

Parables About Readiness

by Tricia Berg

Today, I noticed some similarities between the Parable of the Ten Virgins (in Matthew) and the Parable of the Foolish Builder (in Luke). Neither had prepared ahead for what would be needed. The foolish virgins had not thought about how the bridegroom could be delayed and so they should have brought along more oil for their lamps like the wise virgins did, just in case. The foolish builder miscalculated the cost to complete his project. Neither were prepared like the wise virgins were.

*"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.** As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.***

(Continuing on in Matthew 25, for context):

14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here

I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:1-30

Let's also go back to the last part of Matthew 24 for context, as we'll find it matches what Jesus is saying in other parables:

*"But concerning that **day and hour no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. **Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.** But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must **be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not **expect**. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? **Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.** But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant 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 put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:36-51*

Next, Luke 14:25-35:

*Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. **For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?** Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**"*

The context of each parable is very interesting as well. As we know, context is everything! What else does Jesus discuss at the same time? In Matthew, He starts in Matthew 24 by discussing the importance of being ready, continuing with a similar parable in Matthew 25. He then tells another parable about what we are supposed to be doing while waiting for Him to return—how He has given us each gifts to invest in the growth and “profit” of His kingdom. The one who didn’t use what he was given, but kept it hidden away was like someone who hides their light under a bushel. Jesus is NOT happy with them. ALL of us (His servants) are given gifts for His glory. The more we use them for building His kingdom, the more gifts He will give us for use in our work in His vineyard (and we are permitted to make requests for provision and wisdom if we do so wisely and with confidence that He hears and answers our prayers - James 1:5-8, 4:1-4), the happier He will be with our service, the greater His harvest will be and the greater our reward will be in eternity (although I think that since our treasure is where our heart is, we will be fully satisfied to be in Jesus’ presence forevermore). (1Corinthians 12:4-11, Mark 4:21-25, Galatians 6:9-10, Deuteronomy 16:16-17, Mark 12:41-44, 1Thessalonians 4:17)

In Luke, He talks about very challenging subjects like renouncing all we have to be His disciple, loving Him more than anyone or anything, and being the salt of the earth (which preserves food—we can also think of it as truth—Jesus is the Bread of Life and the way and the truth; and enhances the taste of food, which again, is life—without it we can’t survive, and without spiritual bread, we can’t

be born again to eternal life). (Mark 9:49-50, Leviticus 2:13, Hebrews 13:15-16, Romans 12:1-2, John 6:63)

Jesus ends in Luke with "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Where else do we see that? Well, for one instance, He uses this language in the Parable of the Weeds and the surrounding discussion. He makes it clear that only the children of God (the grain planted by the field owner) will inherit the kingdom, not everyone (the tares sown by the enemy). He also discusses how NOTHING is more valuable than the kingdom. This should be our attitude as well!

*Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. **He who has ears, let him hear.** The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." Matthew 13:36-52*

Another time Jesus used the phrase about "ears to hear" was in the Parable of the Sower:

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out

to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. And he said, **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."** And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. **If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.**" And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such

parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything. Mark 4:1-34

In some of the parables, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a field and harvest, just as the Feasts of the Lord center around the farming cycle. Each crop had its own offering of firstfruits. Jesus fulfilled the firstfruits of barley when He rose from the dead. (1Corinthians 15:20-23) We are a kind of firstfruits because we, even Gentile believers, are included among those to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit who arrived at Pentecost, making up the body of Christ during this age. (Romans 8:23, 2Thessalonians 2:13-15, Acts 10:45, James 1:18, Ephesians 4:15-16, Hebrews 3:6) We are also saved first because of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, whereas they will receive mercy because of the mercy shown to us. (Romans 11:25-32, Matthew 21:28-32) Those Jews who have not become members of the body of Christ made up of both Jew and Gentile during this age have been blinded/hardened of heart, but that will change when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

