

Are you Ready to Meet Jesus¹

Luke 12:32-40

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

How ready are you for the future? Are you ready for the glorious mountaintops of blessings to stand upon and the deep, dark valleys to endure! Since our future is unknowable, each of us must decide in the present how prepared we want to be for both the good and bad times. Are you the kind of person who prepares well in advance for all possible outcomes? For instance, a week before a long trip do you have your bags packed and checked twice? Are your weekly goals defined on Monday and does your grocery list come with a detailed meal plan? Is your linen closet ready to handle a national toilet paper shortage and do you have not only three months of salary set aside for emergencies but also enough insurance to hopefully ease any catastrophe that comes your way? If you answered yes to these questions, then you might have excessive preparation/scheduling syndrome with a side dish of a control fetish. On the other hand, maybe you are the kind of person who prefers to live in the moment? For instance, do you often arrive late at meetings and events but feel you are on time based on your own unique time clock? Do you pack the morning of a major trip and then are forced to buy “on-the-fly” what you forgot? Do you purchase but one roll of toilet paper and enough food to last but a few days and are you constantly in debt, putting out past fires that are raging uncontrollably? If you answered yes to any of these questions then you might have an procrastination, live by the seat of your pants syndrome. While it is ok that everyone falls somewhere on the preparedness spectrum when it comes to worldly events, how does God want us to prepare for the eternity He has placed in our hearts?

The Return of the Lord

While there are many things that can be handled by procrastination, live by the moment attitude; when it comes to the kingdom of God Jesus said, “You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him” (40). While the world goes on “eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” up until the Day of the Lord (Luke 17:27), God’s own family are commanded to always be ready for His return.² Whether it be in the “middle of the night or toward daybreak” (38) and though it might seem a long time in His coming (2 Peter 3:9), one can be assured that the Lamb who was “slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) will return to “break the serpent’s head, and with a rod of iron, to dash His enemies in pieces, as potters’ vessels.”³ He will on day return to take His own home to the mansions He has prepared for them (John 14:1-4). Whether He comes now or in a thousand

¹ The sermon is based on a Premium Sermon on Sermon Central called “Ready and Faithful”

² C. H. Spurgeon, [“Watching for Christ’s Coming,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 158.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Watching for Christ’s Coming,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 158.

years hence or longer⁴ the time will come when “the Lord 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 will rise first and after that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Since He will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night (39), to be found faithful upon His return it is crucial that we live our lives moment by moment in preparation of meeting Him. If we procrastinate and let life merely happen, then we are likely to be found indulging in our sin but if we acknowledge that the eternity God has placed in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11) points to His Son’s return then we will live prepared to meet Him by constantly doing those things that would please Him. The remainder of this sermon is going to focus on the two things Jesus says we are to be found doing in Luke 12:32-40 when He comes to take us home: giving to the poor and being ready to serve Him for ever more!

How to Become Ready to Meet Jesus

The first thing Jesus wants us to do to be found faithful upon His return is to stop being preoccupied with worldly stuff.⁵ While it is important to work to provide for oneself it becomes a sin the moment one seeks and trusts in the accumulation of “stuff” rather than in the Good Shepherd who lays us down by the green pastures and restores our very souls (Psalms 23:1-3).⁶ Many people work excessively because they are afraid of all the possible futures of catastrophes. Like the “rich fool” even in their accumulation of stuff their fear of the unknown future does not subside but instead they build bigger “barns” to store earthly riches so that they might feel even more secure (Luke 12:15-21).⁷ This is not how Jesus wants to find His own upon His return for in accumulating excessive stuff to mitigate suffering and pain in future trials and tribulations shows one is not trusting in God to take care of one’s needs. Jesus tells us to not fear because though we be like sheep amongst many wolves the Father not only protects us, but it pleases Him to allow us to be partakers in His kingdom (32).⁸ He told us to “not worry about our life, what we will eat, or about our body, what we will wear” (22). Jesus is not telling us to not work to help sustain our lives but to heed the words he gave to Apostle Paul, “do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6). The heavenly Father who knows you need food, water, and shelter to stay alive and promises to provide all these things if you seek first His kingdom (Matthew 6:33). To be found faithful upon His return, then, one must be looking up rather than fearfully looking within to secure the life one cannot keep.

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Watching for Christ’s Coming,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 159.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Watching for Christ’s Coming,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 161.

