

Lesson 39

Servant-hood

Icebreakers:

As a wealthy individual, what qualities would you want in a personal servant?
Who is responsible for taking care of your personal servant?

Introduction:

When Jesus drew the previous lesson to a close, He told His disciples to seek **first** the Kingdom of God. This was the equivalent of saying, "First, establish God's rule over your lives." Once a disciple makes that commitment then God accepts the responsibility to provide the necessities of life for him. In this way he will have no cause for worry and will be able to devote his time and attention to serving God.

Reading The Scripture:

Luke 12:32-59

Storing Up Treasure

Luke 12:32-59

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible, authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a journey with Jesus)

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Be Prepared At All Times

Luke 12:35-40

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"Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the **second watch, or even in the third**, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

Second watch, or even the third. Jesus is probably speaking of the Jewish method of dividing the night into watches. The Jews divided the night into three watches of four hours each: 1st - 6 PM - 10 PM, 2nd - 10 PM - 2 AM, 3rd - 2 AM - 6 AM. The Romans divided the night into four watches of three hours each.

The Faithful and Sensible Steward

Luke 12:41-48

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And Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?" And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his

master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Be Discerning **Luke 12:54-59**

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a journey with Jesus)

And He was also saying to the multitudes, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' and it turns out that way. You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time? And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right? For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, in order that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent."

Group Discussion:

1. Are you a servant of God?
2. Do you believe that God will provide the necessities of life for you?

The Commands:

1. Do not be afraid, little flock.
2. Sell your possessions.
3. Give to charity.
4. Make for yourselves purses, which do not wear out.
5. Be dressed in readiness
6. Keep your lamps alight.
7. Be like men who are waiting for their master.
8. You too be ready.

The Lesson: Employed by God

Jesus begins the lesson on servant-hood by assuring His disciples that God has employed them. He has **gladly** chosen to give them the Kingdom of God, so they do not need to be afraid. He will provide for their needs. And since God has freely chosen to give the disciples employment, they can feel free to sell their possessions and give the proceeds to the poor and needed.

These acts of charity were quite prevalent in the early Church as the book of Acts attests to. *And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. (Acts 2:44-45) And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. (Acts 4:32-35)*

The Lesson: The Job Description

The next thing that Jesus tells His disciples to do is to make purses for themselves, which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven. Upon hearing this command the disciples might have been somewhat puzzled but with a little thought we can ascertain what Jesus was saying. Lets break it down.

- According to the Scriptures there are only three things (treasures¹) that have eternal worth or value. They are faith hope and love. (1Corinthians 13:13) These three are priceless treasures in both heaven and earth. No thief can steal them and no moth or rust can destroy them.
- Finding material to **make purses** that can hold faith hope and love forever is the next step. The only things that qualify are human beings. They can be made into disciples of Jesus Christ who in turn will go to heaven with treasures stored in them. *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Lesson: Daily Responsibilities

In the final portion of the lesson Jesus addresses the disciples daily responsibilities. First, they are to be dressed in readiness. This implies that disciples are to be prepared at all times and points to a well-known passage of Scripture. *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the SHIELD OF FAITH with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, which is the WORD OF GOD. (Ephesians 6:13-18)*

Secondly, He tells them to keep their lamps alight. In Lesson 04 we discovered that the disciples' light shines when they bring the testimony of Jesus to others. In order to keep the light shining a constant supply of oil is needed. Throughout Scripture oil is used symbolically to represent the Holy Spirit. For example, in Zechariah chapter four we see the image of a seven-branched golden lampstand flanked by two olive trees with pipes running from them to the lampstand providing it with a constant supply of oil. Then we hear God declare, *"Not by might nor by power, but by My*

¹ See Lesson 13.

Spirit.” In order to keep their lamps alight the disciples need to be continually filled with the Spirit of God. Interestingly, several months later Jesus cautioned the disciples not to run out of oil when He told them the Parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins.

Thirdly, Jesus tells the disciples to be like men who are waiting for their master. Within this command are two concepts: expectation and priority. The disciples are to go about the business of making disciples daily. However they are to remain alert for the arrival of their master who may give them additional instructions that override what they were currently doing. As Christians we are to be constantly listening for our Lord’s voice and immediately stop what we are doing and respond to it.

An additional allusion can be drawn from what Jesus told them, *“Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.”* In the Book of Revelation the last message given to the Church before Jesus’ return concerns this very issue. The Church has become wealthy, apathetic and self-satisfied. Yet the Lord is displeased with their servant-hood and finds them needy. Do they hear His voice anymore? Will they welcome Him in their midst? Listen to how the message to the Church of Laodicea² reads. *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*(Revelation 3:20-22)

Group Discussion:

3. Why do you think that Jesus would want His disciples to sell their possessions and give to charity?
4. How can you be more effective at making purses that don’t wear out (disciples)?
5. Are you waiting expectantly for the Lord’s word each day?
6. Are you willing to prioritize His word above what you are doing?

The Point Of The Lesson:

Learn to be a good servant.

Application:

Read Revelation 3:14-22

² The name Laodicea means “human rights”.