

Be Ready + Faithful

In Luke 12:41- 48 (NCV), the Bible states “⁴¹ Peter said, 'Lord, did you tell this story to us or to all people?’” ⁴² The Lord said, 'Who is the wise and trusted servant that the master trusts to give the other servants their food at the right time?’” ⁴³ When the master comes and finds the servant doing his work, the servant will be blessed. ⁴⁴ I tell you the truth, the master will choose that servant to take care of everything he owns. ⁴⁵ But suppose the servant thinks to himself, 'My master will not come back soon,' and he begins to beat the other servants, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶ The master will come when that servant is not ready and is not expecting him. Then the master will cut him in pieces and send him away to be with the others who don't obey. ⁴⁷ "The servant who knows what his master wants but is not ready, or who does not do what the master wants, will be beaten with many blows! ⁴⁸ But the servant who does not know what his master wants and does things that should be punished will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. And from the one trusted with much, much more will be expected.”

In preceding verses before this passage in Luke 12:35-40 (NCV), Jesus spoke about the need for us not to be distracted and impaired from serving him with full sight and strength. Jesus spoke about being proactive and ready to spring into action when required. The context here is to be ready for service and keep our lamps burning. This calls for an eagerness or willingness to serve God and others in whatever capacity we have been gifted and called to do so at a moment's notice. To ensure that your lamp is burning requires watching the supply level of oil and length of the wick. The lamp is used when there is darkness to ensure we can see and we do not fall or trip over anything. The oil in the lamp is symbol of the Holy Spirit that guides and directs our lives. If the oil of a lamp runs dry without replenishment or the wick is burnt out, there will be no light and the person holding the lamp will experience darkness and may suffer loss and pain. So it is with us if influence and direction of the Holy Spirit (represented by light and oil in this passage) is absent in our lives.

Jesus was asked by Peter if His parable is meant for the disciples or everyone (Lk. 12:41). Jesus did not respond directly but it can be inferred from His response in Luke 12:42-48 that the parable is meant for both the disciples and everyone. Jesus responded by speaking about distinguishing features of faithful and wise manager versus unfaithful manager thereby giving a choice to His hearers as to what they want to be.

A faithful and wise manager performs his/her responsibility in God's kingdom on earth with a sense of purpose in and out of his Master's presence and applies knowledge acquired in the right way. He exhibits his faithfulness and wisdom by taking care of others committed into his hands in terms of apportioning care, substance, compassion, support and resources in his hands to them as when and as they have need. This can be in form of coaching, sharing, teaching, mentoring, counseling, comforting, praying, directing, guiding or providing physical resources. The reward of faithfulness and use of wisdom is promotion (1 Chron. 4:10).

The unfaithful manager forgets he is just a steward of resources in his care and that he will be called to give account. He also believes that since the Master has delayed in respect of performance of His promises he can take law into his hands and do his own thing. The unfaithful manager threw off restraint, became power conscious, did not care for others and became a lord to himself. Many of us fall into this category when God's timing does not match ours. The result of unfaithfulness is loss of position and relationship with the Master, punishment and pain. Jesus made it clear that the degree of punishment and pain is dependent on the degree of relationship and revelation that the unfaithful manager has. The Christian that knows what is right and does not do it will receive many blows. But those ignorant of the will of the Lord will receive few blows.

The shepherds were watching their flock by night they received the great news of the birth of Jesus. They were not really watching the flocks but watching out for any danger to the flock and themselves. If you want to receive great news from God you cannot afford to be sleeping but be alert even when it is night. Are you watchful in respect of your eagerness to be of service unto God and to others? Have you lost your zeal for the Lord? Are you prepared and on the lookout for opportunities to be a blessing unto others? Can you say you are a faithful and wise manager in respect of resources and opportunities given to you?

Footnote:

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