**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 7** Luke 12:35-59 Watchfulness/Division/Interpreting the Times!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture, and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe pages 167-170.

What attitude must a Christian have regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ? What should he be doing in the meantime?

1. Read Luke 12:35-40. The Parable of the Watchful Servant!

Watchmen in the Bible were guards responsible for protecting towns and military installations from surprise enemy attacks and other potential dangers. Ancient Israelite cities often stationed watchmen on high walls or in watchtowers. Their job was to keep watch and warn the townspeople of impending threats.

The Hebrew word translated “watchman” means “one who looks out,” “one who spies,”
or “one who watches.” Sometimes watchmen were scouts who looked out for approaching friends as well as enemies.

There are many references to watchmen who kept an eye out for physical threats in the Bible: “Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came and said, ‘I see a company.’ And Joram said, ‘Take a horseman and send to meet them, and let him say, “Is it peace?”’” (2 Kings 9:17, ESV).

Watchmen safeguarded fields and vineyards during harvest time (Isaiah 5:1–2;
Matthew 21:33; Mark 12:1) and acted as sentinels who announced the start of a new day (Psalm 130:6; Isaiah 21:11–12).

The Bible also refers to watchmen in a spiritual sense. God appointed prophets as spiritual watchmen over the souls of His people: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me” (Ezekiel 33:7; also Hosea 9:8).

The prophets’ job as watchmen was to urge God’s people to live faithfully and warn them of the perils involved in falling away from the Lord and doing evil. As watchmen, the prophets were also called to warn wicked people of the judgment and destruction that would come their way unless they turned from their evil ways.

Israel’s spiritual watchmen bore a heavy responsibility before the Lord. If a prophet failed
to warn others as God had appointed him to do, his own life was in danger, and he would be held accountable for the people’s sin: “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their
own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone’s life, that person’s life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood’” (Ezekiel 33:2–6).

A watchman who was blind or disobedient to the Lord’s Word left the people he was called to protect open to danger and suffering (Isaiah 56:10). Obedience is the only course of action for a true watchman: “But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved” (Ezekiel 33:9).

The role of spiritual watchman continues in the New Testament in the form of church leaders: “Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit” (Hebrews 13:17, NLT).

In another sense, God calls not just leaders, but all Christians to be watchmen. Jesus told
His disciples to “watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:38). We should all be ready and waiting for the Lord’s return: “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants 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. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the
thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be
ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him”
(Luke 12:35–40).[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. In verses 35-36, Jesus warns his disciples that they must “be dressed ready for service and keep [their] 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.” In Jewish culture, weddings took place in the evening. The servants of the bridegroom would be at the home waiting for their master to return with his bride. Not knowing the exact moment of his return, it was imperative for them to be ready at all times. Jesus’ is using this true-to-life parable to explain a spiritual reality. Keep in mind that parables usually contain one or two nuggets of truth.
2. What is the main lesson Jesus is teaching?
3. What does the phrase ‘keep your lamps burning’ mean?
4. What are some ways we as followers of Christ can keep our lamps burning (Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 2:10)?
5. Verse 38 states, “It will be good for those servants whose master finds them *ready*, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.” Focusing on the word *ready,* what is the first and most important step a man must take in order to be *spiritually ready* when Christ returns (John 1:12; 3:16-17; Romans 10:13)?
Are you ready? Have you truly been born again?
6. What do you find the Master in this text doing when he arrives home? What do you learn from this about Jesus and the Second Coming (Luke 22:27; John 13:1-15; Revelation 19:7-9)?
7. When will the Son of Man return (verse 40; Matthew 24:26, 42-44; Luke 21:34;
1 Thessalonians 5:2-4)?
* Are you watching, waiting and ready?
* What will you change about the manner in which you are now living to
be more ready?
1. From the article above, what are some of the responsibilities of watchmen? How are you doing as a watchman for yourself, your family, and your community (friends)?
2. Read Luke 12:41-48. The Parable of the Faithful versus the Unfaithful Servant!
3. These verses focus on the responsibilities of faithful servants, those placed in charge of the flock (pastors, teachers, true disciples, etc.)
4. Who is the faithful and wise steward?
5. Verse 45 addresses unfaithful, unbelieving servants. The fact that they will one day be ‘cut to pieces and assigned [to] a place with the unbelievers’ implies their true identity. How can we recognize false servants of God (Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 17)? What is their destiny?
6. Verses 47-48 show that one day God will deal judge the world with justice and in righteousness. In other words, he will be fair in meting out punishment and condemnation. Just as there will degrees of reward for the righteous there will be degrees of punishment for the unrighteous (*will be beaten with few blows compared to many blows*). Verse 48 states, “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.”
* Explain verses 48 in your own words.
* Read Romans 2:12-16 along with the article below. Back in the days of Christ, Jews had been given much more in terms of the knowledge of God (the Old Testament, the Laws, the Promises, the Temple worship, etc.) compared to the Gentiles. Thus, more was expected from them by God. Today, one might argue the opposite. Does the average American have much more knowledge of the Gospel than a Muslim in Iran, or a Hindu in India, or even a Jew in Israel? If yes, then how will God’s judgment be meted out according to this Romans passage? Does this seem fair? Explain your answer.
* What should you do with all the knowledge that you have received about Jesus simply because you live in America?

