

Stewards Of God

Text : **Luke 12: 35-48**

INTRODUCTION :

A. What would you say if God asked you when would be a convenient time for Him to come back.

1. Would you say as the Apostle John said, “**Come Lord Jesus.**” (**Rev. 22: 20**)
2. Would you request a couple weeks make to preparations.

B. It is a repeating theme throughout the N.T. that Jesus could come at any time.

1. It was a re-occurring theme in the parables of Jesus. (*Coming ... unannounced*)
 - a. Our text ... vs. **39-40** (*Earlier in Chapter = parable of the rich man's barns*)
 - b. The 10 virgins ... vs. **Matt. 25: 1-13** (*Next verses = parable of the talents*)
2. The Apostles preached about the Lord returning as a “**thief in the night.**”
 - a. Paul ... **I Thes. 5: 1-3**
 - b. Peter ... **II Pet. 3: 10-13**

C. God alone decides when He will come for us.

1. Even the Son of God does not know when the last day will be.
 - a. **Matt. 24:35-36** **Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.**
 - b. **Thus,** Christians are instructed to live in readiness to depart.
2. We live on the earth as travelers who are just passing through. *Non-citizens*
 - a. God's people have always realized that this world is not their home.
Heb. 11: 13-16 **All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.**
 - * *The life of Abraham was a parable to teach this very thing.*
 - b. Like these, Christians are commanded to live as those just passing through.
I Pet. 2: 11- **Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.**

I. Because we are but temporary residents on the earth, God gives us a significant volume of instructions about how to view and to use “things.”

A. Jesus taught a lot about money and the use of things.

1. 1 out of every 7 words spoken by Jesus in N.T. was about using things.
2. 16 out of 38 parables talk about possessions.
3. 15% of the teaching of Jesus was about things.

B. This theme goes all through the N.T.

1. There are 500 references to prayer in the scriptures. (*according to Dr. Herd*)
2. There are just a few less references to faith.
3. Money and possessions are addressed more than 1000 times.

C. The sheer volume of material indicates to us that God views it as important.

II. Why does God place so much importance on things ?

A. One's attitude toward “things” affects every man his entire life.

1. It started when grandpa gave you that first coin.
 - a. You learned it could get you things that you wanted. *Candy*
 - b. It gave you independence. *If you paid, you could choose what kind of candy.*
2. You soon learned that by saving in *Piggy Bank* you could buy larger items. *Toys*
3. If you're an American you learn that you can spend more than you make. *Credit*
4. Many spend their declining years monitoring their 401-K .
 - a. They worry if they will have enough.
 - b. **Matt. 6: 16-34** aside, they trust in money rather than God.

B. All people are vulnerable to the temptations associated with things and money.

1. The very first sin was motivated by a desire to **have** something more.
 - a. Saw it and desired it. (*ONLY forbidden thing on the planet.*)
 - b. Eve reasoned that it was a good thing to have.
 - c. She rejected God's authority when she took it.
2. Things can be very seductive in every era and every culture. (*Same choice as Eve.*)

I John 2: 15- 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.

C. **THEREFORE :** one's attitude toward money becomes an acid test of his character, his faith and his relationship with God.

1. How does one evaluate what is truly important to him ?
 - a. We very often give an answer based upon what we know should be important.
 - b. Our checkbook registry gives us a true picture of what is important to us.
2. We spend our money on the things that we truly value.
 - a. No matter what we **say** is important to us, our expenditures prove what we value.
 - b. The checkbook registry is an objective measure rather than subjective.
Compare ... James 2 ... *It is easy to say be warmed and filled, BUT .. only those who assist actually love.*
 - c. **Fact :** Americans spend more on pet foods than on all benevolence combined.
3. **Illustration :**
Retired man came for advise : *"My faith and the church means more to me than anything in the world, but I am struggling with the decision to cut my contribute. That \$100 a week is becoming difficult for me, I may just give \$75."*
*** He had a standing order for a new luxury car to be delivered every other year, he had a \$175,000 boat and played golf three times a week at \$100 a round.**
Without question he loved the church, but what was really important to him ?

