

# Are You Ready?

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Preacher: Tobin Miller

[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, alright. Today's scripture reading today comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12. Please follow along in your bulletin. Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit.

Be like men who are waiting for their masters when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom their master will find on the alert when he comes.

Truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch, or even the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

But, be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

You too, be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect. Peter said, Lord, are you addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?

[ 1 : 19 ] And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?

Blessed is the slave from whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, My master will be a long time in coming, and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. And that slave, who knew his master's will, and did not get ready, or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes. But the few who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required. And to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. This is the reading of God's Word.

Wow, it has been at least five weeks since I've been able to get up here and say, how you guys doing? How you guys doing? Come on, five weeks.

[ 2 : 51 ] I was expecting something much greater than that. That was just not good enough. How you guys doing? Great, that's good, that's good. We talk a lot.

About being on a journey here. This summer I went on a journey. I got back last Saturday and ended up with strep throat. A great gift from my kiddos who are back home and they are trying to heal up and Christina will bring them back this Saturday.

So I'm praying for her and her jet lag state and bringing them back. The journey this summer was crazy. We left here, we went to London, we went to Oxford, we took a group of people from here to Oxford, we studied, we went back to London, we flew to Bologna, we got in a car, we traveled with some friends for their birthday and the best part was it was just a gift to us and so we didn't have to pay for a lot of it.

That was amazing, right? That's the best kind of journeys, right? That it's a free journey. You know, it's a grace journey. We went to Bologna and we went to a little town where there was nothing happening there, not even a telephone and people like Dave Sutherland were very frustrated as they held their Blackberries up and walked around trying to find a signal and you could not find a signal for 25 miles and they just realized, or they thought, that a place like this could not exist in the world anywhere.

So we found a new place like that and then we drove to Rome and spent a couple days there and then we got in this airplane that was held together by bandages, I think, how most European airlines are and we prayed a lot.

[ 4 : 31 ] You know, it's like one of those airlines, you read the article where the guy got on and he looks out at the wing and the wing is torn up but there's a little note and it says, don't worry, we know about this. So it's like one of those airlines.

You get in and you go, I don't know if this is going to work but people know about this and then we fly to Atlanta and we get into Atlanta and we drive up to North Carolina to see my dad and we have this experience in North Carolina where my dad wants to do something on his bucket list and so he takes all the grandkids to whitewater rafting which he thinks is going to be very peaceful because it's called Zen tubing.

Ooh, Zen. Don't ever go Zen tubing unless you want an unpeaceful time and about halfway down the journey as Kip was running through all the trees and just being miserable, he yells out, this is the worst day of my life!

And I'm sitting there listening to him and I'm like, I wish I could say that. But I'm an adult. I can't say things like that. I just have to say, don't worry, it's going to get better.

And we see my dad and then we fly to Dallas and we see Christina's dad and then I fly back on Thursday and I get back here on Saturday going through London and Hong Kong and if you want to go to the States, never go through London because it's just, it's not good.

[ 5 : 48 ] And I come back in and well, London's okay and the weather's terrible. And I have this massive sore throat and the staff wouldn't let me talk last Sunday because they realized that I was doped up just as I'm doped up now and they were worried about what I was going to ramble on just as I'm rambling on now.

But I realized in the journey that there are certain questions that get asked a lot. When you have four kids, they ask questions like, when are we going to eat next?

And how long till the next place? And in this time, I realized how bad of a husband and a dad I was. I really struggle as a dad, especially answering questions because the one that gets me is when they ask the same question over and over and over and over and over again, like in a span of like two nanoseconds, right?

And it's almost as if they don't hear your response, but they keep asking that question and my kids kept asking that question and the question was always, when is this going to end? When is this going to end? When is this going to end?

Which I started asking myself also, when is this going to end? And as I traveled, I listened and talked to my kids and friends on this journey and I realized kind of what I shared last week, that people talk about a lot of different things depends on what country they're in.

[ 7 : 13 ] But for the most part, the questions we ask on the journey are pretty much the same. As a pastor, I get asked the questions and not necessarily in order, but the questions normally are this, should I date him or her?

They're really cute. What do you think? The question is, should I tithe? Does God really need my money? And should I tithe on my net or my gross?

The question is, is this the end times? Is this what was foretold in Scripture? Is Jesus going to come back soon?

