

“BLESSED SERVANT”

- Luke 12:41-59

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Luke 12:41-59 Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"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? ⁴³ "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 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, 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. 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. 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. ⁴⁹ "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! ⁵¹ "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. ⁵² "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. ⁵³ "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." ⁵⁴ Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. ⁵⁵ "And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. ⁵⁶ "Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? ⁵⁷ "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? ⁵⁸ "When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.



Jesus began this chapter with a parable wherein He described the individual who was preoccupied with the world and its amenities as a “fool.” He went on after that initial ‘throw-down’ to elaborate on what life should look like for the one who believes himself or herself to be a child of God, a kingdom participant and one ‘watching’ for the Master’s return. This is the one who ‘packs light’ in this world and seeks with purpose to avoid the *chase* for the material and the accumulation of possessions. It is *this* individual that comes to know God’s ‘good pleasure’ and have acquired for himself or herself both a present and an eternal reward.

Now Jesus goes on to present a picture of things to come...the one looking forward to the return of his master. The faithful steward. The passionate follower. The “*blessed servant*.” It is sadly ironic how we can feverishly seek after fulfillment and satisfaction from a world where, as Bob Dylan’s song goes, “*everything is broken*.” We indeed want God in our lives but we want the world too, so most of us honestly pursue parallel paths through life. One that is God’s and the other that is of our own making.

Matthew 6:24 says that "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other..." James 1:8 refers to the man that tries to have both as being a “double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

And 1 John 2:15 puts it all to rest saying *“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

Peter begins here by verbalizing a heart that exists in many of us: he is wondering if Jesus is talking to **him**. It would seem like a strange thing to ask if it were not the fact that so many of us seem to think that what He is saying is not directed at us either. I mean, He must be talking to the guy next to me right? Because He can't possibly mean **me** when He says these things! You know, because I'm special!

I wonder how often we mentally manufacture a “two-tiered” Christianity: those of us who are “saved,” and those who are the ‘hard-core’ bunch. You know, the pastors, teachers, and those radical people. There are the “normal Christians” and then there are the “disciples.” But the only thing that separates such folks is how much they love Jesus. A “two-tiered” faith is a modern religious idea invented to accommodate sloppy faith.

Jesus here refers to a good “steward.” Just what is this steward? Both the modern dictionary as well as the original bible text says a steward is: *“one employed in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns and affairs, such as the supervision of servants, collection of rents, and keeping of accounts: a manager for an owner.”* How twisted around has Christianity become today! The general idea today is “what do **I** get out of this?” It's about **me** and **my** benefit and **my** gain! But that's not the Christianity of the Bible.

Certainly our faith comes with great blessings, but they come as part of my relationship and service to the master. Jesus isn't a 401K. He is to be a master over my life because coming to Him I am saying that I can't do it and I need both a Savior *and* a Lord! We see in scripture that a blessing is a statement of and a giving of good will and happiness, as well as the condition that fulfills those good words. Being “blessed” therefore is different than having money, possessions, good health, and earthly happiness. “Blessed” is a place where God has placed us and our embrace of such.

But do we look at life that way? Do we live our faith that way? The blessings we receive from our faith do not come out of a mere mental adherence to scriptural ideals. They come out of faithful obedience to His instructions and faithful living stewardship over what He has given us to care for, to use to love others, and to multiple for kingdom glory. When we do not live faithful...if we do not manifest our beliefs, there is little if any earthly benefit to be had. This is why so many who claim Christianity fail to see any real joy or peace. It's like having a great car parked in the driveway, but still riding the bus because you never take it for a drive. Verse 31 clearly tells us that if we seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give us everything we need.

And we must recognize that with knowledge and position come greater responsibility and accountability. We have become part of the family of God... “stewards” of the vineyard if you will, and we are thereafter judged and dealt with differently than those outside. Jesus says that when *someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, he or she will be punished only lightly. (But) When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.*

And what we as Christians rarely talk about is that the ramifications of taking upon us the mantle of steward and then failing to do the job...or failing to invest in what God gave us to take care of. The penalty is steep! The one who abuses the position and fails to be faithful to its requirements, the master will *“cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful.”*

Such is similar to His example of the servant who failed to use and invest what was given him and His judgement was *“cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Matt 25) This is undeniably some serious stuff! It will cost us dearly if we fail in this matter. We are without excuse because according to 2 Peter 1:3 that *“God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.”*

The language of these passages clearly paint a picture that despite what we may think, we are in fact going to be ultimately lost for eternity! Did that person lose his salvation or did he never have it? While I have strong feelings and opinions about such, I think we are debating the wrong question. Because what does it matter if the end result is the same? The point is disobedience and unfaithfulness results in no blessings in this life and hell in the next. Why do we dance around this fact? In fact, according to the passage before us, if we knew this stuff and still blew Him off, then the penalty is actually worse than if we had never come to Him in the first place!

