are we faithfully serving him? Or are we living on our own, doing our own thing, living as we want?

[28 : 51] And to whom much has been given? Let me ask you a question. You're sitting here in the room today. You've been hearing preaching from the gospel of Luke, maybe for some time, if you've been coming for a while.

What category would you be? Would you be in the category of someone who lives in the part of the United States where the gospel is preached pretty much all over the area that you live and there's churches all over the place and they're preaching the gospel?

And to everyone to whom much was given, would you say that much has been given to you? Yeah. Much will be required. Versus someone who lives, let's say, for instance, on an island or in some part of Africa where the gospel has never been preached.

They haven't heard much, right? If anything. For whom, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

So you're going to be accountable for what you have heard, for what you've been taught. So what do you do with this?

[30 : 02] And so we're going to spend some time, and this is where the fun part kicks in for me. How to understand a difficult parable. Okay? So it's going to help us.

These little things that we're going to learn about today are going to help us understand, in general, how to understand difficult parables, but it's also going to help us to get this particular one and answer that question.

Who is that servant? Who's he talking about? What is that all about? Now, to start off with, I would say this. With all Bible study, there is a solution to apparent problems in the text.

Okay? And I would admit that this is a problem in the text, because I don't know. I don't know. What's he talking about? Who's he talking about? Who is this servant?

What does he represent? Is he talking to me? Is he talking to unsaved people? Eh. This is tough. But, often, that solution is found in diligent study.

[31 : 04] Am I willing to diligently study the word? Or am I just going to flippantly read it, you know, occasionally, or maybe even every day, but I'm not really going to worry about whether I understand it or not.

I'm just going to make sure that I can put a check next to the box on that day and say I read it. I did what the preacher said I was supposed to do. Or am I willing to invest some time and effort?

Dependence upon the Holy Spirit's ministry, I can't understand it in my own strength and my own mind. I need the Holy Spirit to guide me. And prayer is a big part of that.

Because let me ask you a question. Do you think the Lord wants you to understand his word? Do you think God will answer that prayer if you say, Lord, help me to understand?

Yeah, that's one of the ones that he promises. If you ask according to his will, he will do it. You can know that when you're asking, Lord, help me to understand your word, that you're asking according to his will.

[32 : 03] So he will absolutely answer that prayer. So that's a part of that. That's a big part of that. Another thing that we have to remember here is that God's chief motivating forces are love and grace, not fear and guilt.

Because we read this passage and we read some stuff that sounds pretty terrifying. Cut into pieces and sent to be with the unfaithful.

Hmm. That sounds... But remember this. This is from Romans 2.4. Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, the riches of God's tolerance, the riches of God's patience, not realizing that it is God's kindness that leads you towards repentance?

It is not his wrath. It is not the threat of hell. God doesn't threaten us with hell.

Now, when God tells us of some things that are coming that are very bad outcomes, like wrath, like judgment, like hell, those are very real things that will happen, they're just statements of fact.

[33 : 28] It's not his motivating force. It's not what is God's heart. God does not want you to be saved because you're afraid of hell. He wants you to be saved because you recognize his overwhelming love and grace and goodness and kindness in your life.

And you recognize just what he has done. When you recognize the message of the gospel and the length that he went to to bring you back into his family, to adopt you as his son or daughter, and you say, how could I reject all of this overwhelming grace and love and mercy in my life?

That's God's motivation. Not just the simple fact of if you reject him, this is the outcome. It's not a threat.

It's just reality. It's just what happens to people who reject the gospel. Now, one of the things that we have to do when we're doing Bible studies is to ask key questions.

And so the key question was, who is the servant then who ends up being cut into pieces, placed with the unfaithful? Who is that?

[34 : 56] Who is this guy? Who does he represent? And this is interesting with all of this. So back again to our passage, verse 45.

We read this already. But if that servant, the one who's been given charge over the master's household, the one who all the other servants now answer to him, all of their provisions are taken care of by this one steward who's been placed in charge.