Is Obama the Antichrist? And I'm so confused, I thought Bill Clinton was Antichrist. Antichrist. And before that, people were assuring me that Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist because his whole name has six letters, six middle letters, six middle, six, six, six.

And so I just thought Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist. But in the midst of the conversations with people, people are asking these questions because they look at the world around them, they look at their world, and they see things that aren't good.

[ 8 : 31 ] They see darkness, they see confusion, they see lack of clarity. They not only see the darkness, but they feel the darkness.

Do you feel the darkness? darkness? When you look around and you see what's going on in the world, when you listen to stories about what's going on in movie theaters, when you listen to stories about people being abandoned or maybe you're being abandoned, or even when you look at your heart, and you wonder why you think certain thoughts, is there darkness there?

It's interesting in the end times as I was talking to people, there's usually two camps, at least in the people I run into.

There's the one camp that they're spending all their time thinking and wanting to know when. When is this going to happen? When is Jesus coming back again? I need to know when. I actually had

someone present to me about three weeks ago this whole chart, and it was amazing. They had this three-by, I mean, it was like a bulletin board, and they basically took history and peoples and names, and in this whole history, they went up to the point of this is when the world is going to end, and this is how it's going to happen, and this is who the Antichrist is.

[ 9 : 58 ] And I just looked at that and I go, wow, that's an amazing piece of energy towards that. I don't know, I'm pretty sure that that's not correct, but whoever put that together, that's amazing.

And so you have one side of people who are like that. They're struggling with trying to figure out when is this going to happen? When is the end times? When should I sell my Apple shares and enjoy whatever I can until that end time comes?

And then what I saw, you should, no one laughed, but that is a joke. Never sell your Apple shares, they're good forever. Never. And then you have some people who kind of basically say, I don't really care.

In fact, I hope that there's never the end time because I'm having too much fun here in life, it's just too good. Jesus is on a journey.

He's on a journey to Jerusalem, and when you hear that, you always think the end, his crucifixion. And in this journey in chapter 12, he's talking to his disciples and he's giving them a lesson and we're told in the scripture in Luke 12 that there are over 10,000 people following Jesus.

[ 11 : 09 ] It's like a rock concert. And they're all gathered towards him because they know that he's going to Jerusalem and they know that something big is going to happen. And in Luke 12, he pulls his disciples aside and he talks to them about things they need to be careful of, things they need to worry about, things they need to keep their eyes out for.

He talks to them about hypocrisy. He talks to them about wearing masks and being different in one place or another and not allowing people to see your true heart or who you are.

To depend on what your appearance is as opposed to depending on truth. He talks to them about coveting and how that's, Paul says, that that's his greatest downfall, that coveting and wanting things that other people have, when you see what they have, you want it and so you desire it and you make it an idol, you make it a God and Jesus realizes that us, his children, are going to have a problem with that and so he talks about that over and over and over again because we're walking in the darkness and in the darkness sometimes we cling for things and they look really good but when we hold them up to our face because our lamp has blown out, we can't see them clearly and so that we cling to those things and eventually we realize that those things, those idols, cannot sustain the weight of our soul.

They're empty, they're hollow. Jesus goes on in his journey and he talks to them about fear and worry and in verses 22 and 34 he tells them not to worry and to be careful because he's in control and there's nothing you need to fear because God is in control and everything is in his hands. Your job, your cancer, your family, your children, as you walk with the Lord he is big enough to hold all those things and the scripture says he holds all of those things tightly and he takes care of them and Jesus reminds his disciples and he reminds you and me that we don't need to be fearful of those things and then we get to this amazing chapter in verses 35 through 48 and Jesus begins to talk about the end time.

[ 13 : 38 ] It's the question that everybody is talking about because they know they're going to Jerusalem, they know something that massive is going to happen and they want to know when his kingdom is going to come again. This is the first major teaching of Christ on this.

Now there are 280 chapters in the New Testament but 318 times they talk about Jesus' second coming. So that means one out of every 25 verses in your New Testament talk about Christ's return.

Talk about him coming to earth. Talk about him penetrating the darkness and grabbing you and I as his children and taking us home. And so it's really important.

And he wants his disciples to be aware of that and not to lose focus because he realizes that as you and I and they go on this journey we're going to be tempted to lose focus.

