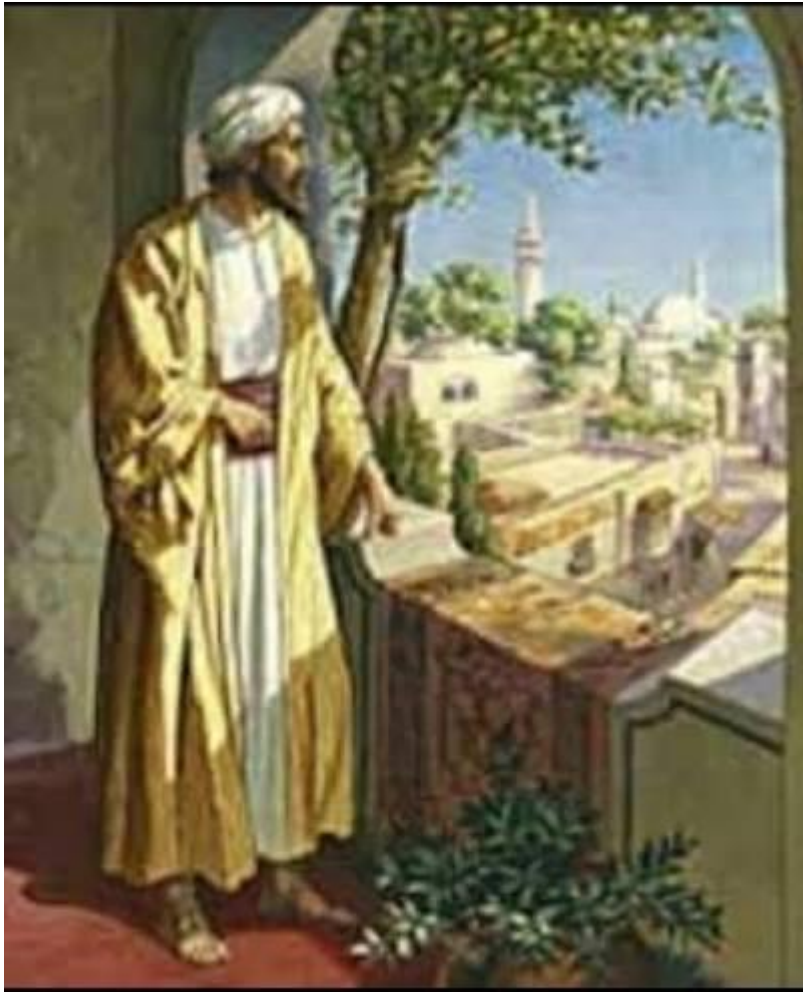


Bible Class – the Parables of Jesus

16th July 2026

The Parable of the Watchful Servants

Luke 12:35 - 40



**Passage for
Consideration:**

35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

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

39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

The context is helpful here. In verse 41, the verse immediately after the parable we are looking at, the disciple Peter asks Jesus “Lord, do you speak this parable unto us, or even to all?” In his response, it is clear that the Lord Jesus was addressing this parable to believers. To his disciples. Bearing this in mind, it is also worth noting the verse before our parable – verse 34 - *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*. Jesus had been teaching and pointing out all the concerns, cares and worries of this life which so easily distract, but are in themselves of little importance, the incident which sparked such a teaching was the demand from one man, who asked Jesus to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Jesus would not comment on that, but warned against covetousness, and gave the parable about building bigger barns for storing more possessions, and the vanity of it all. If that treasure is what concerns you most, then that is where your heart will be. Whereas if you are not so concerned about personal possessions, and accept that God is in control of your life, and gives you the necessary things to live, and therefore to be content, then your heart will be settled upon Him instead.

So with that in mind, Jesus delivered this following parable of watchful servants to his disciples, in an effort to get them to appreciate to always be watchful, and alert. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning*; words used to describe the practice of the time, whereby the long day-coat, or cloak, so favoured at the time, was tucked up into the belt, to enable the person to run and move about unrestricted. Your lights burning – this reminds us of the parable of the ten virgins all who had lamps, but five were so unconcerned about the task ahead, that they had no store of oil, and when the oil ran out, their lamps were of course useless, and their jobs redundant, their whole employment depended upon

forethought, planning and care. So Jesus was telling his disciples, that in their lives, they needed to be flexible, not stuck in their ways, but ready to serve at a moments notice. To be ready to put their own lives on hold, and serve others, to not restrict themselves by a limited character, and to plan ahead, to be prepared, to be familiar with how to defend their faith, and ready to explain to others the reason for their hope with meekness and with fear (1 Peter 3:15). To be disciplined.