But if that servant instead says, no, I don't think he's coming back anytime soon, so I'm going to take advantage of them. I'm going to beat the male and female servants, and I'm going to eat and get drunk, and this is how I'm going to live my life.

But then the master of that servant's going to come back on a day when he doesn't expect him and an hour when he doesn't know. And what does it say? We'll cut him to pieces and put him with the unfaithful.

Another question here. What does it mean he will cut him to pieces and put him with the unfaithful? Does that mean that he will send them to hell? Is that a description of hell?

[36 : 19] Is that what's in view there? Or is there just, is this some sort of torture or torment that's short of hell? How do we answer that?

And so we have to ask, we have to learn to ask more questions. So here are some more questions that we can ask here. First of all, who does the servant represent?

We got to ask that question, right? Hopefully we can find an answer for that. I'm going to show you at the end, though, even though you don't, if you never do discover the answer to that, you can still get the main point of the parable.

That's important to know. What do this servant's actions tell us about his relationship to his master? Does that tell us anything?

Is there any information? What was the relationship between this particular servant and his master? Do we get any clues from the text about that? I would say, yes, we do.

[37 : 18] Absolutely we do. Who are the men's servants and maid's servants? What is that about? Is that just a little extra, something thrown in, just filler? Jesus threw some filler in there just to show us how disobedient this master was, this servant was being?

And what's his punishment? Is it hell? And so what does a Bible student do? He starts to begin to check the context.

Is there anywhere else in the Gospels this particular parable is told? And if so, is there information from that other telling of the parable that helps to fill in some blanks?

And so we travel to Matthew chapter 24 where we find another telling of this parable. But if that wicked servant, if that wicked servant, Luke didn't say that.

Luke just said, if that servant, here Jesus says that wicked servant, we get a little extra piece to the puzzle there with the word wicked. What does that tell you about his relationship?

[38 : 27] To his master. Probably unsaved to begin with. Says to himself, my master is delayed and begins to beat his fellow servants, eats and drinks with drunkards.

Any of you beaten anybody? Are you like eating and drinking with drunkards and beating fellow servants?

No, no, no, no takers there. But if the master of that servant, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, a little different word here, hypocrite.

Hypocrite is someone who's pretending to be something, but it's not. Okay? And, and, oh, here's another piece of information, new information.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Now, does that tell you anything about the final destination of this particular servant? Yeah, that's a, that's a, that's a little interesting piece of information that it's talking about hell, actual hell.

[39 : 47] But we're still bothered by that question of who is the servant? Who is this servant?

Well, in the Old Testament, keep in mind, the Gospels are taking place in an Old Testament way of doing things.

Okay? Sacrificial system is still in place because Jesus hasn't died yet. So the Old Testament, none of the New Testament is written yet. They're living, the Gospels, right now.

So all they have is the Old Testament. And the Old Testament refers to four different terms to describe a servant. One is a particular servant, like a Moses.

God will refer to Moses in the Old Testament as a servant, as God's servant, or King David. He referred to David as his servant. Okay? Also the prophets.

[40 : 53] The prophets were referred to as God's servants. Okay? Even the Messiah, in prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, he was called God's servant who would come to serve God's plan, God's purpose when he came.

But there's a fourth one. All of Israel was called his servant. Let me give you, for instance, an example of this.

In Isaiah 44, verse 21, remember these things, O Jacob and Israel. Remember, Jacob's name was changed to Israel. So, Israel, when he's talking about Jacob, he's talking about the nation of Israel.

And just to clarify, he uses the name Israel. For you are my, what? What's the word? I formed you. You are my servant, O Israel.

You will not be forgotten by me. It's interesting. Now, another passage in Isaiah that helps to fill in some blanks for us, Isaiah chapter 65, verse 1.

[42 : 13] I want you to begin to notice some of the language here. Because when Israel, God's servant, rejects Jesus as Messiah, who then will the gospel be open to?

Us Gentiles. Watch this. I was ready to, this is God speaking. Now, I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me.

That's a reference to the Gentiles. The Gentiles did not ask for God, but God was ready to be sought by them. I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, here I am, here I am to a nation that was not called by my name.

