

Redeeming the Time - Part 1

FAITHFUL SERVICE Luke 12:35-48

STIMULATE

** In Psalm 90:12 Moses prays that he would learn to number his days so that he may present to God a heart of wisdom. Hopefully we are "**Redeeming the Time**" by becoming more aware of how we spend our "free" time. As we take a close inventory of our life, may it be that we end up presenting to our Lord the heart of wisdom that He intended for us to have.

MOTIVATE

** Frequently Jesus would teach the multitudes with parables (as God's design for reaching the elect, Matthew 13:10-11) and this series will be based completely upon those parables. Over the next five weeks we hope to learn the secrets of "Redeeming the Time" which are contained in the parables of Jesus.

Our studies together will teach us about:

FAITHFUL SERVICE - Luke 12:35-48

FERTILE SOIL - Matthew 13:1-23

FORGIVING SAINTS - Matthew 18:21-35

FAIR SALARIES - Matthew 19:27-20:16

FIVE SINNERS - Matthew 25:1-13

** For today, how can we use "**Faithful Service**" to our Lord as a means to "**Redeeming the Time**"?

Let's turn together to the gospel of Luke and in chapter 12, verses 35-48, we will learn three specific truths that when applied to our life will help us to redeem the time for our Lord's sake.

Read passage - (V.35-37) (V.38-41) (V.42-44) (V.45-48)

Opening Prayer

Faithful Service

INVESTIGATE

V.35 ** We don't get very far into this verse before we learn the first profound truth in Scripture relative to redeeming the time. Do you see it?

1) "**Be dressed in readiness...**" Lit. "Let your loins be girded", Jesus is saying that we are going to have to be ready for the battle. When one was about to be challenged with a life threatening situation, he would take the long tunic from down around his ankles and draw it up about his waste to help his legs to be free to support him and move him as became necessary. Jesus was telling His followers to be ready, for whatever might come!

** What really dresses us in readiness? What clothing is it that the Christian is wearing, which makes him or her ready to meet their returning master?

The clothing of His righteousness.

All see - Romans 13:13-14, Ephesians 4:20-24 and Galatians 3:27

** Now back in Luke 12, what do we do once we are ready in our righteous clothing?

Let our light shine or "keep your lamps alight". This parable works in concert with our Lord's literal teaching in Matthew 5:16.

V.36 ** Alright if we want to redeem the time we must first be ready with a life that reflects the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the world around us. Secondly, what are we doing?

2) We are waiting!!! "Be like men waiting for their master..."

** What do you notice about who these men are waiting for?

This is personal, it is "their" master for whom they wait.

** What will happen the moment their master knocks on the door?

They will "immediately open the door to him". How often do you get a surprise knock at the door and then scramble to pick up the living room before you open it? Our life, if it is going to redeem the time, must be waiting for and anticipating the return of our Lord.

cf. 2Peter 3:11-12, 1John 3:2-3

V.37 ** Ok, we are ready, we are waiting, finally what must we be to most effectively redeem the time?

3) We must be faithful! "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert..."

Our faithfulness day in and day out, is the measure of how we use the time that we have for the glory of the Lord. The apostle Paul spoke much about this issue, remember 1Corinthians 4:2, "it is required of stewards that one be found **trustworthy**." And his instructions to Timothy in 2Timothy 2:2 to entrust the gospel to "**faithful**" men repeats the same concept.

** How is the Lord going to respond to our faithfulness?

Most incredibly, He is going to serve us! Here the parable refers to the time in the future when God rewards our faithfulness by actually serving us. cf. Revelation 19:6-9, 1Corinthians 4:5

V.38 ** When might we expect the Lord to come?

We have absolutely no idea! We do not know what time of day, or for that matter which day that we will meet the Lord face to face.

** What is the status of the servant who is found to be faithful when his master comes?

Again, he is blessed!

V.39 ** What do we know for sure about our actions, if they were to be based upon a timely and known schedule?

If we knew the day and hour to be prepared, we would be. However, since we do not know, we must labor earnestly to always be prepared.

V.40 ** How does that warning to the homeowner apply to us?

