



Faithful and Unfaithful Servant!

Luke 12:41-48

Matthew 24:46-51

Matthew 24:43-51, *But 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. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

⁴⁵ *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Introduction

Imagine a coastal lighthouse keeper who, despite decades of calm seas, never lets the beacon die—one unlit night can cost ships their lives.

Jesus ends His Olivet Discourse with the same insistence: keep your lamps burning, for you do not know when your Master will return.

We dwell in a tension: Christ has come once in humility—and He is coming again in glory. Oscar Cullmann called this our “already” and “not yet.” We’re already forgiven, empowered, and indwelt by the Spirit, yet we have not yet tasted the fullness of our inheritance. That tension should fuel our hope—and our holiness.

A pregnant woman carries new life within her—she rejoices in her child’s presence even as she longs for the day of birth. So, too, the Church lives between the first Advent and the Second.

The Uncertainty of the Hour

V 36, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

Sovereign Secrecy

- If God published Christ’s timetable, we would trade obedience for date-setting.
- We learn trust, not timetables.

Weather-forecast apps can predict storms, but fishermen still tie down their boats before every voyage—uncertainty drives preparedness.

1. The Thief in the Night.

V 43–44, *But 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.* ⁴⁴ *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

These two verses cap Jesus' teaching on the end times (the Olivet Discourse).

He is emphasizing that no amount of calendar-watching can substitute for heart-watching.

The point isn't foreknowledge but rather faithfulness.

The Master's Missed Alarm

V 43, *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come,*

Hidden timing:

In first-century homes, thieves tunneled through walls at night. The master's ignorance shows that even the most diligent owner doesn't know the exact moment of intrusion.

We can study prophecy, track world events, but we will never nail down the precise hour of Christ's return.

The Lord's coming is often likened to the coming of a thief.

It is a criminal coming. The likening of the Lord's coming to a thief.

2 Peter 3:10, *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Revelation 3:3, *Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

Luke 12:35-40, *“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶ and 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. ³⁹ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would [\[a\]](#) have watched and not allowed his house to be*

broken into. ⁴⁰ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

1 Thessalonians 5:2, *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

The Lord's coming is likened to a thief, it is not that Christ is like a thief, it is that Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly like a thief comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

This is the only analogy.

When a thief comes, he takes everything you have.

Likewise, when Christ comes and finds a man who is not ready for His coming everything that man has will be taken.

It will all be burned up.

We might see Christ like the thief who comes and takes everything that a man puts his faith in, which cannot stand the test of judgment.

The Lord is coming unexpectedly.

He is coming suddenly, in a moment when no one is aware, and no one realizes.

It is hard to imagine this because when you think about the rapture and all these other events, everybody's going to be saying, "when is He going to get here?"

But sin, being what it is, and so overwhelmingly blinding. The mystery of iniquity having reached its apex, and people explaining everything away the best they can. Hostility toward God reaching a fever pitch and people are literally going to explain it away other ways.

Even those people who may say, "He might come," are going to find themselves sort of settling into the fact that He's not coming.

We don't know what happens maybe after the sign in heaven, things go back to some modicum of normality and everybody says, "whatever it was it must have been over."

They may settle back down just long enough to be unexpecting Him and that's exactly when He comes.

But we know they are not going to be ready when it happens unless they have prepared their hearts before the moment.

V 44, *he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

V 42, *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

Jewish nights in the Old Testament are divided by **3 watches of 4 hours**.

First Watch (“beginning of the watches”) –
Sunset 6 PM to about 10 PM

Lamentations 2:19, *“Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches...”*

Middle Watch – 10 PM to about 2 AM

Judges 7:19, *“Gideon and the hundred men... came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch...”*

Morning Watch – 2 AM to sunrise 6 AM

Exodus 14:24, *“Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked...”*

1 Samuel 11:11, *“The Lord thundered... in the morning watch.”*

New-Testament 4 Watches – 4watches of 3 hours

- **First Watch (“evening”) – 6 PM–9 PM**
- **Second Watch (“midnight”) – 9 PM–12 AM**
- **Third Watch (“cockcrowing”) – 12 AM–3 AM**
- **Fourth Watch (“dawn”) – 3 AM–6 AM**

Military: guards relieved at each watch to protect towns or camps (**Ezekiel 33:1–6**).