Who was called by God's name? Israel. But the Gentiles were not. And he's saying, I'm ready to be sought by those. Here I am to a nation that was not called by my name.

I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good following their own devices.

[43 : 23] That's us. That's Gentiles. God, and what you have to understand is that that was God's intention for Israel from the beginning.

that when God chose Abraham and from Abraham made a mighty nation of Israel and pulled them away from all the other nations and gave them a land that gave them a purpose and gave them a calling, part of that calling was to be a light to the rest of the surrounding world so that they could see God for who He is, so that they could recognize God and that they too would come and worship the one true creator God.

But what did Israel do? They rejected that plan and they said, nah, we're God's chosen. We're better than.

All you people out there, you reject God and you hate God and you worship your multiple gods and your created images and your idols and we're so much better than and God hated that.

So He gives these warnings to the nation of Israel. You better knock it off. You better recognize that if you reject me, I will turn my attention away from you, Israel, and will go to the Gentiles.

[44 : 51] People that were not calling by God, calling God by name. People who were not living according to God's principles or plan.

a rebellious people. Now toward the middle of the chapter, verse 13, therefore, thus says the Lord God, behold my servants. Before we read this, remember the parable.

The servant is called to make sure that all the other servants in the household are fed and taken care of and provided for.

And the faithful servant does exactly that. So that when his master comes, he will find him so doing. He will be, the faithful servant will be daily, on a daily basis, just doing what he was called to do.

Take care of the other servants. But the unfaithful servant said, nah, I'm going to eat it myself. I'm going to celebrate and party and drink and eat and get fat and it's all mine.

[45 : 58] Therefore, thus says the Lord God, behold my servants shall eat, but you, Israel, shall be hungry.

Behold my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. Behold my servants shall rejoice, but you, Israel, shall be put to shame. Behold my servants, those of the Gentiles who come to faith in Christ.

Behold my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse.

It's exactly what Israel has done. They left the name of God to a group of people who weren't asking for it, you and I, and they chose instead a curse.

And the Lord God will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name. Does this have something to do with our text today?

[47 : 13] One of the, again, as a Bible study, as a Bible student, one of the things you're going to look at is the near context.

Has Jesus been saying something leading up to our parables that we're learning today to help us to understand where we're getting at today? So back, we're in Luke chapter 12, let's go back to Luke chapter 11 and look at these, this instruction, this, this woe that Jesus talks about.

This is Jesus speaking and he says, therefore also the wisdom of God said, so this is, this is God speaking, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world may be charged against who?

This current generation that is rejecting their Messiah right in real time. This current generation, remember, when Jesus came, he didn't go to Gentiles, he came to Israel and he spoke to Israelites.

The couple of times he mentions Gentile people, he's talking about the incredible faith of these few Gentile people in comparison to and contrast to the lack of faith of the people of Israel.

[48 : 43] From the blood of Abel, the first prophet who was martyred by his brother Cain, and he murdered him because he worshipped God well. Cain did not.

Through the blood of Zechariah, this is not the book of Zechariah, Zechariah, this is a priest of Zechariah from 2 Chronicles 24, one of the last priests that was murdered before the 400 years of silence before the New Testament, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary, yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation that was standing right there in front of Jesus, they were rejecting Messiah right in front of them, and all of that blood guilt was laid upon that generation.

Woe to you lawyers. For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves.

Not only did they reject it themselves, themselves, but they hindered others who were trying to enter. They taught, basically, how we would call it today, a false gospel.

They didn't teach them the truth. The very thing they were given charge over, the Pharisees, the scribes, the lawyers, as it's referred to here in the English Standard Version, their main job was to be the ones to recognize, there's the Messiah.

[50 : 19] Don't miss it. And when the Messiah showed up, not only did they miss it, they pointed the people away from him. And they killed him.

Just like they did the prophets of old. So to everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.

Those Pharisees, those lawyers, scribes, priests, who missed the Messiah, their punishment will be even more severe in hell than those who perhaps heard and rejected, than those who perhaps never heard and still rejected Creator God.