Jesus explained that they needed to be like men waiting for the master for when he returns from the wedding. This may seem a bit strange to us. The whole concept of waiting around for ages, for someone simply to come back from a wedding. But in those days, things were done differently, firstly, wedding feasts were not hurried affairs and could go on for several days, the start of the feast was also unknown, as guests would be arriving from various locations using modes of transport which could take several days. There was no instant messaging service or phones to arrange things, instead, such arrangements were based on trust, patience, hospitality and understanding. It might take days for the bridegroom to arrive for example (as the parable of the ten virgins illustrates). So the master of the house, has travelled a long way, to give support and kindness to others, he has had to wait around, and suffer great inconvenience, but only for the wellbeing of others, and then finally, he is able to leave, to get back to his own house. Arriving back, he knocks on the door, only to have no answer, so he has to bang the door, and then the windows, and then has to break in like a thief, only to find sleepy servants just waking up, and grumpy that they have been aroused from slumber. Imagine if this was the case! Would they be employed for long?

Jesus did not describe that happening, instead he described faithful servants, up, dressed, watchful, ready for service, springing into action when they hear someone at the door. Even though it is the second or third watch – the early hours of the morning, when all others are fast asleep. But these servants really care about their master. They are willing to sacrifice their own comfort. Such is their welcome, and attentiveness that the Master of the House is so pleased to be home again, that he makes them all relax, and sit down all comfortable, and he serves them with a nice meal. This is a parable with a twist. Because that sort of behaviour would be most unexpected, and certainly not in line with behaviour and custom of those days – and certainly not today! It says a lot about the kind character of the Master of the House.

Well the Lord Jesus is like that. He is the Master of the House (Hebrews 3:6) He explicitly told his disciples that he was going on a far journey, and would return. See Mark 13: 34-37: *For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter [doorman] to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.* Such a warning is necessary, because the return of the Son of Man will be when least expected, and at a time, when most people will be fast asleep, and when keeping awake is difficult. This is to do with spiritual sleep, when complacency and back sliding have set in, when the disciples have lost care and respect for the Master but think that he has forgotten to come back, or will be a long time yet, so lets all have a good time instead of waiting around.

The wedding is spoken of in Isaiah 62. The Lord Jesus went to sit at the right hand of the Father, - the far country, all principalities and powers being made subject unto him. Part of his responsibility is preparing his people Israel for their regathering to their land, preparation to be reconciled to their God again, to be married once again. The Lord Jesus has his own marriage too, to be united as one with the great Body of resurrected believers. See Revelation 19:7-9.

But first he must return from his duties afar off, he must return to his Household and see how things are there. So Jesus exhorted – again explicitly in Revelation 3:20: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* The Lord Jesus knows it is not easy to stay alert all the time. He saw his own disciples fall asleep in the garden even while he was with them. He knows the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak. So that is why he has given warning, why he gives signs of the times, why he gave the book of Revelation with trumpet blasts to keep us awake seeing fulfilled prophecy.

Yet the Laodiceans, in their Ecclesia, instead of standing by the door ready with loins girded, they were lounging around, and had let the whole place go to pot. Fires gone out, place was cold, lights out, they were blind, couldn't even be bothered to get dressed, - naked, they were worn out caring about the riches of this world - miserable. Above all they were completely deluded, thinking that Jesus would be ok about everything, it was all just fine! But Jesus in his kindness has checked in and seen the mess, and given warning that he is to arrive soon! He has given a chance! So he said: Revelation 3:18,19: *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with*

eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Back to Luke 12, verse 39: Jesus added these words: *And this know, that if the goodman [owner] of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.*

So Jesus is advising his disciples – treat my House, as if it were your house, care for my things, as you would like your things looked after. As he said in another place, inasmuch as you have done it unto these my brethren, you have done it unto me... (Matthew 25:40) The House Hold, we know is not a literal building, it is the Fellowship. We will be judged by our efforts in keeping ourselves spiritually clean and tidy, and enthusiastic, we will be judged by the welcome we give to others, as that will reflect the welcome we will give to Jesus. We will be judged by the hospitality we give, forethought and planning, and organisation of our lives, putting the Fellowship first,- because we are looking after it, until the Master comes. If he comes tomorrow, is it too late to get ready?

Brother Terry