Jesus calls all His servants to “keep watch” continually, since His return will come at an hour we do not expect.

Vigilant response: Had he known, he would have sat by the door, lamp trimmed, and every lock secured.

Ignorance isn’t the issue inaction is the issue here.

We can’t claim “I didn’t know”

We don’t know what happens after the Tribulation and after the sign of the Son of Man.

We don’t know what’s going on in that time period, that little bit of a gap that we don’t have much Scripture about.

But we do know that somehow the world loses the sense that He is coming immediately.

When they least expect it, He will come in final fury, in final glory.

Jesus' analogy is simple.

If a man knew a thief was coming, he would be ready.

If you know Jesus is coming, you better be ready.

You better be ready and know He is coming.

If a man knew a thief was coming, he would get ready for the thief. Jesus is telling you, "I'm coming."

Our call is to constant readiness.

Illustration:

A city apartment dweller in a high-crime area doesn't need a police bulletin saying, "Burglars strike at 2am." He secures every window every night, ready to sound the alarm at the first sign of danger.

The Imperative of Readiness

V 44, *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

The **Greek** word "**Gregorio**" meaning is to stay awake, alert, and watchful. It's the same word used of Jesus praying in Gethsemane.

Mark 14:38, *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Readiness is active, not passive.

Who is here addressed?

"You"—everyone alive when Jesus returns. No bystanders.

V 44, *for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Unexpected hour: The focus isn't the exact moment but our posture. We serve the Master who arrives unannounced.

Kingdom urgency: Every task prayer, mercy, and witness are done under His potential gaze.

Illustration: Think of a surprise inspection at a restaurant. The chef doesn't wait for the inspector's schedule. The kitchen is always spotless, every station battle-ready.

Practical Implications of "Be Ready"

Spiritual Watchfulness

Carve out daily "quiet hours" in prayer and Scripture.

Mark 13:35, *Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—*

Use simple prompts an alarm or hourglass to pause and check your heart.

Moral Integrity

Live with transparent hands and clean speech.

1 Thessalonians 5:22–23, *Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Repent swiftly when self-indulgence or secrecy creeps in.

Keep your eyes open for opportunities to serve and share the gospel.

Acts 20:31, *Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

Practice hospitality and compassion as if today were the day of reckoning.

James 1:27, *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

A wake-up call. Whether it's 2 AM or 2 PM, the Master may come at any moment.

Our preparation isn't in guessing the hour but in living each hour under His lordship, fully awake, fully engaged, and fully faithful.

The "thief in the night" metaphor isn't meant to terrify but to act before alarm.

Illustration: A night-shift nurse keeps her pager on and scrubs at the ready, knowing any instant could be an emergency.

Living Alert

- **Mind:** "Set your mind on things above" (**Colossians 3:2**).
- **Heart:** "Be sober, be vigilant" (**1 Peter 5:8**).
- **Hands:** "Serve wholeheartedly, as to the Lord" (**Colossians 3:23**).

Illustration: A wildfire lookout scans the horizon every hour even when skies are clear, he is trained to spot the slightest wisp of smoke.

2. Faithfulness.

V 45-51 is about faithfulness.

A beautiful analogy, a parable, it illustrates very clearly the point that He wants to make. It is a powerful illustration.

The Faithful and Wise Servant.

V 45, *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?”*

The lord is like God.

The servant is like every man and woman in the world.

Every one of us has been given a stewardship and responsibility.

As if the Lord had said that you manage life, breath, intellect, will, emotion, talent, truth, spiritual sensitivity, opportunity, privilege, and all that I give you in creating you in My image. All that I give you in endowing your world with all the good things that I could possibly create, all that I give you in terms of opportunity to serve Me. You are responsible for.”

Like a servant who is told to rule over the house is to manage all the goods and to make sure that he properly gives food to everybody in the right time and the right place.

In other words, every person in the world not just Christians, has been given a management test by God. Life, breath, privilege, all those things are granted to us by God, and they are a stewardship for which we are accountable.

Hell will be populated not only by the devil and his angels, but by people who wasted that privilege, and who embezzled God’s substance.

