

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 12: 35-48

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 12, verses 35 to 48.

This section records Jesus speaking to His disciples, telling us that we must first seek the kingdom of God, and our heavenly Father will surely give us everything we need in life. Then, beginning from verse 35, Jesus starts to speak about the responsibility that His disciples—those who follow Him—must bear.

Verse 35: “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;”

In the Middle East, people wore long, loose robes. When they were about to work, they needed to use a belt to gird up their robes; only then would the clothing not hinder their movement. Girding the waist with a belt usually speaks of using truth. The clothing represents our conduct and behavior. If we gird our waist with the belt of truth, our life and every action will be full of the new style of Christ.

Gird your waist with truth, and let your lamps be burning. In the previous chapter we saw that when a person lights a lamp, the spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD. When the Holy Spirit is added into the lamp, the lamp can be lit. This shows that our human spirit is that lamp, that vessel. If we allow the Holy Spirit to richly fill our human spirit, our lamp can be lit. It means our spirit is alert, our spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit, and our life is constrained by truth. This speaks about our person.

Verse 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.”

We are the Lord's disciples; we are the Lord's servants. Today, every day of our life is a time of waiting—waiting for the Lord to return from the wedding feast. The Lord has gone to prepare the wedding feast, and one day He will come back to receive us, His overcoming ones, into the wedding feast. We prepare ourselves every day in this way, like servants waiting for their master. When He comes and knocks, we immediately open the door to Him. Because daily life is a life of waiting, knowing that the Lord will surely return, we are always watchful. The moment the Lord knocks, we can open the door to Him immediately.

Verse 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.”

Our responsibility is to live an alert and watchful life of waiting every day, because we know our Lord will surely return. One day, when the Lord comes back, those servants who are watching and waiting will be blessed. The Lord will bring them into the feast. At the feast, the Lord Himself will gird Himself and serve them. Today on earth, in the house of God, we serve, watch, and wait for the Lord's return like servants. One day when He returns, these watchful and waiting ones will be blessed. They will be invited by the Lord to the feast, and the Lord will personally come and serve them.

Verse 38: “And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.”

This also shows that we do not know when the Lord will come—whether in the second watch or in the third watch. It also indicates that the age we live in today is in the night, and the Lord will return at the darkest part of the night, just before dawn. And the Lord's return will be like a thief.

Verse 39: “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.”

Here the Lord compares His coming again to a thief. When a thief comes, there are two characteristics: First, you do not know when he will come; usually it is at the darkest part of the night, usually when people are sleeping most soundly, at a time you least expect. Second, when a thief comes, he steals valuable items. Only those who are prepared, watchful, and waiting are the valuable items that the thief wants to steal.

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

The Lord has already been gone for more than 2,000 years. Now it is already deep night, and also almost dawn. Although we do not know when He will come, we know it is very soon. Therefore every child of God must be watchful and must be prepared.

Verse 41: “Then Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?’”

This whole section was spoken by Jesus to His disciples, but there were still many other people listening nearby. Therefore Peter interrupted the Lord’s words and asked Him a very crucial question: When the Lord comes again, who exactly will be taken? Only these few disciples of His, or will the crowd listening also have a part?

Regarding Peter’s question, Jesus did not answer it directly. Instead, Jesus raised another, better question.

Verse 42: “And the Lord said, ‘Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?’”

Jesus did not answer Peter’s question—“Is it us or them?” Instead, Jesus asked, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward?” Faithful—toward God; knowing that our commission comes from God and we must give an account to God, therefore we must be faithful to God. Wise—toward people; knowing people’s needs and knowing how to supply God’s rich provision to those who are in need.

For every steward of God, His requirement is twofold: faithful toward God, and wise toward people. Toward God we must be faithful; toward people we must know their needs and be able to supply them appropriately. And this steward is the one the Lord has appointed to manage the people of His household. When we hear the word “manage,” our first thought is usually someone high above others, ruling with authority. But that is not Jesus’ meaning at all. He immediately explains what managing the people of the household means: it is to give them their portion of food in due time.

God’s church is not a company, God’s church is not a factory, God’s church is not an organization—God’s church is a household. Those who serve in the household are called stewards. The function of a steward is to give out food at the proper time. In a household there are all kinds of people, and each person has different needs. Are you a faithful and wise steward? Are you someone who can give out food appropriately? Everyone needs different food—some need the building up of truth, some need the serving of love, some need the support of life.

A good, faithful, and wise steward, on one hand receives the commission from God, and on the other hand knows each person’s need very well, so he can give them their portion of food in due time. What does “in due time” mean? It means giving each person the food he needs at the time he needs it. Therefore, everyone who desires to have a share in the stewardship must put in effort in God’s word and learn how to turn God’s word into food that can meet people’s needs.

Verses 43-44: “Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.”

Jesus gives a positive example: a good steward who is faithful to God, who understands people’s needs, and who has rich preparation of food. When God returns and sees such a servant, that servant will be blessed.

Verse 45: “But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,”

Jesus also gives a negative example: This servant is also saved, because he calls the Lord his master. However, he does not know God; he does not know that the master is coming soon. He thinks his master is delaying his coming. At that time, he begins to beat the other servants—brothers and sisters who serve together in the church—and to eat and drink and get drunk. He indulges in all kinds of earthly things and lords it over others in the church.

Verse 46: “the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”

“Cut him in two” can also be translated as “cut him in pieces.” In other words, he lorded it over others in the church; one day when Jesus returns, his body will suffer. And the Lord always returns at an hour he does not expect—while he is oppressing his fellow brothers, sisters, and fellow servants, the saints. Our Lord will severely punish him and assign him his portion with the unfaithful. Because the stewardship is entrusted by God, one day he must give an account to God.

Verse 47: “And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

The Lord’s servant must first know the master’s will; second, he must prepare; third, he must obey. Therefore every servant must read the Bible thoroughly. Only one who reads the Bible thoroughly can understand the Lord’s will.

But knowing the Lord’s will is not enough. We must be watchful and prepared in our daily life—girding our waist with truth and lighting our lamp with the Holy Spirit. After we are prepared, in everything we do we must act according to the Lord’s will. We must know that everyone in the church is precious to God and is a child of God; we must serve God’s children according to the Lord’s will. If we do not do this, that servant will be beaten with many stripes.

Verse 48: “But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

One day when the Lord returns, we firmly believe that His judgment will be absolutely righteous and fair. If you did not know, yet did things deserving of stripes, you will still be beaten, but with few stripes; for everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Thank the Lord. On one hand we should desire the portion of a steward; on the other hand we need to know God’s will, prepare ourselves, and submit to God’s leading. We must know that in God’s household, the most important service is to give them their portion of food in due time.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for once again reminding us that serving in Your household is to take care of Your children according to Your will. Give us a humble heart and a spirit of preparation, knowing that one day You will come again and we must give an account to You. In the process of learning to serve Your church, Lord, we ask for Your grace. Help us learn how to supply the saints every day with words that are suitable according to Your will. Bless us also in our daily Bible reading, that through Your own word You would speak again to each person's heart, so that we clearly understand what kind of life You want us to live today. Bless everyone who is willing to follow Your will. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.