He realizes that as we go on this journey we're entering into these dark areas these dark times. we have darkness sometimes in ourselves and in the darkness we lose focus of God.

[ 14 : 55 ] And he writes this scripture to his disciples and you and I and over and over and over again and he says be careful. You're going to walk in darkness be careful.

There's distractions be careful. There are going to be things that look so good to you in the darkness but when you hold them up to the light they're not real.

Be careful. You're going to walk through life and you're going to hear these voices talk about you. Man you really screwed up. I cannot believe you did that. How can you be a child of God and make those mistakes?

Man you might as well just give it up. It's not worth it. You've tried everything you can but you're not getting anywhere. Your boss is a jerk. You're never going to succeed. You're doing all the righteous things but you might as well just give up because it's not worth it.

It's too hard. It's too difficult. Give up. And Jesus says be careful of those voices because those voices that speak to you in the darkness are not real.

[15:59] They're not truthful. They're not of me. Be careful. And so he goes in this passage and he lays out a story of a party and a master and slaves and he gives two to three parables of what happens as they go on their journey and as they serve the master and what happens in the middle of that journey and he tries to teach us what it means.

And when I look at this passage there are two things that stick out to me. The first thing is how. How am I supposed to act? What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to live in this in-between time that we keep talking about?

How am I supposed to live in the darkness when I can't see clearly when my light has gone out?

How am I supposed to do that? And why? Why am I supposed to do that?

I mean what's really the big deal? Because God is he's good. He's gracious. He's like Santa Claus. Everything's always going to be turned around.

In the end everybody wins with God, right? And so Jesus lays out this argument in Luke. How and why?

[17:18] And I want to really look at it and as I've been on cough syrup and all these things I've got to this point where I'm trying to figure out how do I do this? What does this look like? Because we've talked about this over again. So I want to talk about the ending first.

The why. Now you might remind me later and say you should have started with the how but I want to talk about the why and the why is found in verses 45 through 49 verses 37 and I'm just going to read them really quickly and we're going to talk about them.

Why do we care? Why do we worry? Why should we do these things? Well let me just read it. Be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps lit. Be like a man who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast so they may immediately open the door to him and when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those slaves when the master finds alert when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself. The master will gird himself as a slave have the slaves recline at the table and he'll come up and wait on them. Whoever he comes in the second watch or the third watch and he finds them though blessed are these slaves.

But be sure of this. If the head of the house had known what hour the thief was coming he would not have allowed the house to be broken in. You too be ready for the son of man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

[18:32] Verse 45 But if the slave says in his heart his inner self in Greek my master will be a long time in coming and he begins to beat the slaves both men and women and to eat and to drink and to get drunk.

When you look at the why there's actually two whys. There's a negative why and there's a positive why. And what this passage says to you and I as children of God and I've shared it before that God is a venture capitalist and he's given a lot of money and resources and talents and giftings in relationships to you.

And one day the venture capitalist is going to come back and he's going to look at the return on your life. And this passage says that there either is going to be a positive response to that return or a negative response to that return.

The negative response says the slave says in his heart my master will be a long time in coming and he begins to eat beat the slaves both men and women and to eat and drink and get drunk.

The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him. It's basically saying in Greek that the slave took the resources that the master gave him and the slave used the resources on himself.

[ 20 : 18 ] the master gave him all these talents this time this money all these things that he could have done amazing things in God's kingdom. And the slave goes yeah I know that this isn't really mine but by the time the master comes back I'm going to be long dead.

Or by the time the master comes back he's going to forget about all these things. Or you know the master might not ever come back. So maybe I should just do what I want with my stuff and take care of myself.

So the slave begins to get drunk and he beats the men and women in Greek he's basically saying he's misusing resources. The master of that slave comes on a day when he does not expect him in an hour he does not know and he will cut him in pieces.

Very very strong language. I mean some of the strongest languages you could say it basically means he hews him in two. Everyone that heard this would have gone back to Abraham's covenant with God and in that covenant God placed these animals and separated them in two pieces and Abraham walked through those pieces and God said whoever breaks this covenant this is what will happen to them.

And so the minute the listeners heard Jesus speaking his disciples they would have known wow this is not good. So the master comes and he separates the slave into two places and he puts them into the place of the unbelievers.