⁶ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁷ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

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To keep from being ruled by the love of the things of this world and to obey His command to love one another Jesus says we are to sell off our excess stuff and give the money to the poor (33). Jesus is not trying to define “discipleship in terms of deprivation or ascetism, but to warn disciples of the confining and restricting nature of possessions.”⁹ For example, the rich young ruler that sought eternal life his face fell the moment the Lord told him, “Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor” (Mark 10:21). Jesus told the disciples that “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (10:25) not because having stuff is inherently evil but because it is often a stumbling block for those who in their abundance covet and fear going without. The truth is “if God does not own our possessions, then our possessions will own us.”¹⁰ Since God knows “no human being can live without possessions”¹¹ we must trust that when we seek first the kingdom of God that He who asks us to give will provide! If our true treasure is the Pearl that we have found in the field then divesting of our possessions by giving to the poor,¹² especially out of our abundance, should be an easy and joyful endeavor for our allegiance is to the Lord and not ourselves. Once we give up the desire for “security and ease and prestige of accumulation”¹³ of stuff one can focus on pleasing the Lord by giving unto the poor what the Lord has entrusted to one’s care! Since “nothing in this world is safe from corruption”¹⁴ and the love of worldly things is sinful, to be found faithful upon the Lord’s return means giving away that of which one cannot keep so that one might receive “purses that will not wear out and treasures in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys” (33).

The second thing Jesus wants us to do to be found faithful upon His return is to “be dressed ready for service and keep our lamps burning” (35). Eschatology or the teaching about the final destiny of the soul is not just to inform us of what is to come but also to encourage us to serve the Lord faithfully while on this earth.¹⁵ Since the day or hour of the return of the Lord will come unannounced like a thief in the night the only way to be found faithful is through

⁹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 377.

¹⁰ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 378.

¹¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 377.

¹² James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 377–378.

¹³ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁴ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 377.

¹⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 355.

being holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16).¹⁶ May the Lord not find us idle¹⁷ but instead using the spiritual gifts He has given us to fulfill the divine tasks He has assigned us (1 Corinthians 12).¹⁸ May we “gird up our loins”¹⁹ and not run aimlessly through life but instead purposefully give unto the hungry, thirsty, widows and poor of this world not with the intent of looking good to our “Christian peers” but with the glorious realization that when we serve unto the least of these brothers and sisters of Christ we have done it unto Him (Matthew 25:37-40)! Though we are likely to be persecuted for righteousness’s sake (Matthew 5:10) may we be found letting our light shine²⁰ so that our good deeds might point to the grace and mercy of our salvation that we received from the Father through the Son. And while we are serving the Lord may we in great humbleness and in overwhelming sense of gratitude know that faithful servants will share in the banquet normally reserved for free persons.²¹ Praise be to God those who are born of the water and Spirit (John 3:5-8) are no longer slaves but children of God (Galatians 4:7) and as such will join His communion table, totally and eternally accepted by the Good Shepherd²² who laid down His life for us the sheep (John 10:11)!

Conclusion

Are you ready for the future? There will be many glorious mountaintops of blessings to stand on and deep, dark valleys to endure. When it comes to the future of this world it often makes little difference whether one is an excessive preparer or procrastinator for the mountaintops and valleys are rarely predictable and even less controllable. While we do not know the hour or day of the Lord’s return, He commands us to be ready so that we might be found faithful. For this to happen one must first give up fearing the unknown future. Jesus knows we need food, water, and shelter to live and promises us that in seeking first His kingdom that these things we be given to us by His Father. To keep the coveting and security of stuff from ruling our hearts Jesus commands us to sell our excess and give unto the poor of this world for in doing this we will know that our treasure is truly the Pearl found in the field and not the love of this world. Also, for us to be found faithful upon His return we must gird our loins with a servant’s heart that truly wants to offer Him a cup of cold water by not only giving unto the poor but also my letting our light shine so that our good deeds might point to the Father who

¹⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 355.

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Watching for Christ’s Coming](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 161.

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Watching for Christ’s Coming](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 161.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Watching for Christ’s Coming](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 161.

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Watching for Christ’s Coming](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 39 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), 162.

²¹ Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 460.

²² Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 12:35–48.

offers the world eternal life! When the Lord comes down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet call of God, will you be found faithful? This may happen today, a thousand years hence or even longer but this glorious day will come, and I don't know about you, but I want to be found serving Him with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength for He truly is my portion forever! Are you ready to meet Jesus?