This passage is leveled at the “servant.” So one can only see such as directed towards one who at least *believes* himself to be part of the fold...or even the one who was and is no more! Jesus spoke in Matthew 21 about the son who said he would go and work in the vineyard as his Father instructed but he in fact did *not* go, and was disobedient in his roll of a son. This is a concept that repeats itself throughout the ministry of Jesus. Our faith is not judged or lived out merely in what we *do* but *what we fail to do!*

But most of us want to play nice and see Christianity as something to add to our lives to smooth out the bumps and level the living. But where does that principle come from? Certainly not the Bible! The greatest con Satan has ever played out is the concept of comfortable and easy living Christianity. These passages are ignored in that dynamic! And they will be ignored at great and eternal cost. “*Depart from me, (because) I never knew you...*”

Jesus said “*Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.*” Such is hardly plaque material, though maybe it should be. Because Jesus Himself is herein painting a totally different picture of Christianity than what is being propagated today.

We have, out of His loving grace, received new birth, life eternal and abundant. To take this gift and not acknowledge the gift as well as the giver by stepping up to the call is the height of self-centeredness and is worldly still. It is *evil*, pure and simple! He loves us enough to give us the life of His only Son to die in our place. So I ask again today, *how much do you love Jesus?* We cannot have both God and the world. Only those who choose to “*come out from it and be separate*” (2 Corinthians 6:17) are true children of God. The rest are lost.

We tend to think of Christ’s entrance and presence in this world as being some sort of “peace sit in”, but what Jesus was bringing was something much more radical than that! In truth, it would have the effect of *fire*. Flames that, even yet today, fail to be extinguished! That fire continues to purify the faithful and burn away the ‘chaff’ of those who were not truly of the fold. Matthew 3:12 “*He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.*”

What Jesus came to do...both in His living and in His sacrificial dying was a *baptism*. (vs 50) He wasn’t ‘dabbling.’ He was “all in” and He is asking us for the same baptism of faith. Our baptisms of both water and the Holy Spirit are to be issues of *immersion* and *overflowing*. People want to believe that Jesus came to unite mankind into a “universal brotherhood.” But that is not what He said! He says that the true faith is sure to divide friends and family. And that is often the “line in the sand” that many people will not cross! It will more than separate believer from unbeliever. It will separate believer from disciple, the church-goer from the truly faithful. Such earthly division is a common theme in scripture. We see it in the likes of Luke 9:57-62; 11:27-28; 14:26; 18:28-30. Being a faithful disciple is an expensive proposition.

Jesus says herein that like the weather, we know what's coming. We see it on the news and read about it in the papers. We see it every day around us even here in the nice rural Midwest. The storm is coming. Are we ready for it? According to scripture, all the events that must transpire prior to the second coming have passed. The next event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church.

In verse 57 Jesus...pleading with the people to open their eyes and see for themselves says "*Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right?*" God in His patience had given them life, and thus far, *another day*. But Jesus was now calling them to choose, to make a decision. What will it be? Are you in or are you out? If we attempt to wait and take our chances in the heavenly court of justice, we will be accountable for every debt, for every sin. And that is a debt we can never pay or get out of without help. That is why Jesus stepped in to pay what we never could! We have the opportunity to now settle "out of court" by accepting the terms of God's salvation!

Jesus began all of this by calling the one who ignored it all and simply built bigger barns to collect more stuff a *fool*. Psalms 51:1 says "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'*" But it also says that "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...*" (Pr 12:15) And that goes for all of us...inside and outside of the church. Proverbs 14:16 "*A wise man fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident.*" Ecc 10:3 says that such a man shows everyone that he is a fool. Indeed, the evidence is in your living and on your face.

Of course, my prayer today is that you hear these words. But more than just hear, I pray that today you move to surrender more than your sin, but that you surrender also your life. One must question why you are here today. What is your goal and your purpose for having come to church today? Ezekiel 33:30-33 "*Son of man, your people talk about you in their houses and whisper about you at the doors. They say to each other, 'Come on, let's go hear the prophet tell us what the LORD is saying!' So my people come pretending to be sincere and sit before you. They listen to your words, but they have no intention of doing what you say. Their mouths are full of lustful words, and their hearts seek only after money. You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't act on it! But when all these terrible things happen to them — as they certainly will — then they will know a prophet has been among them.*"

While I am no prophet, I can see the storm coming...

Are YOU a fool?