[ 22 : 06 ] And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will he will receive many lashes. He goes on and he says if the slave or the owner of the house knew what time the thief were going to break in he would not have allowed it to happen.

The negative is that we all have a responsibility as God's children. We've all been giving resources. We've all been giving time and talent. And one day the master is going to return again.

Do you believe that? If I were to ask you or say Jesus could come this week or Jesus could come today what would you think?

How would you react? Let's say you go home tonight and you're watching TV and all of a sudden there's a knock at your door. And your wife or your friends or your kid opens the door and they come back and you go who was it?

And he goes Jesus. What? Yeah he wants to come into the house. What would you do? I mean how would you react if God wants to come into your house and to visit with you?

[ 23 : 28 ] Would there be things you would say okay wait wait wait I got this cleaned up for a minute. Wait one second. There's some areas here I need to clean up really quickly before this happens because I don't want him to see these things. Or would you say that's great.

Come on in. Jesus tells his disciples he tells us that in the end the master returns and each one of us are held accountable for what we have.

The negative the hard one the one you won't want to talk about as a pastor because you want people walking away going oh man. But we need to talk about that. Then there's a positive why. And it's found at the very beginning. He says be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps lit. Be like the men who are waiting for their master when he returns to the wedding feast so that he may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.

Blessed. It means this incredible feeling and position of honor and blessing put upon them. It doesn't just mean it happens right when the master comes home but it means they are blessed.

[ 24 : 44 ] They have been watching. They have been waiting. They know that he could come home anytime and they have been there. Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself to serve them and have them recline at the table and will come home and wait on them.

whether he comes in the second hour or the third and finds him so blessed are those slaves. The story is this.

There's this banquet and the master has gone off to this banquet and Jewish banquets last anywhere from one day to one week. And so the slaves know they have no idea when the master is going to come.

They have no idea. I mean he could come in one day or he could come a week later. And the passage says the faithful slaves, the faithful servants are always ready.

They're always watching. They're always thinking and doing. And then one day, and this is a very interesting passage because if you read this to a Jewish person today, they would have a lot of questions about this.

[ 25 : 59 ] One of these is basically the word waiting doesn't really mean waiting. It means expecting. I mean waiting means I'm just going to wait. Okay, when is this going to happen?

It's like you're waiting for your wife to finish shopping or you're waiting for your husband to turn off the TV or find the remote. It's like I just don't know if this is ever going to happen. Maybe it will happen, maybe it won't happen.

But expecting is like being in the movie theater and you see the beginning of the movie start. you're really excited about this movie and you know that what's going to happen is going to be amazing. And he's saying that the faithful slaves, the faithful servants are those who are expecting the master to return. Because they know that when he returns something amazing is going to happen. And something amazing happens because when Jesus' followers heard this they couldn't understand it. because it says the party is happening, they're in the house waiting, and the master slips out of the party and he goes to his home.

[ 27 : 02 ] And it's very unusual because usually you never knock. If you knock on a door it means you're a stranger. Usually the master would just speak and the door would open. But here he knocks, he's testing them, he's trying to see are they ready, what's going on, are they ready for me to come?

He knocks, he sees them all ready. And the passage says that when he does that he brings them into the dining room, he sits all the slaves down, he takes his clothes off, and he girds himself with a loincloth, and he kneels down and he serves every person at that table.

Now when Jesus' followers heard this they couldn't understand it. Because a master would never serve a slave. But what Jesus is telling you and I is that one day when he comes back and he sees how you have faithfully served, how you were expecting him, how you're ready, how you're using your gifts and your talents, that one day there's going to be this huge banquet.

And Jesus is going to sit you down. And he's going to say, you know, I knew that you struggled with this. I knew that you found it so hard to be salt and white in the office.

I knew that it was so difficult for you to walk with the ward as your husband or your wife didn't do it. I knew that you struggled with keeping the accounting books right and correct because you had so much pressure with you.

[ 28 : 38 ] I knew that things were always piled up against you at your school. You were the only teacher who professed faith and you tried to be salt and light and you always faced a struggle.

I knew that in your bank that there were very few people who thought similar to you and when you talked about starting a prayer meeting or reading the word, people laughed at you and pushed you aside.

