

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 12:35-59

Key Verse: 12:40

"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Study questions:

1. Read verses 35-36. How should servants wait for their master? With what basic attitude should children of God wait for the Second Coming of Jesus? What does it mean that Jesus comes again? (1Thes 4:16; Mk 8:38; Rev 5:12; 2Co 5:10)
2. How many times is the word "ready" found in verses 35-40? What is the hope without which we cannot be ready? (1Pe 1:3,4; Ro 8:17) What is the love that enables us to be ready? (Dt 6:5) What must we do while we wait? What did Peter ask? Why? (41)
3. Read verses 42-48. Who is the faithful and wise manager? What is his reward? Who are some examples? What characterizes the unfaithful manager? (45, 47-48) What will happen to him?
4. Read verses 49-53. What does Jesus mean by "bring fire on the earth"? By "baptism"? Why must Jesus and his people suffer for the sake of justice? Read verses 54-59. Why must God's servants interpret the present times? How can they?

Today's story is an allegory about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We can get a glimpse of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in this passage. We also learn how to live in the world as the children of God who are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

First, the children of God must always be ready (35-41).

Look at verses 35-36. "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a

wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him." These verses teach us the attitude of the children of God who are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the children of God are those who are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. When we study the Bible, the Bible plot is paradise lost and the rehabilitation of paradise. Through Jesus' holy blood, paradise, that is, the kingdom of God, was reestablished. John, in his Revelation, described the reestablishment of paradise by Jesus. Revelation 5:12 says, "In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!'" Jesus came to this world to reestablish paradise, the kingdom of God, through his death and resurrection. The key point of the Bible is God's promise that Jesus comes again to judge the living and dead. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." This happens after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. But most Christians are unfamiliar with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. What is worse, most Christians do not believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. If they don't believe the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, they know nothing about the Bible. It is because the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the key point of the Bible. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are very important events in the Bible. But they are not the key point of the Bible. The key point of the Bible is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

There are many of Jesus' teachings about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Mark 8:38 says, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." There are innumerable remarks in regard to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

In the allegory of the kingdom of God in Luke's gospel the master refers to Jesus. Verse 37a says, "It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes." And in this passage, the servants refer to the children of God. The children of God must be always ready to welcome the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this passage, the words "be ready" or "finds them ready" are repeated three times (35,38,40). How can we be ready to see the Master come?

First of all, we must have a living hope in the kingdom of God. One Russian student, who finished undergraduate work in physics, is full of despair. He was in the Moscow State University physics department as an undergraduate student. He was a member of the national research center for defense. Because of this, he was forbidden to travel to other countries. Because he is a Russian, he speaks Russian very well. He also speaks French, German and Korean. But in his letter, he mentioned that he is full of despair because he has no hope. Now, he has two options from the government. Either he can be a Ph.D. student, or he can be drafted as a soldier. He has no idea to undergo hard Ph.D. study, or to join the army for two years. So he is suffering from deep despair. These days many people of the world put their hope in money and fame. But there are too many mental patients and those who have heart diseases and strokes and stomach ulcers. These came from their false hope. Only Jesus Christ is the living hope. Through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we have the hope in the kingdom of God. 1 Peter 1:3,4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you...." Therefore, when the children of God are ready, or found ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, they receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, eternal life and the kingdom of God as their inheritance through his death and resurrection. This is the only hope for man in Jesus.

How can we live with hope? We must have hope in Jesus and we

must live a life of faith in this adulterous and sinful generation. We must believe that there is a terrestrial world which is very temporal. And there is a celestial world which is eternal, forever, and it is the kingdom of God. There are so many people in the world who cry. But there are no tears in the kingdom of God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev 21:4). Instead, there is the glory, honor and power of our Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God, and we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ forever (Ro 8:17).

Our life of faith is credited to "be ready" or "found ready" by our Master Jesus. Our life of faith is the life of pilgrimage. We do not believe that this world is permanent. We do not believe that the things of the world can give us eternal life. We believe that the children of God are holy pilgrims, as John Bunyan said. We do not stay in this world forever. We stay in this world until we fulfill God's purpose for each of us in our generation (Ac 13:36). Historically, many holy pilgrims loved Jesus wholeheartedly. Their love for Jesus was remarkable. Deuteronomy 6:5 expresses their love for Jesus exquisitely. It says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Since the children of God are holy pilgrims, they do their best to obey the word of God because they love God. This is the watchfulness of the children of God who have faith in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The children of God who wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are very diligent, not lazy. They get up early and pray to listen to God's word and to be ready to help the helpless through Bible study. They do many good things because they are full of hope in their hearts. Peter heard Jesus' words concerning the watchfulness as the children of God while they are waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He was amazed. He asked Jesus, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" (41) It seems that Peter was amazed by the hope of God in the Second Coming of Jesus. So he hoped this story applies not only to the disciples, but to everybody.