Their final destination will still be hell. But it will not be as severe as those who taught a false gospel. And so you come back to our text and you put in what Jesus has been leading up to all along.

The idea that he's speaking of the servant as Israel itself is not foreign to what the Old Testament leading up to this was teaching.

[51 : 48] And it's certainly not foreign to what he had just spoken about the previous chapter. But this generation of Israel rejecting their Messiah. If that servant, Israel, says to himself, my master's delayed in coming and begins to beat the male and female servants, to mistreat God's servants, which the Israelites had been doing throughout the Old Testament, beating the prophets, killing the prophets, rejecting their message, to eat and to drink and to think that they're just fine.

The master of that servant is going to come on a day when he doesn't expect them and an hour when he does not know and he will cut them into pieces and put them with the English Standard Version uses the word unfaithful.

All the other translations, King James, New King James, NIV, New American Standard, use the word unbeliever instead of unfaithful. Both translations are acceptable when you recognize that it's just the word for faith and the letter A, which means no, faith.

He's going to put them with all the people who have no faith. Unfaithful, unbeliever, both fit. Context here lets us know that these are unsaved because they're unbelieving.

It's the final destination. So, with all of that in mind, the last point, and again, whether or not you've ever figured out who the servant is in this parable, let's say you've just been reading along and you just, oh, I don't know who the servant is.

[53 : 45] Is it me? Is it unsaved? I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. You can still get the main message of the parable. Get this. When you're studying parables in particular, we need to discover the clear point of the parable.

Parables are taught to deliver one clear truth. Always remember that when you're studying parables. One clear truth.

And here's the clear truth of this parable, of this section of parables. That your attitude toward the Lord's second coming will be the result of your response to the Lord's first coming.

And you don't need to know who the servant is to get this point. So even someone who is a brand new believer, who doesn't know any Old Testament history, can still be able to read this parable and still get it.

My Lord's coming again. I need to be ready. And because it's my Lord, my Savior, the one who died for me and rose again for me.

[55 : 02] I'm looking forward to that day. And I cannot wait to see Him face to face. And I know that He will make all things right and all things new on that day.

And oh, what a day it will be. Sense the anticipation. Do you sense the joy that comes from that? And it's built on relationship. And it's because I've responded to the first coming of Jesus with acceptance and trust and love.

But to the one who says at the second coming of Jesus, ah, He's not coming again. It's been too long. He's just, no, I'm just going to live how I want to live.

I may even go to church. I may even, you know, read my Bible from time to time. But if my view of the second coming is, oh no, if the Lord comes now, I'm never going to get the raise, the boat, the girl or the guy I wanted, the house I've dreamed of, I'm never going to get all of this stuff that was mine.

I knew, it's supposed to be, I'm going to, talking about all me and my, and my stuff and my kingdom. And the Lord's coming is going to wreck that.

[56 : 38] And it's because my response to his first coming is, I'm really not interested. I'll play the game, maybe.

I'll act religious. Some people, other people not. But am I really interested in a relationship with the one who died for me?

Am I really interested in having that close bond with Christ, with Jesus who died for me?

Or is my attention and my favor and my interest all in the things of this world? Building my kingdom and his coming kingdom would wreck my deal.

Would wreck what I've worked for. What I've wanted to accomplish. What's your response to all of that? Understanding these truths, listen, helps us to understand what is happening in the news today as well.

[58 : 01] and we need to pay attention to this. There's some bad theology that's even being worked out in our newscasts today, whether you call yourself a conservative or a liberal or whatever it is.

There's some bad theology that's being taught out there that you need to be aware of that God, here's this bad theology, that God is done with Israel.

God has rejected Israel. That's true, but only for a time. Don't think, listen, don't think that you, the church, that we, the church, are a replacement for Israel.

That God has set Israel aside and now let them be condemned. Let them, no, God made these promises to Israel and if God will not fulfill those promises to Israel, what kind of a promise maker is God?

No. Listen to this promise that was made by God to Israel. Amos chapter 9 verse 14. Listen to this. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel.