But you persevered. You expected me. You trusted me. And now because of that I want to pour out my blessings upon you.

Do you know that each one of us right now we're living for rewards? Do you know that? I mean sometimes we feel uncomfortable talking about it because we feel like all pride and arrogance but we all are living towards a reward and that reward is salvation in Jesus Christ.

But he says also as we live out our life we're living towards rewards of faithfulness. And one day the master is going to come back and he's going to look at all the hard and difficult things you've done in your life.

[ 29 : 54 ] All the things that made no sense. All the unreasonable things. All the things that you were the only one and you stood in there and you honored him and you walked with him and he's going to go well done.

Well done my good and faithful servant. I'm so proud of you. I'm so amazed by what you've done here. Here let me give you some more things.

Let me give you some more responsibilities. Let me give you some more blessings. I knew that it was so hard when you do that but here is why you did it. And here is what makes it all worthwhile. All worthwhile. Do you believe that? Sometimes it's hard.

Sometimes it's hard as we walk in the darkness. Sometimes it's hard when people laugh at us.

Sometimes it's hard because even in my own mind it makes no sense whatsoever sometimes.

[ 31 : 01 ] But Jesus said that's why. That's why I want you to be faithful. So we know the why. The why is we're going to be judged.

The question is Jesus is going to come back and either he's going to be your savior or he's going to be your judge. There's only two options. He's not a good dude.

He's not a fun guy. When he comes back he's either going to be your savior or he's going to be your judge. And he's coming back. Now again I struggle with that.

Sometimes I just wonder how long, how long. Everybody's been talking about that for 2,000 years. His disciples were talking about that for 2,000 years. When is it? I don't know. But I know that it's sooner than it was yesterday.

And some of us might not see him return. But some of us are going to see him face to face when we meet him when we die. We all meet eternity.

[ 32 : 03 ] We all meet Christ. We all are going to be held accountable for all the resources he's given us and what we do with those things. On the Wednesday that I left, I was leaving on Thursday, one of my closest friends came with his family to the lake house.

My Christian's parents have a house. And we were hanging out there and in the middle of our time he got this phone call. And his kids are four of them playing with my four kids.

And he said, I got to leave. I go, why? Why? Because my dad just died. I said, did you expect that? No. Came out of a total surprise. Had no idea. His health was perfect. He was in great shape. He just, we just got the call. He just passed away.

He died. And so we packed them up in their car and we sent them back to Austin, Texas. And I was praying for them. The funeral was going to be on the following Monday. And I was trying to decide, should I stay and do the funeral?

[ 33 : 10 ] Or what should I do? My kids are getting, what do I do with all these things? Saturday, Paul calls me up. He said, I mean, how do you, I usually say, how you doing? But how do you, you don't want to say how you doing after your dad's died, right?

I mean, you're like, you're like, what's happening? What's going on? I mean, that's clearly what I sounded like. And he goes, I got really bad news. I'm like, okay, what's worse?

Your dad just died. He goes, well, Friday night, we took my mom out to eat. Saturday morning, she woke up. She died.

So on Wednesday, his dad dies. And on Saturday, his mom dies. And he calls the church up really quickly and says, can we change the funeral from a single funeral to a double funeral?

And I looked at Paul and I cried with him. And I said, you never know when we're going to meet Christ. The passage says that we'll either meet him when he comes again, or we'll meet him when he opens our eyes.

[ 34 : 25 ] The why. Because he's coming. And he wants us to be faithful. The how. How are we supposed to act? Because if you hear a talk like this, I'm a doer.

I want to know what do I do? How do I do these things? What should I do? Tell me everything you need to do. Give me a list here. But scripture never talks about list. It talks about relationships. It talks about walking with God. In verse 35, I think it's the answer to the how. How are we to live? Jesus talks to his disciples and he said, but be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps lit. This idea dressed is a word that actually means girded. So in Jewish time, in Jesus' time, they wore these long robes.

And often they would wear them without a belt because it was just so hot and you wanted it to be as loose as possible. But when you had to do work, when you had to do some kind of movement, when you had to run, when you had to fight and battle, you put a belt on.

[ 35 : 32 ] And after you put your belt on, you reach down and you grab the end of your robes and you pull them up and you stuck them in your belt. And if you ever saw somebody walking around with the end of their robes pulled up and stuck in their belt, you knew that they had been working or running or doing some kind of strenuous exercise.

