

Title: Where Your Treasure Is . . .  
Date: June 2, 2024  
Subject: Followers of Christ are to be heavenly focused and serving him while waiting for his return.  
Scripture: Luke 12:32 - 48

A story is told about Albert Einstein from when he was on a lecture tour. While proceeding to the next stop, his chauffeur commented he'd heard the theoretical physicist deliver the same speech over and over. He felt he'd be able to give it. Einstein suggested the two switch roles as nobody at the next college had seen his picture. The chauffeur agreed and did well. He even opened the meeting for Q & A. When one person became aggressive in his questions, the impostor replied, "I can see you're a brilliant professor, but I'm surprised you would ask a question so simple that even my chauffeur could answer it." Then he had his "chauffeur" – Einstein - give the answer. That's how the fictitious story ends.

The story Jesus tells it isn't a tall tale. People have the option of thinking that way, but they'll suffer the consequences for not believing what the Bible reveals. Jesus reminds his followers that he is with them until the end of time on earth...and he'll return to take his followers to be with him through the non-ending ever after of eternity. He gives instructions about what we're to do while we're waiting for that to happen.

Read Luke 12:32

I. "Your Father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom." 32

This is stated as a present possession though the complete gifting of the kingdom is still future. We're able to experience some of the benefits of it while on earth. It's a deal that's been signed and notarized. There's no backing out of it. It's fully guaranteed.

If that's the case, then what are we to do?

Read Vv. 33, 34.

II. Work on accumulating treasure in heaven. 33-34

If you think you've heard this someplace in our study of the life of Christ, that's because you have. It was during the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:19-21).

The background in Luke's Gospel is that Jesus had just told the story of the foolish rich farmer who concentrated on building his earthly portfolio. Read what God had to say to the man and Jesus' conclusion.

Read vv. 20, 21.

The man was focused on living in and for the present. People like him live for today and don't prepare for the future beyond this life. Jesus prefaced that parable by saying, "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (V. 15). Jesus states what should be obvious but is often overlooked - people who store up their treasures on earth will have no benefit from them once they die. It'll go to somebody else.

Instead, Jesus teaches that to pursue a life that matters, we're to be concerned about storing up treasure in heaven. It's the underlying principle expressed in v. 34.

Reread v. 34.

Where a person stores their treasure is their home.

People are enthralled with home, at least the sentimental version of it. Songs: Home on the Range, I'll Be Home for Christmas, My Old Kentucky Home, Sweet Home Alabama.

Near the end of "The Wizard of Oz," Dorothy clicks the heels of the ruby slippers and chants "There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home." That's all it took to get her back to her home in Kansas.

The phrase didn't start there. In 1823 John Payne wrote the lyrics and Sir Henry Bishop composed the music for the song *Home, Sweet Home*: "Mid pleasures and palaces, Though we may roam, Be it ever so humble, There's no place like home."

The song had prominent fans. When Charles Dickens toured America in 1842, he played the song on his accordion every night with "great expression and a pleasant feeling of sadness." President Abraham Lincoln and wife Mary invited an opera star to the White House to sing the song after the death of their son.

The phrase goes farther back. An English newspaper (*The Bath Chronicle*) in September 1781, included: "But this maxim mind – No place like Home For safety will you find."

Followers of Jesus Christ understand that "there's no place like home." The difference is we haven't been to our home yet. This world isn't our home. Jesus told his followers he's preparing a home for us in heaven (John 14:2). There are lots of songs about our home in heaven with Jesus: Home Where I Belong [They say that heaven's pretty, And living here is too. But if they said that I would Have to choose between the two, I'd go home, going home, Where I belong B. J. Thomas]; When I go Home (acapelridge), Long Way Home and Not Home Yet (Steven Curtis Chapman), Almost Home, Finally Home and Homesick (MercyMe), I'm Going Home (Chris Tomlin), Finally Home (Don Wyrzten), Don't It Make You Wanna Go Home? (The Cathedrals).

C.S. Lewis explains the sense of attachment to our heavenly home where we'll experience the full expression of the kingdom of heaven: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

Jesus tells a story to aid in understanding.

Read Vv. 35-38.

### III. Be prepared

Jesus presents the conclusion before telling the story. It's expressed in two ways: be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning. Both address being prepared. Do what's necessary in advance as we watch for him to return.

We're to be like servants whose master has gone to a wedding banquet. They don't know when he's coming back. Since it's not a great thing to keep the master waiting, the servants need to be dressed, have the lights on, so that when the master comes home, they can open the door...no matter the time of night he returns.

If they're ready, they don't have to listen to pounding on the door, groggily climb out of bed, try to find their slippers, light a lamp and shuffle over to the door.

The servants who are prepared for their master's return will find it well worth their while. The master will assume the role of a servant and lay out a spread for them. Maybe it's treats he brought back from the wedding banquet. The bottom line is they'll be rewarded. This could be an allusion to the heavenly banquet Christ will throw for his bride.

Jesus tells a second story.

Read V. 39.

Pretty straightforward. If the owner of house had known when the thief was coming, he wouldn't let his house be broken into. He'd be prepared to greet the thief. He'd be wide awake. He'd have the lights on. He'd have other people watching. He'd have the authorities ready. He wouldn't be surprised because he'd be ready.

Jesus spells out the implication.

Read V. 40

Jesus is the master who will be going away but will return at an unspecified time. He wants his servants to be watching and ready. It can get tough in the waiting... in the depths of the night of our soul, the trials we face, the anti-God society we live in. We must be ready because the Son of Man will come an hour when he isn't expected.