“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” (Luke 12:48). This statement of Jesus has become somewhat of an idiom in Western culture and is found, paraphrased, in Uncle Ben’s words of wisdom to Peter Parker in *Spider-man*: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

The idea of “to whom much is given, much will be required” is that we are held responsible for what we have. If we are blessed with talents, wealth, knowledge, time, and the like, it is expected that we use these well to glorify God and benefit others.

In context, Jesus had just told a parable about being ready for His return. His disciple Peter asked if the parable was for just them or for everyone. Jesus replied with another parable in which He defines the “faithful and wise manager” as one who gives out food and other allowances “at the proper time.” When the master returns and finds the faithful servant managing his resources well, he “put him in charge of all his possessions” (Luke 12:42–44). We have been entrusted with certain things, and faithfulness requires that we manage those things wisely and unselfishly.

Jesus continued the parable with a contrast: “Suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows” (Luke 12:44–47). The unfaithful servant mismanages the master’s resources to satiate his own greed, and Jesus warns that judgment is certain for that servant. The Lord then summarizes the point of the parable with these words: “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more” (verse 48, ESV). A related parable that also deals with stewardship is the Parable of the Talents (or the Parable of the Bags of Gold) in Matthew 25:14–30.

It is easy to assume that only wealthy people have been “given much,” but, in truth, we have all been given much (1 Corinthians 4:7). We have been granted the abundant grace of God (Ephesians 1:3–10; 3:16–21; Romans 5:8–11; 8:14–17), the Word of God, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–21; 16:13; Romans 12:6). “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

We should also not assume that the less we know about God and His gifts, the less we’ll have to do. As evident in Jesus’ parable, we are held responsible to know our master’s will. God has plainly shown us what He requires (Micah 6:8).

God gives us resources such as finances and time, talents such as culinary skills or musical ability, and spiritual gifts such as encouragement or teaching. We should ask God for wisdom on how to use those resources and commit ourselves to expending them according to His will so that He may be glorified. In regards to spiritual gifts, Paul said, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully” (Romans 12:6–8). This is simply responsible stewardship.

We have been given much, and God desires us to use what He has given to further His Kingdom and proclaim His glory. It’s what we were created to do. “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. . . . For the Son of Man . . . will reward each person according to what they have done’” (Matthew 16:24–25, 27). We are living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), giving the things God has given us in service to others, and in that we actually find life. God, the giver of all good things (James 1:17), gives us everything we need to fulfill His will. “Freely you have received; freely give” (Matthew 10:8).[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Read Luke 12:49-53 along with Matthew 10:34-36. Not Peace, but Division!
2. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 confirms this truth: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, **The Prince of Peace**.” If Jesus is the Prince of Peace, explain why his coming then, and now (anytime you mention His name or share the gospel), always brings division?
3. Have you experienced this division personally either with family members, friends, or co-workers? When we see division, how should we respond?
4. Read Luke 12:54-59. Interpreting the Times!
5. Luke 19:41-44 states, As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.  The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.  They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”
6. The Jews of Jesus’ day (scribes, Pharisees, teachers of the law) were thoroughly familiar with all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the appearance of the Messiah. They could interpret the appearance of the earth and sky, what kept them from interpreting the appearance of the signs pointing to Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah (1 Corinthians 2:14)?
7. Read Matthew 24 along with Titus 2:11-14. How about you? Are you familiar
with all of the New Testament prophesies concerning the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ? If not, why not? If yes, are you ready? Do you have your lamps burning? Are you doing the work to which God has prepared for
you to do?
1. “What are watchmen in the Bible?” Got Questions Ministries, accessed June 14, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/watchmen-in-the-Bible.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “What does it mean that “to whom much is given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48)?”

Got Questions Ministries, accessed June 14, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/much-given-required.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)