

• *Direct teaching on readiness and faithfulness*

• *Jesus comes in more than one way*

The parable of the house worker - Watchful – always ready

1. *Let Jesus find us engaged in His service*

2. *Let Jesus find us ready and eager for His arrival*

3. *Let Jesus find us faithful.*

Jesus is speaking to his disciples and to outsiders at the same time

• *Judgement – the fire of hell for outsiders – salvation ‘through fire’ for Christians*

After the parable of the rich fool Jesus follows up His story with direct teaching in which He urges His disciples to freedom from anxiety^{□1}, readiness in His service^{□2}, and to faithfulness^{□3}.

‘This night your life is required of you,’ said God to the rich fool. Yet Jesus can visit and summon His people in more than one way. One day Jesus will return to this world bodily. He will come in shining majesty to end the world and bring in the day of judgement. But there are other ways in which Jesus can come. He comes in answer to prayer, in sudden blessings, and sudden judgements.

Whatever form the coming of Jesus may take Jesus warned us to be always ready. **Jesus goes on to speak of watchfulness.** He uses the picture of a house-worker who is ready for his employer to return suddenly.

1. **Let Jesus find us engaged in His service.** ‘Let your loins be always girded...’ says Jesus^{□1}. He is using picture- language taken from the clothing of the ancient world. Men wore long flowing robes. When they needed to do anything that required action, these were tied up around the waist. ‘Let your loins be always girded’ means ‘Get ready for action’.

2. **Let Jesus find us ready and eager for His arrival.** ‘Let your loins be always girded, and your lamps burning’^{□1}. He goes on to put the matter to us in a parable. The master goes away, but he requires his servants to stay awake ready to open the door to him and serve him when he returns^{□2}. If they are awake when he comes he will serve them^{□3}! The master may even come after great delay^{□4}. His sudden arrival will be like that of a thief^{□5}. It is surprising to find that the master serves the servant. We expect it to be the other way around. When Jesus finds us faithful He likes to reward us. He enjoys ministering to us and (when we are faithful) He wants to minister to us even more than we minister to Him.

3. **Let Jesus find us faithful.** Peter asks who the intended audience is in the parable that has just been given^{□1}(referring to the parable in 12:36–40). Sometimes when we listen to the Word of God we like to think how suitable it is for other people!

There is an important principle of interpretation here. Sometimes Jesus has things to say to His disciples and things to say to outsiders at the same time! The thought of judgement is mainly for the outsiders – and yet it is for the believers as well. The wicked person can be thrown into the fire of eternal hell, but the Christian might also be ‘hurt’ by the second death. There is such a thing as being saved ‘through fire’^{□1}. Christians have to be just as ready as anyone else because although they do not need to fear eternal punishment and do not need to lack assurance of final salvation – yet loss of reward and salvation ‘through fire’ is still a fearful thing. It is a fearful thing for even Christians to fall into the hands of the living God. Even an apostle could ask: ‘Lord, are you telling this parable to us?’ Peter was ready for warnings of sudden judgement for others, but he was surprised that Jesus seemed to be including the apostles as well!

□1 12:22-34
□2 12:35-40
□3 12:41-48

□1 12:35

□1 12:35

□2 12:36

□3 12:37

□4 12:38

□5 12:39-40

□1 12:41

□1 1
Corinthians 3:15

The parable of the manager of a large house

• The day of visitation – 3 sins will be dealt with

(i) Ill-treatment of others

(ii) Living for pleasure

(iii) Sin against knowledge – 3 kinds of people

• Increase of knowledge brings increase of responsibility

• Ready for the Master to be pleased when He comes

Jesus answers in another parable! He asks a question in return. 'Who is the faithful and wise manager...?' ^{□1}. The Christian is like a servant who is left in charge as the manager of a large house. He has freedom and responsibility. Yet from time to time he must give account ^{□2}. If he is faithful the reward will be further responsibility ^{□3}. But if he is unfaithful he will suffer loss and – although he is not an unbeliever – will share something of the unbelievers' suffering in judgement ^{□4}.

Three sins will be specially dealt with in the day of the master's 'visitation'. (i) **Ill-treatment of others may be suddenly judged** ^{□1}. When the manager gets careless and thinks his master is not likely to arrive just yet, he begins 'to beat the menservants and maidservants' ^{□2}. He starts treating other people badly.

(ii) **Living for pleasure may be suddenly judged**. The careless manager starts eating and drinking from his master's supplies ^{□3}. He is more concerned about his pleasures than he is about his responsibilities. If the master arrives suddenly he will face terrible and swift punishment.

(iii) **Sin against knowledge may be suddenly judged** ^{□1}. It is not that an ignorant servant will escape altogether. Even the servant who did not know his master's will gets punished. There are three kinds of person here. There is the person who does not know the master's will and does not do it. He is punished. Ignorance is no excuse. God gives us plenty of ways of knowing His will. There is the person who **does** know the master's will but still does not do it. Then there is the person who knows the master's will and does do it. The second category is the worst. The last category is the only place of safety.

Increase of knowledge results in increase of responsibility. These verses throw some light on the nature of God's wrath. There are degrees of punishment. There is such a thing as salvation through fire. The Christian must set out to pursue the opposite of what Jesus denounces. Instead of ill-treatment he pursues love. Instead of pleasure he pursues discipleship and lets God abundantly pour joys and pleasures upon him of a higher nature altogether. Instead of refusing knowledge or neglecting knowledge, he seeks it and he works it out – and so is ready for the Master to be pleased when He comes.

□1 12:42

□2 12:42-43

□3 12:44

□4 12:45-46

□1 12:45-46

□2 12:45

□3 12:45

□1 12:47-48

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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