It's been almost 2000 years since Jesus stated he'd return. This may put us in the second or third watch of the night. We are to anticipate that he will come back at anytime. His return is nearer than it ever has been.

How are Christians to be prepared? This begins with an attitude of expectancy that leads to conduct. They're to be dressed in the righteousness of Christ, not seeking to fulfill the desires of the earthly sin nature. They're to have lamps burning so people can be pointed to the truth of God in Christ Jesus. They're to be watching in anticipation of the King's return.

Service is prevalent throughout the parables. Servants orient their lives according to their master's wishes and his business. The servants in the parables didn't spend their time in the things they wanted to do or chase their dreams. Likewise, we're to occupy ourselves with the concerns of our Master Jesus Christ. We're to work for the benefit of his kingdom, not ours. We're to use our gifts and abilities, to serve him and by extension others. We're to be diligently and willingly engaged in the service of our master. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you'll receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23, 24).

Jesus had been speaking to the disciples, but a crowd may have been congregating. Curious minds want to know and no mind is curiouiser than Peter's. He has a question. Jesus answers with another story.

Read Vv. 41-48.

IV. Faithful versus faithless servants

Jesus reinforces his points and adds more layers. Knowing the master's will and being ready versus knowing the master's will but not getting ready or not doing what the master wants.

Let's dispel some fear and angst. Jesus is changing how he uses terms manager and servant. He isn't saying some of his genuine followers are somehow going to wind up in hell because they weren't properly focused on or looking forward to his second coming.

There are two classes of people - the truly saved and the unsaved.

Vv. 45, 46 show the unsaved, those who don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are faithless and unwise servants who think they have plenty of time and therefore engage in unacceptable conduct which is living lives of sin. When the master returns, these servants are caught off guard and punished.

The punishment - cut to pieces - can be confusing. Jesus uses a figure of speech for being severely punished. The punishment will be harsh for unbelievers as it involves being condemned to the place of unbelievers which is hell, the place of eternal torment.

The summation of the parables expresses the idea of degrees of punishment. Those who've heard numerous times about Christ and reject him incur harsher punishment than those who've had limited opportunities. All will still be in hell.

A wealthy Christian often talked with his chauffeur John about the necessity of accepting Christ, the blessed hope of the Lord's return and being ready for beyond this life. One day he told his chauffeur, "John, when the Lord comes, you may have my cars." John politely expressed his gratitude while trying to hide his happiness. "And John, you and your wife can live in our nice, large house." John offered an enthusiastic: "Thank you, sir!" The Christian also told John he could have all the money and property he possessed when the Lord Jesus came.

John was overjoyed when he returned home and told his wife. Both were excited at the prospect. When John went to bed, he couldn't sleep. In the middle of the night, he went to his employer's home and knocked loudly until he came to the door. He asked, "What's the matter, John? Why have you come at this time of night?" "Oh sir, I don't want your car." "Don't want my car? Why not?" "Nor your house, nor your money, nor your property." "Well, John, what is it that you want?" "I want to be saved—to be ready, like you, for the coming of the Lord." John placed his trust in Christ.

The first part of being ready is to know Christ as personal Savior. There's more to following Jesus.

Vv. 42- 44 are about those who are in a right relationship with Jesus Christ. They're "the faithful and wise manager" who does what the master has asked him to do. He will be rewarded.

Another Scripture instructs us to "Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness" (Ephesians 5:8-11). The idea of "pleasing the Lord" pretty well summarizes the supreme purpose of the Christian life. The servant seeks to please his master.

How does a servant find out what pleases his master? By listening to what the master says. How do we find out what pleases the Lord? By listening to what he has to say. It's found in the Bible. Therefore, we read and search for ourselves to discover what pleases him. We listen to what others have to say about what God teaches in the Bible whether that's through Bible studies, sermons, books, or podcasts.

We aren't forced or coerced into living to please the Lord. Parents, spouses, church leaders, authors may try to challenge, nudge, provoke, maybe sometimes guilt or threaten, but ultimately, you and I are responsible for ourselves as to if and how we will please the Lord.

English preacher Alexander MacLaren: "If he (Christ) is what he assuredly is to everyone of us, nothing can be plainer than that we are thereby bound by obligations which are not iron, but are more binding than if they were, because they are woven out of the cords of love... Bound to serve him supremely, him only, him always... Serve him by the suppression of self, and the making his pleasure our law... Christ desires most that we should all be like him... And what is the likeness to Jesus Christ which it is thus our supreme obligation and our truest wisdom and perfection to bear? - self-suppression and continual consciousness of obedience to the divine will... It is a poor, cold thing to say to a man, "Do this because it is right." It is a still more powerless thing to say to him, "Do this because it is expedient. Do this because, in the long run, it leads to happiness." It's all different when you say, "Do this to please Jesus Christ, to please that Christ who pleased not himself but gave himself for you.""

v. 48 ends with a challenge to use what we've received – "for everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who's been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Christ followers have been given much, some more than others. He is going to hold each of his followers accountable. The quality and quantity of our service for Christ will be revealed when it's rewarded at his coming. Jesus wants to prevent embarrassment at his return.

Jesus' message isn't subtle. It's open and direct: "I'm coming back. Will you be ready? How are you serving?"

Change the analogy from servants serving their master to soldiers fighting in a war. Much of the news soldiers hear is hard – battles, fatalities, wounds, enemy attacks. My dad received a "Dear John" letter from his fiancée who told him she was breaking off their engagement and she was going to marry his friend.

There is one piece of news that all soldiers are waiting for: "The war is over. It's time to go home."

That will be Jesus' message when he returns: "The war is over. It's time for you to come home."