

Session 22 Disciples Called to Live in the Light of Eternity (Lk. 12-13)

I. BE SPIRITUALLY ALERT AND WATCHFUL FOR JESUS' RETURN (LK. 12:35-48)

- A. Jesus taught three short parables on the wisdom of being watchful related to His return to earth: the watching servants (12:35-38), the watchful master (12:39-40), and faithfulness (12:41-48). The call to make life choices to be ready to stand before the Lord in eternity is a primary theme in Luke 12:1-13:9 and is set forth in the language of *watching* and *being ready* for the Lord's return.

⁴⁰... *you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.* (Lk. 12:40)

- B. The Lord “comes” to us in two different ways—at His second coming and at our physical death. The emphasis of these parables is Jesus’ return more than His coming for a believer at their death.
- C. ***Son of Man***: This is the title that Jesus used the most and is associated with the end times when He returns to the earth in power to rule all the nations (Dan. 7:9-14). The generation in which He returns will see the most intense persecution and greatest pressures in history, along with both the greatest falling away **and** the greatest release of the Spirit. That generation must be prepared so that they are not fearful, offended, deceived, or confused by the events unfolding on earth at that time.

⁹*I watched...the Ancient of Days...* ¹⁰*The court was seated, and the books were opened...*

¹³...*behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven...* ¹⁴*Then to Him was given dominion...and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.* (Dan. 7:9-14)

- D. The underlying impact of Jesus’ teaching in Luke 12 is that His people live in the fear of the Lord. An important aspect of this lies in understanding that the Lord is watching His people and having their deeds recorded in His books. Imagine there being a “heavenly camera” capturing everything that everyone says and does— thus, the small things that we do have significance. Because of the cross, any sin can be removed from God’s books with genuine repentance.

³*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.* (Prov. 15:3)

¹²*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened...the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.* (Rev. 20:12)

II. THE PARABLE OF THE WATCHING SERVANTS—PROMISE OF BLESSING (LK. 12:35-38)

- A. Jesus gave three exhortations to prepare people to be ready to stand before Him at His coming—let your waist be girded, your lamps be burning, and be like one who waits for His return (12:35-38).

³⁵*Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;* ³⁶*you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.* ³⁷*Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.* ³⁸*And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.* (Lk. 12:35-38)

- B. **Let your waist be girded:** describes a man who tucked his long robe up under his belt so that he might work or to go to battle. It speaks of a person who is ready for action to serve God and people (Ex. 12:11; 1 Kgs. 18:46; 20:31-32; 2 Kgs. 4:29; 9:1; Job 38:3; 40:7; Prov. 31:17; Isa. 32:11; Eph. 6:14; 1 Pet. 1:13). Here it speaks of being dressed appropriately to honor the arrival of the master.
- C. **Lamp burning:** Lamps were carried in the hands at night to bring light to the path. It speaks of walking in the light with a vibrant spirit (Lk. 11:33-36; Jn. 5:35). The parable of the ten virgins speaks of having oil in their lamps to escort the Bridegroom to a wedding (Mt. 25:1-13).
- D. **Waiting for the Lord's return:** This speaks of living with understanding of Jesus' leadership in the end-time in context of the unique dynamics related to an unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit while overcoming the escalating darkness in the nations in the generation that He returns.
- E. **Open immediately:** The result of being prepared is that they immediately open the door to Him. Such responsiveness is in contrast to needing time to try to cover up their bad deeds (12:45-48) or in drawing back because of being overcome with fear, offense, deception, or compromise.
- F. **Blessed:** This includes living in His presence and participating with Him in reigning on the earth.
- G. **Serve them:** Jesus will honor the faithful at events like the messianic banquet in the millennial kingdom. Jesus delights in serving His people (Lk. 9:14-17; 22:27, 30; 24:30; Jn. 13:1-17).
- H. **Third watch:** There were three watches in the night in Israel: 6pm-10pm, 10pm-2am, 2am-6am.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE WATCHFUL MASTER—SOBER WARNING (LK. 12:39-40)

- A. The parable contains a sober warning that one's future blessing can be minimized. Jesus compared His return to the coming of a thief who comes at an unexpected time, resulting in loss for those not watching—this includes suffering loss of potential rewards (1 Cor. 3:15).
*³⁹But **know this**, that if the master of the house had known what hour the **thief would come**, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰Therefore **you also be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Lk. 12:39-40)*
*¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will **suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved...as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:15)*
- B. **Know this:** Jesus was pointing out that “suffering loss” can be avoided by watching. The narrative of this parable shifted from a steward watching for his master to a master “watching” for a thief so as avoid suffering loss. This life is a time when our personal choices have great significance.
- C. **Thief:** The thief metaphor is used often in relationship to Jesus' second coming (Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thes. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:14-15).
- D. **Jesus' second coming:** The call to readiness is clearly stated as being in context to Jesus' return. The charge is to be “ready” by engaging in three activities in 12:35-36—the Bride will be ready.
*⁷...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready**. (Rev. 19:7)*

