

The Gospel of Luke

Parables of Readiness and Reward (I)

Luke 12:35-40

1. The Preparedness of the Ready Servant (vs.35-36)

Master and slave is a common way in which the Holy Spirit has chosen to describe the relationship between God and those who faithfully follow Him (Rom 1:1; 1 Pet 2:16) as well as God's relationship to those who do not obey Him (Luke 12:45-48; cf. Matt 25:14ff).

A. Be Dressed in Readiness: Attentiveness (v.35a)

In order to be prepared to serve the master upon his arrival, the servant must be ready and able to serve without unnecessary delay (cf. Matt 25:1ff). This requires that the servant be clothed in a manner that will facilitate that service (Ex 12:11; 2 Sam 20:8; Eph 6:14).

B. Keep Your Lamps Lit: Awareness (v.35b)

The ready servant must be aware and mentally ready. A lighted lamp often is used as a metaphor for knowledge or mental awareness that is necessary for proper conduct (Ps 119:105; John 17:17). The servant must be able to clearly see what is going on in order to be prepared (Matt 6:22; Luke 11:34-35).

C. Be Waiting at the Door: Anticipation (v.36)

The servant must be in the right place to serve; he must be positionally ready (cf. Luke 2:25, 36-38). Waiting for the master's arrival is characterized by actions which are based on the immanence of his return and not by his present absence (Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 2:28-29).

2. The Blessing of the Ready Servant (vs.37-38)

Jesus makes a distinction between those servants who are blessed by God and those who are punished (cf. vs.43-48; Matt 25:41ff). One of the key distinctive between the two types of servants is whether or not that servant is on the alert. One of the shocking descriptions that Jesus gives of the blessing for those who wait for His coming is that He will serve them.

3. The Parable for the Ready Servant (vs.39-40)

One of the consistent pieces of Jesus' teaching as it relates to His second coming is that it will occur at an unknown and unexpected time (Matt 24:36-39). The immanent return of Jesus Christ should motivate the actions of the disciples and serve as a warning against laziness and complacency (1 Thess 5:1-11; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 2:28-29).