We must interpret Scripture in light of this information, letting the Bible interpret itself, in order to understand properly. Don't just get your information from YouTube or simply "take sides" with your favorite Bible teacher. Likewise, in the parables, Jesus presents the same message in different ways so that we can be sure that we have "gotten it." If we listen to the devil instead of Him, then we do not "have an ear to hear." His sheep know His voice and follow HIM, not a stranger and not someone who claims to know Him but contradicts Him. (John 10:1-29, 2Corinthians 11:1-4, Matthew 7:15-20, 2Timothy 3:6-12, 2Peter 2:1-3, Jude 1)

There is a slightly different context related to us in Luke's account of the Parable of the Sower:

*And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**" And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' Now the parable is this: The seed is the*

*word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing **fall away**. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and **their fruit does not mature**. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and **bear fruit with patience**. No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." Luke 8:4-21*

Jesus teaches that His family consists of those who hear the word of God and DO IT (which matches all of the other teachings that it is of no use at all to only HEAR the word and go on as before hearing it). (James 2:14-26) There is no use to having a lamp that is not GIVING LIGHT. (Philippians 2:14-16) (Again, doesn't that remind you of the foolish virgins with NO OIL to keep their lamps LIT?) And being associated with someone who believes will not save anyone, just as the wise virgins could not provide oil for the foolish virgins. Our bodies and families are both gifts from God to enjoy in this temporary lifetime. What (or who) we choose to cling to most tightly will affect eternity. If we are fearful of suffering for Jesus' sake, not trusting His perfect will for us, that will be to our future shame. If we love someone more than Him (including ourselves), such that we desire to please them more than Jesus—compromising on the truth, being drawn away from serving Jesus with our whole heart, etc., we will be mortified when we stand before Him and fully realize that He gave ALL for us. (Romans 8:16-18, Luke 14:26, John 10:17-18, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1John 2:26-29)

Jesus speaks to those with "an ear to hear" in the letters to the churches in Revelation 2, 3 as well. These contain both very serious warnings and very great promises. He loves us and wants us to receive what we believe we have been promised by overcoming this world as He did. (Hebrews 10:36-39, James 1:12, John 16:33, Hebrews 6:10-18, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10) It brings Him great joy to bestow rewards upon us that reflect how our lives honored Him above all.

*"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.** Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'*

*"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers** will not be hurt by the second death.'*

*"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore **repent.** If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'*

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you

tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only **hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end,** to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'** Revelation 2:1-29

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. **Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.** Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. **The one who conquers** will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. "'I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about **patient endurance,** I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. **Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers,** I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall

he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**'

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. **The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**"' Revelation 3:1-22

The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Revelation 21:7-8

Jesus warned the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane that they would fall away from Him that very night. He also asked them to keep watch with Him while He prayed, but they kept falling asleep. Doesn't that sound like the Parable of the Ten Virgins? (They were ALL waiting for the bridegroom, Jesus, and they ALL fell asleep.) Jesus said the mind is willing, but the flesh is weak. We know that it's imperative that we keep our faith strong in order to overcome the flesh. (Ephesians 6:10-20) Does it ever amaze you how wise our wonderful Lord is—how He has given us the answers to ALL of our questions before we even ask them? It does me!

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "**You will all fall away because of me this night.** For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall

away." Jesus said to him, **"Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."** Peter said to him, **"Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"** And all the disciples said **the same.** Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and **watch with me.**" And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them **sleeping.** And he said to Peter, **"So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he came and found them **sleeping,** for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, **"Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand,** and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand." While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." Matthew 26:30-48

Jesus told many parables dealing with readiness. Will we heed His warnings to keep our lamps burning and stay awake? Will we be ready when He returns? Will we be overcomers? (Luke 18:7-8)

*"And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. **But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit.**"* 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. 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. **Whether he comes in the second**

watch, or even in 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?" 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 that slave 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 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.** Luke 12:29-48

He said whoever listens to Him will also listen to those He sends. Let's be wise and "have an ear to hear." Let's follow the Shepherd's voice if we claim to belong to His flock, not taking advice or following the example of those who are lost. (Matthew 15:13-19, 2Corinthians 2:14-17, Hebrews 12:28-13:9, 3John 1:11)

"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me." Luke 10:16

And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.** Hebrews 10:24-25

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