IV. THE PARABLE ON FAITHFULNESS—REWARDS AND JUDGMENT (LK. 12:41-48)

A. This parable is addressed to those who serve in any kind of leadership in the kingdom (12:41-48). Jesus promised blessing in terms of ruling with Him in the age to come. This is for those who are faithful in serving, endure persecution, make godly financial decisions, overcome anxiety, etc.

⁴¹*Peter said to Him, “Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?”* ⁴²*And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them...food in due season?”* ⁴³*Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.* ⁴⁴*Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.”* (Lk. 12:41-44)

1. **“This parable”**: While this seems to refer to the warning of 12:39-40, it surely includes the promises of blessing that Jesus set forth in the first parable (12:36-38). Peter asked Jesus a question, and Jesus answered with a rhetorical question. Jesus did not give Peter a direct answer—his question was not fully answered until 12:46-48.
2. **Give them food**: Jesus is referring to any who are responsive to Him as described in 12:37, who are engaged in caring for others, especially in feeding or encouraging them spiritually. Jesus was talking to Peter and any believers throughout history who were wise and faithful, but He is especially addressing the leaders in His kingdom in the generation the Lord returns.
3. **Ruler over all**: These faithful ones will partner with Jesus, giving leadership over the earth in the millennial kingdom (Dan. 7:27). Jesus taught on eternal rewards more than anyone else in Scripture did (Mt. 5:12; 10:42; 16:26; 19:28; Mk. 9:41; Lk. 6:23, 35; 22:30; Rev. 3:21).

B. Jesus described what some will encounter if they are unfaithful to the stewardship entrusted to them (12:45-48). Various ways that Jesus’ servants are unfaithful are by *neglecting their assignment* (did not do His will), *abusing their authority* (beating the servants), or *being self-indulgent* (drunk).

⁴⁵*But if that servant says... “My master is delaying his coming,” and begins to beat the... servants and to eat...and be drunk,* ⁴⁶*the master...will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.* ⁴⁷*And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not... do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* ⁴⁸*But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required, and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more.* (Lk. 12:45-48)

C. **Beat, eat, and be drunk**: Jesus used cultural images commonly seen in the Rome’s slavery system of that day—the language of beatings. He used “beating” when describing the bad leadership of His servants (12:45) and of their future punishment (12:47-48). He was not referring to leaders hitting someone physically, but was speaking of abusive leadership that was harsh and vindictive.

D. **His portion with unbelievers**: Matthew’s record of this parable adds “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 24:51; cf. Mt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 25:30). There is debate on what this means. It seems to me that this refers to these leaders going to hell. Some who do not believe that one can lose their salvation may see “having no honor in the kingdom” as being the place of an unbeliever.

- E. **To cut him in two:** Some see this as symbolically speaking of a terrible penalty, recalling David's captain, Joab, who literally cut their enemies in two (1 Chr. 20).
- F. The Scriptures indicate a distinction between sins that are committed knowingly and those which are committed in ignorance (Num. 15:27-31; Deut. 17:12).
²⁸So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally...and it shall be forgiven him. ²⁹You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally...³⁰But the person who does anything presumptuously...that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. (Num. 15:28-30)
- G. With greater privilege and opportunity to receive the truth comes a higher standard of evaluation (judgment) in the age to come (Lk.12:48; cf. Lk. 10:12-15; 11:31-32; Rom. 2:12-13; Jas. 3:1). The final judgment will be less severe on the people of Sodom than some in His generation (10:12-15).
- H. The King gives assignments to each of His servants to walk out in the different seasons of their life. Each assignment has its own difficulties, including times of being mistreated. Being faithful to the King requires that in these times of pressure they do not quit the assignment that He gave them by "taking the liberty" to choose another assignment.

