



PRAYER & WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

- What is "Caught Off Guard" means to you?
- Have you experience being caught off guard? Or have catch someone off guard? What was your reaction. (Ask someone to share their brief experience.)

Today we will hear what the Lord's says about BEING READY - through a parable.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

LUKE 12: 35-40 (ASK SOMEONE TO READ LOUD AND CLEAR)

35 "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;

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.

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.

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

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.

40 **Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."**

DISCUSSION (- GET ANSWERS -)

1. What is the context of this parable?

ANS.: (BY LEADER)

In Luke 12, Jesus gives the six rules for life in His kingdom and this is the 3rd parable in the series of 6:

- *There is no place of hypocrisy.*
- *Be a faithful steward of all the gifts from God.*
- **Be ready for the Lord's return.**
- *Don't live for the temporary - live for eternity.*
- *Seek to live at peace with each other.*
- *Store up treasures in heaven.*

Prior to this parable, Jesus was speaking to His disciples and the crowds teaching them not to worry about their physical needs, but to be concerned with the spiritual issues of life. **Luke 12.22**

Scripture where the parable was mentioned: Matthew 24:42-51 and Mark 13:34-37

2. What was the parable about? (Get answers)

ANS.: WATCH and be READY

The parable is an illustrative lesson of Jesus Christ used to teach regarding:

- Being watchful – for you do not know what hour the Lord is coming.
- Being ready – because Jesus (Son of Man) will come unexpectedly.

The teaching is about the coming of the Son of Man and judgment at the end of the age.

- A Promise of a joyful occasion
- A warning of impending tragedy

3. Who are the characters in this parable?

Describe each. (Get answers)

ANS.: verse 12:36

- **Master**
-owner of the household
-Has gone to a wedding banquet and on a delay (the master is relatively close by and can return at any time).
-Jesus
- **Servant**
-men waiting for the return of their Master

"THE PARABLE OF THE WATCHFUL SERVANTS"

-stay awake and be ready at a moment 's notice to welcome the Master
 -commanded be always ON DUTY
 -Believers

-He girds up his own clothing and begins to serve THEM.

**Jesus is a Servant Leader from whom all of us learn to serve and take on a servant mentality.

****Change in the scene of parable imagery (verse 39)**

- **Master of the House**
 -owner who knows when the thief is coming
 - those who should anticipate the Lord's coming
- **Thief**
 -Jesus

- A Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
- Humble Servant (John 13:4-17)
- Son of Man who does not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45)

4. What instruction did Jesus give to His disciples? (Get answers)

ANS.: verse 12:35

7. How can the master prevent the thief from breaking into his house? (Get answers)

ANS.: verse 12:39

- *By staying up all night, be alert and listen for any sign of entry*

- **Be Dressed Ready for Service**
 - a symbol for constantly being ready for action
- **Keep Your Lamps Burning**
 -a sign of vigilance (watchfulness)

****A thief in the night** – describes in NT as the **unannounced and unexpected coming of Jesus.** (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; Revelation 16:15)

- *The Son of Man is coming unexpected.*
- *As Christians, we must be alert for His coming, even our alertness must be long maintained.*

**** The life of the faithful servants of God in this world is certainly a diligent journey, having the light of the word going before the journey.**

5. They were to be like servants waiting for what? (Get answers)

ANS.: verse 12:36

8. How did the Jesus Christ end the parable?

ANS.: verse 12:40

- *He ended it with a command. **BE READY!***

- **Waiting for Their Master to Return**
 - A servant's most important priority is the coming of His Master. **No place for: weariness and self-indulgence.**
 - **WAITING:** *Not a dutiful waiting* but an anticipation of one who is expected, hope for and looked forward to.

9. What can we learn about this parable?

ANS.: verse 8

6. When the Lord returns, what will he do for the faithful servants? (Get answers)

ANS.: verse 12:37-38

- **There is a reward /blessing (role reversal)**
 - The master they have so eagerly prepared for tells THEM to be seated at the table.

- *The Lord's return will be in an unexpected time.*
- *To be ready for the Lord's return, we cannot choose a time to be ready but must always be prepared.*
- *In order to motivate us to faithfulness and diligence, God does not tell us when Jesus is coming.*
- *The disciples and all believers are taught to watch and wait for the Lord's return.*
- *To those who are prepared – the coming of Jesus is a joyous event. There is a promise of a reward/blessing.*

"THE PARABLE OF THE WATCHFUL SERVANTS"

- To those who are unprepared – the coming of Jesus will be sudden and unexpected. Hence, it is a warning/like a thief who breaks in and brings disaster.

REFLECTION**1. The Lord's instruction is clear – we should ALWAYS BE READY.**

Life does not end at death but at my "Lord's return" for me.

2. How is one "ready" for Christ return?

- a) Do not be indulged to sin.
- Sometimes, we know something is not exactly pleasing in the Lord, but we indulge and do it anyway. **DO NOT COMPROMISE!**
 - Self-indulgence prevents us from walking closely with Jesus and being alert to His voice.
- b) Always pray and have constant communion with God
- To be fully spiritually alert and awake.
 - **DO NOT BE TOO PRE-OCCUPIED.** When we are too busy, our guard is down and if becomes a pattern-even attending the church service-we can become spiritually sleepy.
 - Pray for increased faithfulness and diligence.
- c) Study the WORD of GOD.
- Know the truth by studying the scripture.
 - Study the relevant scripture to keep you prepared, ready, so that if Jesus will come this week or next, you wouldn't be surprised, but ready to meet Him.

3. What character is created or developed when we have this attitude or concept of waiting and being ready for the Lord?A. Cheerful.

1. Because my Lord, my Creator, my Provider, my Healer is coming for me... for He loves me.

B. Diligent.

1. If today is the day my Lord will come
 - a. I will be more careful how I teach.
 - b. I will thoroughly represent His truth.
2. If I realize that my work or business may be interrupted by His return...
 - a. I will be honest always.

C. Fearless

1. I will not fear death
2. I am looking forward to our Lord's promise of eternal life.

SHARING

(Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Do you struggle with getting distracted by unimportant things? Are there times when you catch yourself doing something that pales in comparison to other things you need to be doing?
2. What helps YOU keep YOUR spiritual edge. What kinds of things cause you to lose your spiritual alertness? Speak personally.
3. If Jesus were to come today, can you say that you ready?

PRAYER

Father, I know how easily I can become preoccupied, complacent, dull. Please forgive me for my self-indulgence, my lack of discipline, my prayerlessness, and my spiritual laziness. Re-teach me, Father, to be on the cutting edge of your Kingdom. Help me to be ready for Christ's coming. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.