D. The world is seductive and deceitful.

1. **"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** **Luke 12: 34**
 - a. Notice the heart follows the treasure.
 - b. If we want our heart to be on spiritual things, we must first put our treasure there.
2. Satan will not overtly tell you to leave God and follow him.
 He will tell you ... *"Just look at that fruit, doesn't it look good. Try it; it will make you wise."* **YOU CAN PUT IT ON CREDIT !**
3. In America today **debt has enslaved us** both as individuals and collectively.
 - a. All of the money in the entire world could not pay our national debt.
 - 1) Total U.S. debt = **\$ 55 Trillion**
 - 2) Total money in world = **\$ 40 to 44 Trillion** (*Highest estimate*)
 (*The value of all the gold in the world is \$10.5 trillion so all the gold plus all of the money still would not pay off our national debt.*)
 - 3) Our national debt is about **\$675,352** per family. (**+ \$11, 331 per Illinois resident**)
 - b. The individual debt is just about as bad.
 - 1) Total consumer debt is ... **\$1.7 Trillion.**
 - 2) Average credit card debt ... **\$8,562**

D. What does this tell us about our character ?

1. As individuals we have fallen so **deeply in love with the things** of this world that we have become **enslaved** to them.
2. Collectively - As a nation we want what we want when we want it so we borrow.
3. *This American culture is destroying the Lord's Church.*
 - a. *Satan is winning.*
 - b. *What can we expect if we don't change ?*

III. We've forgotten who's the boss ... God owns it all.**He alone allocates.****A. God owns the world and all that is in it.**

1. The universe belongs to God.

Deut. 10: 14- Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.
2. The earth belongs to God.
 - a. **Lev. 25: 23-** The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.
 - b. **Psa. 50: 9-14** I shall take no young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds. **10** For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. **11** I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. **12** If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains. **13** Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of male goats? **14** Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High;
3. **Therefore, we are but stewards using that which belongs to another.**

B. Also, all men are the property of God. (*Many rebel, but all are His.*)

1. **Psa. 24: 1-** ... The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.
2. We are God's by right of creation.
 - a. **Gen. 2**
 - b. Though men rebel, God will never relinquish ownership

Ezek. 18: 4- Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

* **Denying a fact does not make it any less a fact; ... God owns us.**

3. Christians have been redeemed from their rebellion.

- a. **I Cor. 6: 19-20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (*Not just your spirit.*)
- b. **Rom. 14: 7-9** For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; **8** for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. **9** For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

C. As owner, God decides who gets what. (*Man creates nothing, just reshapes.*)

1. God owns **ALL** of the wealth.

Haggai 2: 8- The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts.

2. God gives wealth to whomever HE chooses and HE takes it away when HE chooses.

I Chron. 29: 11-12 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. **12** Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

3. God gives the power to get wealth.

Deut. 8: 16-20 In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. **17** Otherwise, you may say in your heart, "My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth." **18** But you shall remember the **LORD** your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. **19** It shall come about if you ever forget the **LORD** your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. **20** Like the nations that the **LORD** makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the **LORD** your God.

D. Therefore ... by definition we are but stewards of God's possessions.

1. Stewards must prove themselves to be trustworthy.

I Cor. 4: 1-2 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

2. Stewards are held accountable for their stewardship of the owner's possessions.
 - a. The very function of a steward demands accountability. (**w/o notice**)
 - b. Jesus used this principle in many parables.
 - 1) The talents ... **Mt. 25: 14ff**
 - 2) The unrighteous steward ... **Luke 16: 1ff**
 - 3) The unjust steward in our text. ... **Luke 12: 42ff**

CONCLUSION :

A. What does all this mean to us ? How do we apply it to our lives ?

1. We understand that we need to be grateful for all that God has given.
 - a. We have ONLY what God has entrusted to our keeping.
 - b. He has given us the ability to gather wealth.
 - c. He can take it away at any time.
2. Each blessing is a test.
 - a. Will we use it to honor God ?
 - b. Will we use it for our own enjoyment ? (*We will be called into account.*)

B. Knowing that we are just stewards of what we possess, the question is not how much must we give, but how much of God's stuff may we keep for ourself.

C. Our stewardship on the earth is but an interview to see if we will serve God in eternity or be separated from Him.

1. How is your stewardship ? *Are you ready to give and accounting ?*
2. Are you honoring Him ?
3. God will only be honored by those in His household ?

Are you HIS servant ? Or, are you serving your own interests ?

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :

Luke 12: 35-48

35 Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit. **36** Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks. **37** 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*, and have them recline *at the table*, and will come up and wait on them. **38** Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds *them* so, blessed are those *slaves*.

39 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. **40** You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

41 Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone *else* as well?" **42** 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? **43** Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. **44** Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **45** 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; **46** 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. **47** 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, **48** but the one 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.