[59 : 26] Has that happened yet? You might say, well, they're a nation today. That only happened in 1948, so maybe, keep watching, they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them.

They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. If you know anything about modern Israel, you know that it is a tiny, tiny little speck on all of what God had promised to Israel.

Israel's being occupied. In our news, it's twisted. Israel's the occupier. No, no, no, no, no. All of these other parts of that territory are being occupied, not by Israel, but by people who God never promised it to.

I will plant them on their land. They shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them, says the Lord, your God.

God had promised them an eternal kingdom with Jesus on the throne of that kingdom. He's coming again, and when he comes again, he will deal with the nation of Israel once again during the seven years of tribulation, right?

- [60 : 45] It's why the rapture takes place before because the rapture is unique to the church. That should make your ears perk up and say, hey, we're the church, right?
- That lets us know that God's plan for the church is finished at the rapture. He takes us out because he's got some unfinished business with Israel, that for seven years he's going to pour out his wrath.
- And Jews by the the millions will come to faith in Christ, but only in this evil time of persecution where Satan is going to be let loose and all kinds of wrath will be poured out.
- What's your view? What's your view of Jesus? what's your view of his first coming? What we just celebrated at Christmas?
- What we're still celebrating, the 12 days of Christmas? Is he loving savior? Is he lord of all? Is he master, worthy of our worship?
- [62 : 01] or is he unexpected, unwanted, apathetic, not really interested, I'm interested in my thing, my world, what I want.
- And you get to make that call. Will you accept him? Will you trust him as lord and savior? Are you doing that now? Or will you walk away once again?
- Let's pray. Lord, you've given us so much. You came as we celebrate at this time of year.
- It's your birth. You didn't just show up at Christmas though. That your plan of redemption goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 3.
- Being born the seed of a woman. Which doesn't make sense. But it foretells of a virgin birth, not needing the seed of a man.
- [63 : 25] All of human history has brought us to this point. Where we are today. You have put all of these things into place to work your plan, to work your redemption, to help us to see the need that we have for a savior.
- Because we are so racked with sin and rebellion and wanting to do it ourselves and wanting to be our own thing.
- But Lord, help us to recognize that the great truth is that freedom is found in surrendering to you.
- peace is found when we humbly submit to your rule and reign.
- Lord, today we recognize you are coming again. And I pray that here today in this room and people watching online, that there would be a sense of expectation, a sense of joy, a sense of fulfillment, great love, the idea that you're coming again.
- [64 : 54] And we will be united with you in a way that we cannot experience in this life. We get just a foretaste, just a shadow of it. But what a day that will be when we see you face to face.
- What a day of joy. What a day of anticipation. What a day of completeness. But Lord, I also know that there are people in this room and there are people watching that have not yet trusted you as Savior.
- Help them to see that there is no middle ground, there is no neutral territory. that you are either trusting in Christ or you are not.
- I pray that today that people would recognize their need for a Savior, that your Holy Spirit would work in their heart to convict them, convict them of their sin, of their rebellion, of their want for independence from God so that they can be their own God.
- I pray, Lord, that you would help them to see that that's false. it leads to a road of destruction.
- [66 : 37] Help them to see that we were created to live in relationship with you, that our truest and greatest moment is found in serving you, living for you, and doing life your way.

Lord, I pray that even today in this moment that they would be saying, yes, Lord. Today, I want you to know that I'm trusting you as my Lord and Savior.

I repent of my sin. I understand that my sin keeps me from you, but that because of what Jesus has done for me, he took my place on the cross, my punishment that I deserve, and took it upon himself.

so that I could be forgiven of my sin, and brought into a right relationship with you. I pray, Lord, that you would forgive me of my sin, and I want you to know that I'm trusting you.

If you would say that with me today, Lord, I am trusting in you as my Savior, my Lord. God promises he will save you.

[68 : 05] He will do as he says. We have that great and precious promise from God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you for your great love for us.

thank you that you put all of this into place to bring us to yourself. We love you.

We praise you. We ask it in Jesus' name. And all God's people said, amen.