Like the man did in **Matthew 18**. He was called in to give an account for how it is that he could have embezzled the king’s money and stood there bankrupt. He fell on his face and pleaded for mercy. Every man, woman in the world has been given a stewardship by God. If you embezzle God’s goods, privileges, resources, and opportunities, then you will be accountable to God for the wastefulness of your stewardship.

Hell is going to be filled with people who used up God’s opportunities for themselves, who abused their God-given privilege and failed and refused to serve God in the way that He commands.

So, every human being on the face of the earth is being tested by God as to the stewardship of what they possess.

This householder does that with a servant.

V 46, *Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.*

When the Lord comes and finds servants doing what He wanted them to do, they are going to be blessed.

This indicates that they are believers.

This indicates that they are the redeemed.

They are obedient.

Obedience is always the mark.

Doing the will of God is always the mark of true salvation. So, when the Lord comes, He will find the true servant doing what He told them to do by fulfilling His will.

Living out their stewardship to the fullest.

V 47, *Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.*

What that says is when the Lord comes back and finds His faithful servants?

To His trustworthy servants?

To His obedient servants?

He is going to put them over everything He possesses.

It is a marvellous thing.

Do you know what we are going to do in the millennial kingdom?

We are going to sit with Christ on His throne!

Revelation 3:21, *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

We are going to rule over everything He possesses.

Life is a stewardship.

What you do with this little slice of time will determine whether you will rule in eternity in the throne of Christ, or whether you will be dominated in hell by the demons and the devils for whom it was prepared.

When the Lord comes, He will check the stewardship.

The one who is proven faithful will be rewarded with eternal ruling.

3. The Evil Servant's Downfall

V 48–51, *But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

On the other hand, when the Lord comes, He is going to find some who weren't faithful.

Some who, not being faithful over little, can't be made lord over much.

Some whose lamps were not trimmed. (**Matthew 25**)

Some who didn't take their talent and use it but buried it and hoarded it.

They will be cast into a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"The evil servant" – kakos, evil in quality, evil in nature – "says in his own heart, My lord delays his coming" – "he won't be here for a while, I am watching the signs."

There are some people going to be like that.

- They will say in their heart that they will come to Him in the last minute!
- They will also say that I am going to feed myself what I have got for others also and ill treat them.
- They will think that they going to have fun.
- They will indulge themselves in eating and drinking.
- They will lead a worldly lifestyle.

Not everybody who's unregenerate beats other people up or abuses other people to the degree that this servant did.

Not everybody that's unregenerate parties with drunkards.

But he is an illustration of an unregenerate person.

It says he will be given a portion with the hypocrites, verse 51.

It doesn't seem to indicate here that he is much of a hypocrite. A hypocrite is somebody who pretends to be religious.

This guy isn't pretending to be religious, not beating up people and running around with drunks. But he will go to the same place that religious phonies go, which is to say that the category is broader than just this single illustration.

It is for all the unregenerate.

Luke, in paralleling this, says he will be cut in half and appointed a portion with the unbelievers. He is only one illustration of a whole lot of kinds of unbelievers, including not only those who live a drunken, dissolute lifestyle, but those who are religious hypocrites as well.

People will say, maybe some listening to me right now, going to say I want what I want.

- I will watch for the rapture.
- If I miss the rapture, I am in good shape. I know what's coming.
- I will watch for the abomination of desolations, when I see that happen, I am checking through my thing, and then I am going to watch the unfolding of Revelation 6 to 18.
- Then when I see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, since I don't know just exactly what is going to happen after that, I will try to stay sensitive.

Just before I think it's going to happen, I will just get in there and take Christ and I will scarp through.

In the meanwhile, I will have great time.

The lord of that servant is going to come in a day, verse 50 says, when you are not looking for him and an hour you are not even aware of.

Don't try it.

What makes you think if you won't give your heart to Jesus Christ now, you are going to want to do it in the future?

Christ isn't going to change.

He will be no more wonderful, glorious, power to save, power to change your life then than He does now.

If you don't want it now, why would you want it then?

If you don't want Jesus Christ now when sin is to some extent restrained do you think you will want Him more in a period when sin is unrestrained and your evil can run amuck to the degree that it's never in the history of man run amuck?

The world will be worse than it's ever been.