And Jesus says to his disciples, as you walk on the journey, as you prepare for eternity, as you prepare for my return, dress yourself in readiness.

The Greek there actually means to be girded, to arm yourself for action, to be continually active, to be continually doing. And so what he's telling us here as we are on the journey, that it's not a journey about waiting.

That it's not a journey about, well, I want to figure out when he comes so I can know the exact time and so everything will be in place. Every time I think of that story, I think of Joe Littlepage. Joe Littlepage was a junior above me in high school.

And when we started school, Joe, so he's one year above me, he had this vision that this year, Jesus is going to come back. And so for the whole year, he didn't do any work.

[ 36 : 56 ] Didn't do his homework. I mean, he came to class. The teacher says, where's your homework, Joe? He goes, well, Jesus is going to come back. It doesn't make any difference. And at the end of the semester, you know what happened to Joe?

He failed. He failed school because he didn't do any work because he felt like when Jesus comes, all we do is we wait. And when he waits, then everything's going to be okay.

But the passage here says just the opposite. What Jesus is telling his disciples is he says, blessed is he who girds himself. Blessed is he who works.

It's not passive. Blessed is he who is ready. Are you ready? Are you ready today?

If Jesus were to come back, are you ready for him to come back? What would it look like?

[ 38 : 01 ] For me, again, I struggle with that sometimes. Sometimes I go through life and I just forget certain things. I forget that Jesus is God and I'm not.

I forget that he's in control of all things. Sometimes I forget that I'm a servant. I want to be a master. I want to be in control. I want people to listen to me. I want people to obey me. I want to do things.

Sometimes I forget that he's actually coming back again.

But the passage here, Jesus says, be dressed in readiness. If you're a banker, don't quit your banking.

Be the best banker you can. Serve the Lord. Walk with God. Be righteous and humble and gentle in your dressing yourself in readiness. If you're a teacher and you know that Jesus is coming next week, don't quit teaching.

[ 39 : 09 ] You're going to have a reach and output to people and students that no one's ever going to have a talk to. Be faithful. Be gentle. Love your students well.

Care for them. I don't know what other professions are, but what this passage is saying is don't stop doing what you're doing because God has you where you are for a very specific purpose and reason.

And what he wants you to do is just be faithful. Trust him. Walk with him. Allow him to work in your life. Does that make sense?

He's not saying when I read this and I go, I gotta do this, I gotta do this, I gotta do this, and if I don't do this, God's not gonna be happy. You know, whatever you do, if you're a child of God, you're not gonna make God any more or less happier than he is right now because this talk isn't about salvation.

This passage is about after you've become a Christian, this is what your life looks like. This is who you are. This is what you do.

[ 40 : 22 ] The Christian life is actually a lot about doing, about being ready and walking in faithfulness. And finally, how or what are we to look like?

He says these words and I think these, I've been thinking about these a lot these last couple weeks and he says, keep your lamps lit. In Greek, the word is continually keep. It actually means to be faithful, to keep a promise, to act fittingly, to keep your lamps lit.

Last night, I took some codeine before I went to bed for my cold and then when I woke up, I looked into the darkness and I saw figures dancing around my room.

Just, you know, it was just the drugs on me, right? And I realized that sometimes in the darkness, our imagination can get the best of us.

Sometimes when we walk in darkness and our lamp isn't lit with God's truth and who we are, we grab at things that seem real and true in life, but they're not.

[ 41 : 40 ] Now the lamp, I almost brought my lamp. Someone gave me a lamp from Jesus' day. It's about that big. And the lamps weren't really meant for you to walk so you could see your feet because it wasn't that powerful really.

And you really knew where you were going in your house and in your city and in your village. You knew where all the steps were. But the Hebrew historian said the lamp was held like this so that as you walked, people could see your face and they would know who's coming.

It's more of identification so you could know who was coming and you could be aware of what's going to happen. And he's saying here for you and I that we need to keep our lamps lit.

We need to understand who we are. We need to understand what God's word says about us. And sometimes if we start to believe lies and falsehood, we walk in darkness and we stumble and we grab onto things that we think are going to give us life, but they end up destroying our world.

And so Jesus warns his disciples and us, you know how to please the Lord? Just walk with him. Trust him. Be faithful.