V. BE PREPARED FOR DIVISION AND PERSECUTION (LK. 12:49-53)

- A. Jesus called His disciples to be prepared for division (12:49-53). Jesus continued the theme of preparing for the coming judgment (12:1-13:9). In light of the pressures related to His coming, His disciples are to be prepared for pressure. Thus, He emphasized being watchful (12:41-48).
⁴⁹I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! ⁵¹Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. ⁵²For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. ⁵³Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Lk. 12:49-53)
- B. In context, the fire here speaks of the pressures related to His return, while His baptism spoke of His death on the cross that included His bearing God's wrath for the sins of humankind.
- C. **Send fire on earth:** This was a fire of cleansing and of judgment. The truth and ministry of Jesus either purifies or destroys—it purifies what is noncombustible and destroys what is combustible.
- D. **Baptism:** The Greek connotation of this word is **to be immersed in something**. Jesus used it here to referred to being immersed in suffering, and divine wrath on the cross (also see Mk 10:38).
- E. **Kindled:** The kindling of the fire of judgment is the cross—the judgment God put on Him. Divine judgment fell on Him from His Father before it was to come on nations, especially in the end times.
- F. **Division on earth:** This will increase as the Lord's return draws closer. Family strife and tension is a theme that Jesus emphasized to His disciples (Lk. 9:57-62; 11:27-28; 14:26; 18:28-30).

VI. DISCERNING THE TIMES—GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD NOW (LK. 12:54-59)

- A. The leaders and the majority of the people could draw clear conclusions about the weather based on minimal evidence, but they failed to discern the coming danger for rejecting Jesus (12:54-57). Jesus addressed how they wasted their opportunity and privilege, leading to serious consequences.

⁵⁴*And He was also saying to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out. ⁵⁵And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time? ⁵⁷And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?” (Lk. 12:54-57)*

1. **Cloud in the west:** Rain clouds moved in from the Mediterranean Sea indicating showers.
 2. **South wind:** Winds from the desert region in the south indicating heat in the following days.
 3. **Not analyze this present time:** They were blind to the facts that the lame walked, the blind received sight, and the dead were raised as signs that God’s kingdom had arrived.
 4. **Your own initiative:** They could not discern the danger that was coming their way. If they were able to judge the nature of Jesus’ ministry, they would act now to avoid judgment.
- B. This parable pointed to the judgment of God, which will soon come on those who refused to get right with God. The message was to correct the problem of their guilt with God while there is time.
- ⁵⁸*For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent. (Lk. 12:58-59)*

1. **The magistrate:** This was the one who made a preliminary hearing in a legal court case. People presented their case to a magistrate who determined whether to send it to a judge for a trial in court. Thus, this speaks of the time while you are going with your opponent to speak to the magistrate for the initial hearing.
2. **Make an effort to settle:** Make an effort to settle with your opponent so that he may not drag you before the judge as the judge may end up turning you over to the officer of the court who will enforce a prison sentence.
3. **Drag you before the judge:** The point is to settle your guilt before you arrive at the Judge. You had better discern the times—gospel. Find out what the judge requires for you to receive forgiveness and salvation—believe in Jesus.

VII. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE AND THE TOWER IN SILOAM (LK. 13:1-5)

- A. Jesus use two current tragedies—murder of worshipers in the temple and accidental deaths related to a tower. The point is that everyone is going to die, and no one is in control of the timing. He pointed out that in both incidents the victims were not especially sinful. The fate of these was a warning that sudden death is real possibility and therefore we needed to prepare by repenting.
- ¹There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” (Lk. 13:1-5)*
- B. **Galileans:** Some men from Galilee were offering sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem and Pilate’s soldiers murdered them. These men were killed while engaging in worship and obeying Scripture.
- C. **Worse sinners:** The question was “Did this happen to these people because they were living in more sin than others?” Jesus redirected them to a more important issue—that all will die and stand before God with eternal consequences. The biggest issue is not how or when someone dies, but what is the state of their relationship with God (12:58-59)—they must be in right relationship with the Judge.
- D. **Repent or perish:** The fact is that all people will face God’s judgment unless they repent. The wages of sin is death, and God can take our life at any time. When a calamity occurs, the question arises, “Why did it happen? The better question is, why is this not happening more?”
- E. **Eighteen people:** These were killed when a tower fell on them—probably at construction site at Jerusalem’s wall near the pool of Siloam. They might have been building an aqueduct using towers to support the scaffolding for the project. But it collapsed killing eighteen bystanders who were walking by or killing those on the construction team.

VIII. THE PARABLE OF UNFRUITFUL FIG TREE (LK. 13.6-9)

- A. This parable emphasized the need for repentance while drawing attention to God’s grace for allowing time for repentance. Israel was nearing their last opportunity to repent before judgment. Time was running out for national repentance by accepting Jesus before they killed Jesus
- ⁶He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ ⁸But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’” (Lk. 13:6-9)*
- B. **Three years:** This is a reference to Jesus’ three-year ministry.
- C. **Cut it down:** This speak of God’s judgment on Israel in AD 70 and then on individuals for eternity.