Do you think you are gratified by your lusts now. There will be such lustful gratification in the Tribulation that it's indescribable.

Why will you want Christ in the midst of that more than you want Him now?

Don't fool yourself in thinking that you are able to read the signs. The Bible says nobody is able to do that.

Jesus is going to come when you don't think He is going to come, in an hour you are not even aware of.

There may have been a lot of people in Noah's day who said, "if the water gets up to my knees, I will bang on the door."

Too late!

V 51, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Greek verb is *dichotomeo*, "dichotomized."

Exodus 29:17, *Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and with its head.*

It is used in the Septuagint, which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament, of the cutting in half of an animal when an animal was offered in sacrifice and cut into two pieces.

To illustrate the serious, devastating deadliness of the judgment of the Lord. When He comes back and finds this person who thought he could sow his wild oats and live it up and do whatever he wanted and slide in under the wire, it's going to be too late.

He is going to come when he doesn't expect it.

They are going to pay with a very severe price.

The man is going to be cut in half, given a portion with all the rest of the unbelievers and hypocrites, spend the rest of eternity weeping and gnashing his teeth.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth is mentioned **five times** at least in the book of Matthew, and each time is a way to describe the terrible, unrelieved, and unconsolable pain of eternal hell.

Conclusion:

What is to be the right kind of preparation for an unexpected and sudden coming of Christ?

Alertness, readiness, and faithfulness.

We need to be watching for the signs.

We need to get ready for His coming.

To do that, we need to be faithful to His command and His Word and the stewardship He has given us.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

Just when men think everything is fine and they are going to make it then sudden destruction comes.

They shall not escape.

There are going to be those people who say, “peace and safety, it’s all going to work out, everything is going to be fine.”

Suddenly the devastation and destruction is going to fall upon them.

Some of those people who think they can survive the Great Tribulation are going to find themselves facing God, before Christ comes, through death and devastation and disaster that occurs in that time period.

1 Thessalonians 5:4, *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

That day is not going to overtake us.

That day is not going to take us captive.

We are not people in the darkness.

- We will ever go into that Tribulation.
- We will be taken out.
- We are not children of the darkness.
- We are not sons of the darkness.
- We are sons of the day.
- We are children of light.

Story:

The interesting story of three apprentice demons who came before Satan. He sent them to the earth to do their apprenticeship.

The first apprentice demon said, “I will tell people there is no God.” Satan said, “It won’t work; they know better.”

The second apprentice demon said, “I will tell people there is no hell.” Satan said, “It won’t work; they know better.”

The third demon said, “I will tell people there is no hurry.” Satan said, “You will gain many souls.”

There is a hurry.

Application:

1. Three Hallmarks of Faithfulness

○ Attentiveness

- Studies his Master’s heart: Scripture as daily bread (Psalm 1:2–3).

- **Illustration:** A musician practices scales so intuitively that even in a power outage, she can play flawlessly by memory.
- **Dependability**
 - Feeds the household whether the master is present or delayed (**Luke 12:42; Luke 16:10**).
 - **Illustration:** A relay runner keeps pace for the team; she doesn't coast when her leg feels long, because her teammates depend on her finish.
- **Anticipation**
 - Lives as if Christ might return today—calendars are eternal.
 - **Illustration:** A pastor finishes his sermon notes the night before, then spends his Saturday afternoon praying over them—anticipating the Spirit's unexpected leading.

2. The Reward of Diligence

- **Immediate Joy:** “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).
- **Expanded Authority:** Entrusted with “all His goods” (v. 47).
- **Eternal Fellowship:** A seat at the Master's table (Luke 12:37).
- **Illustration:** An intern who exceeds every expectation is invited to join the executive team—trust begets opportunity.

3. Embrace Your Stewardship

- **Inventory:** Write down your top three gifts and three spheres of influence.
- **Action:** This week, pick one gift and one sphere. Perform a tangible act of service there—no announcement, just obedience.
- **Illustration:** A volunteer coach shows up early to paint the gym floor before kids arrive, modelling service without seeking applause.

Final Remarks:

There is a hurry.

Listen to what Paul said.

Romans 13:11-14, *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* ¹² *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* ¹³ *Let us walk [\[6\]](#) properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* ¹⁴ *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.*