

The Gospel of Luke

Parables of Readiness and Reward (II)

Luke 12:41-48

1. **The Question: Who is the Intended Audience** (v.41)

The disciples understood that Jesus' command was for them to continually be ready and waiting for the Lord (vs.35-36, 40). They also knew that diligent obedience to His commands would result with their blessing (vs.37-39). Jesus answers Peter's question indirectly by contrasting faithful and unfaithful servants.

2. **The Answer: Servants and Rewards** (vs.42-48a)

A. **The Faithful Steward and His Reward** (vs.42-44)

The servant who will be rewarded with responsibilities from the Lord when He comes is the same servant who is found engaged in responsible service when He returns (Matt 25:19ff).

B. **The Flagrantly Disobedient Slave and His Reward** (vs.45-46)

This servant is characterized by taking for granted the patience of God (Matt 24:37-39; cf. Rom 2:4; 3:17), his abuse of others, and of his position of authority. The vivid description of this servant's retribution is the most severe and he is then numbered with those who spurned the message of Jesus (Matt 11:20-24; Luke 9:41).

C. **The Unprepared and Disobedient Slave** (v.47)

This servant is characterized by knowingly disobeying the master (Rom 2:8-9; Her 10:26-29). While this servant did nothing as egregious as the previous servant, he is rewarded with a severe beating.

D. **The Ignorant and Disobedient Slave** (v.48a)

The primary distinction between this servant and the prior one is knowledge of what the master's will. He does not know positively what was required of him, and therefore he is not punished for that, but he is punished for those things he has done which are worthy of punishment (cf. Rom 1:18-21).

3. **The Principle of Relative Reward and Punishment** (v.48b)

All of humanity will eventually be divided into one of only two primary groups, the saved and the lost (John 3:36), for all eternity (Matt 25:46). The saved will all experience eternal conscious jubilation (Matt 25:21; Luke 16:23; Rev 21:1-4) while the lost will all experience eternal conscious torment (Matt 25:30; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 21:8). The rewards that the saved receive will be commensurate with his or her individual faithfulness and obedience to Christ (1 Cor 3:14-15; 2 Cor 5:10) while the degree of torment that the lost experience will be commensurate with his or her individual unfaithfulness and sinfulness.