Second, the children of God are the faithful managers of God (42-48).

Look at verse 42. "The Lord answered, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?'" This verse indicates very clearly that the children of God are the faithful and wise managers, not stupid managers. In the world, there are many kinds of workers. Some are factory boys. Some are office clerks. Some are teachers. Some are medical doctors. Regardless of their positions, there are only two kinds of people. One is a hired hand. They do everything superficially. They pretend to work hard if their boss is around. If the boss disappears, then they idle away their precious time. The other is the faithful and wise manager. They believe that this is God's world. They believe that they are God's chosen servants. They believe that they are stewards of God's world. They believe that they are called to serve God's purpose in their generation. This is why they work wholeheartedly. And they are happy indeed. Especially, wise managers are those who give much profit to their masters. They are supposed to work out impossible tasks and they are supposed to turn the adverse situation into fruitful victory. They are supposed to be creative.

In this passage, the faithful and wise managers are those who take care of God's flock. Let's read verse 42. "The Lord answered, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?'" However, God's faithful and wise managers do not know what to do, even if they want to be faithful and wise managers. But this verse tells us clearly that we must give God's flock the word of God. In this verse, the word "food" refers to spiritual food, the word of God, not Russian bread. The faithful and wise manager must give God's flock the word of God at the proper time, faithfully and regularly. As we have experienced, there are many things we can do for God's flock. To buy a Big Mac for one of God's flock is easy. To pick up one of God's flock for Sunday worship service every week is not so difficult. But to feed them with the word of God requires God's faithfulness and wisdom and managership. Without God's unyielding faithfulness, without wisdom from above, without strategy from above, nobody can be the

faithful and wise manager for God's flock.

This passage directly applies to our ministry. We emphasize Bible study with God's sheep through one-to-one. How nice it is for us to get a group of people together and preach one-sidedly and have fun and forget about it. But one-to-one Bible study requires intensive spiritual struggle. Spiritual struggle extends to God's flock, too, because their peers or family members oppose their Bible study vehemently. Most modern family members want their children to be skillful or sneaky to make a little more money. They think that the Bible study hinders them from making money in this world. So they angrily oppose their Bible study. Jesus knew the agony of one-to-one Bible study with God's flock. So he encourages them that they should be faithful and wise Bible teachers. Let's read verse 42.

Verses 47-48 tell us about the unfaithful and stupid managers. Basically, they do not love God. They love the pleasure of the world. Their root problem is their laziness. Their punishment is indeed great. They will be assigned a place with the unbelievers (46), who are heartless, ruthless, men of depravity and godless (Ro 1:18-32). The lazy people's end will be eternal punishment. There are many kinds of punishment. But to live with unbelieving people may be the worst punishment. Look at verse 48b. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." God gave to each of us proper ability. Those who received much ability must render glory to God much more than those who received less ability.

Third, Jesus claims God's justice (49-53).

Let's read verses 49-51. "I have come to bring fire on 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 completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division." In this part, Jesus did not mean that he came to set fire to the world or divide families. The meaning of this part is that he came to bring God's justice. The

world is full of corruption and injustice. There was a man named John Hus who lived 100 years before Martin Luther. He was a Bohemian priest. He urged that the gospel message should be delivered even to the slave people. The king of his country really liked his idea and his high scholarship and wanted to protect him from the church hierarchy. At that time, the church was selling indulgences. The Cardinal Anthony visited the king of Bohemia and told him that the supreme council decided to punish John Hus. Then the king said, "Well, you cannot burn me at the stake because I am a king." Then the Cardinal Anthony threatened the king by saying, "But you can be excommunicated." Since all the kingdoms were under church rule, the king gave in to his injustice. This was a terrible injustice. There are also many family members who threaten their children to compromise with evil and learn the skill to make a few dollars more (52-53). Jesus wanted to cleanse corruption and injustice and spread the justice of God. For this, Christians must suffer and Jesus had to undergo the baptism of death.

Fourth, the children of God must have prophetic insight (54-59).

Look at verse 56. "Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?" At that time, the Pharisees knew the weather forecast by their sense. But they did not have prophetic insight. The Pharisees should have had prophetic insight and they should have told God's flock how to live a life of faith in that generation. But they did not do so. They only played politics. They abused Christian loyalty. Here we learn that the children of God must have prophetic insight and tell God's flock that they must live a life of faith in this adulterous and sinful generation. May God help us to be the faithful and wise managers of God by believing in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.