[ 43 : 05 ] Repent because you're going to sin if you're like me, you're going to sin a lot. So repent a lot. Ask for forgiveness. And remember who you are and who is in control of your life.

And walk with that lamp in your face, the lamp of God's word and his truth. And don't allow the darkness to come in. How do we walk?

We walk in faithfulness and truth by girding ourselves up and being faithful with the truth that's been given us as we walk ahead. Why do we walk? Because one day Jesus, our master, our incredible Lord is going to come back and he's going to judge us and reward us.

To me, this passage is amazing because I know if you're like me, sometimes you're doing things and it's just, you wonder, why am I doing this? And God says, you're doing this because one day I'm going to come before you and I'm going to bless you and you're going to honor me as you be faithful.

Now I realize even as I share this, there are some people in here right now who don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ. I don't know what master you're serving.

[ 44 : 22 ] I don't know what you expect when the master comes home. My hope is, my prayer is, if you're here, someone brought you here, that you would start to talk to them and ask them about their faith with Jesus Christ.

You would start to talk to them and ask them about what it means to walk with God. You would start to talk to them and engage with them about what it means to walk in faith and why Jesus is the good master.

And my prayer for you is that you would not finish this week without a realization that there's a God who loves you, He cares for you, He's given everything for you, He's wooing you and inviting you back on the journey with Him, and He's waiting for you to open the door in your life and allow that to happen.

I realize even as I share this, there's some of us here right now who said, I've become a Christian. I put my faith in Jesus Christ when I was 10 years old, I got baptized, I did all these things, I got it all going on.

But when we look at the passage, we realize that there are certain things that are true of God's people as we walk with Him. The Bible says that it's true that as we walk with Christ and we become more like Him that we serve other people.

[ 45 : 57 ] We think of others more and we think of ourselves less. The Bible says that as we walk with Christ that we walk in readiness. We have an expectation that Christ is going to return and that when He returns it's going to be amazing and glorious.

The Bible says as God's children that we use our money in our resources for His kingdom. and not for our kingdom.

The Bible says as we walk with God and we become more like Christ that we share this journey with other people because we want them to have the good master that we have and we don't want them to end up getting beaten.

And the Scripture says that as we walk with Christ and we are His children that we become more humble that we walk in humility that we walk in love that we walk in gentleness because we realize that we're not the master and that the master is good and He's coming back for us.

And I realize that there are some of us here like this story that if Christ were to come back today and He were to examine our lives we'd be in trouble.

[ 47 : 33 ] My prayer is that we would take this time to come before Him to ask for His forgiveness and allow His Spirit to change us and to make us into the people that He wants us to be.

The amazing thing about the Bible is that it says that wrath and punishment is not God's primary response to His children.

What the Bible says is God's primary response to His children is love, grace, compassion, and gentleness.

My prayer for us as a church is that we would realize that as we go on this journey with Him. Father, we just thank You for this day. We thank You for Your goodness. We thank You for Your Word.

We thank You for Your message that changes us. I pray for each one of us in here. I pray for our hearts and our minds. I realize that some of us haven't even begun the journey with You.

[ 48 : 43 ] And I pray, Lord, that You would open our eyes, their eyes and ears to Your Son, Jesus Christ, and that we would fall more in love with Him. Lord, I realize, especially in my own life, that there are times I let the candle go out.

I stumble around in the darkness of thoughts and words and imagination in my mind, and I think, well, this will make me happy. This will be truth. This is good. And Your Word just says, I'm stumbling in the darkness.

I'm clinging to idols and things that will leave me empty and hurt and beaten. So, Lord, I come before You and I just confess that.

I repent of that sin of arrogance and pride, the sin of wanting to be God instead of following God. and I pray for each one of us in this church, Your church, that You would show us more and more what it looks like to follow You and be called faithful and good and ready and gentle.

And, Lord, in between time, we walk in this darkness all around us when it seems like things are totally out of control and we're in despair in our homes and in our work.

[ 50 : 06 ] and on the streets and fear seems to rule everything. We cling to Your Son who gives the message, hold on, hold on because I'm there and I'm coming again.

When the time is right, I'll be there. May we be found faithful, Lord, when You do that. Lord, we love You. We pray all these things in Your Son, Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.