Exactly the same! We "too" must be ready, "for the Son of Man [Jesus] is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

V.41 ** What is Peter's problem with understanding this parable?

He does not know how broad the application is for the truth that Jesus is teaching.

V.42 ** To answer Peter's question, Jesus tells another parable. This time what is the first characteristic noted of the servant in the parable?

Again, the "**faithful**" servant, here also referred to as sensible.

** What is his job?

His master puts him in charge of feeding and caring for the other slaves, a position of importance and great responsibility.

V.43 ** Before we see the outcome of this story, what jobs has Christ given you to do? Can you name them as they apply to your life specifically?

For myself - Husband, father, provider, protector, friend, witness, teacher, admonisher, encourager, proclaimer, vessel for His glory.

** If the slave is faithfully doing the job when his master comes, how will he feel about it?

The slave or servant of Christ, will be blessed and not ashamed at His coming.
cf. 1Peter 4:15-16

V.44 ** What will be his reward?

Because he was faithful with the charge of caring for the master's servants, the slave is now given oversight over all of the master's possessions.

Our heavenly reward is our capacity to worship, praise and serve the Lord for all of eternity. That reward is based upon the faithfulness in our service to Christ in this life!

All see - Matthew 16:27 and 1Corinthians 3:10-15

V.45 ** Now back in Luke 12:45, what happens if the slave of this parable thinks he has time to kill, what impact will that have on his obedience?

He will begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat the food that was meant for them! His lack of redeeming the time and his incredible wasting of time has led him into sin.

V.46 ** While he is maliciously misusing the time that his master has given him, what rather shocking event takes place?

The master comes home!

** Did the slave have any idea that his master was about to come home?

No! He came "on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know..."

** What tragic thing happens to the slave?

The one who had been given a noble job, is cut in pieces and assigned a place with the unbelievers.

** What is happening here? Is this a Christian who just did not do a good enough job?

God forbid! This is the hypocrite, the fraud, the unbeliever who goes to church for sordid gain. This is the person who wants public recognition, money, popularity for their religious efforts. They can act pious, but their heart is far from knowing God. cf. Matthew 7:21-23, Acts 19:13-16

V.47 ** How severe is the punishment for those individuals who understand the truth about God but fail to "get ready" by giving their hearts to Him in obedience?

He "shall receive many lashes..."

V.48 ** What about the person who does not understand as well, all that God wants from His creation? What will become of him, even if he does things that are worse than the hypocrite we just saw?

He "will receive but few [lashes]".

** What is this parable teaching us about eternal punishment of the ungodly?

It is unique, personalized and varies from one person to the next. None of it, though, would ever be considered desirable, in the light of eternal heaven and glory.
cf. Matthew 10:15, Matthew 11:21-24

** As we bring this parable to a close, what sobering reminder do we learn that should compel us to redeem the time?

1) "...from everyone who has been given much shall much be required..." Remember, that is both the saved and the unsaved!

2) If you have been entrusted with much on behalf of the Lord, it is only the beginning. He will continue to "ask all the more" until the day He comes for us.

EXTRICATE

** What is it that we should want to present to our Lord, according to Moses?

"...a heart of wisdom..." that redeems the time!

DELINEATE

** What were the three specific truths that when applied to our life will help us to redeem the time for the Lord's sake, by offering Him "**Faithful Service**"?

We need to:

1) **Be ready** - clothed in His righteousness

2) **Be waiting** - for His return, while living a holy lifestyle.

3) **Be faithful** - so that when He comes, He finds us doing the job that He has given us to do!

EVALUATE

** How do you think you are doing? Of course we are mainly focusing on "**Redeeming the Time**", but even in the little things, are you doing the job that Jesus has given you to do?

If not, make a short list of things that you would like to improve upon this week. Then go back to that list in prayer as you talk to the Lord about your desire to serve Him faithfully.

ACTIVATE

** Today we have begun to understand that "**Redeeming the Time**" is a serious and specific call of God that we must faithfully answer. Let's pray together now and ask Him to strengthen us to do His will, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Closing prayer