

Bible Studies for Life: May 22

Keep Serving Faithfully • Matthew 24:42-51

By Lee Faler



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It is so easy to become infatuated with eschatology (the study of end times). I've seen it, and perhaps you have as well. Many well-meaning Christians become so absorbed with studying the signs of Jesus' return, like nuances in Revelation and the latest prophecy blogs, that they miss out on what He wants to do in them and through them in the present.

As we know from previous lessons, Jesus does not want us to be ignorant concerning His return but we cannot forsake our mission to make sure that the rest of the world is ready spiritually for His return!

While we study the Second Coming of Christ, we must remember that there are billions in our world who have never even heard of the first coming of Christ! Our eschatology fuels our mission! Christ's return should compel us to serve Him faithfully! Why should we do this?

First, we should keep serving faithfully because we do not know the exact timing of Jesus' return. In verse 42, Jesus tells the disciples to "stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." The application is clear, isn't

it? Followers of Christ cannot afford to fall victim to spiritual laziness or apathy.

If we knew the exact time and hour of Jesus' return, we would stay awake and be on our guard at all times as Jesus illustrates in verses 42-42. The fact is we don't know when He is returning, just that He is!

Because of this we must live in a constant state of spiritual alertness! We cannot grow weary in our service because the eternal destination of those around us is at stake. Heaven is too glorious and hell too horrific for us to quit now! We must be ready at all times.

Secondly, we should keep serving faithfully because the Lord honors obedience. In verses 45-47 Jesus calls those servants faithful, wise, and blessed who are found faithfully serving upon the return of their master. I don't know about you, but I want Jesus to be able to use those adjectives about me!

Jesus then alludes to a time of honor for the faithful servant during which the servant will be entrusted with more responsibility. The calling on our lives from these verses is abundantly clear! Serve Jesus faithfully as the day of His return approaches.

Finally, we should serve faithfully because the way we serve Jesus speaks more about our relationship with Him than we realize. After speaking to the disciples about the reward for faithful servants, Jesus then warns them concerning condemnation for faithless servants. In verses 48-49, He paints a picture of the servant who lives convinced that the master will not return.

Once convinced, the servant begins to live for his own pleasures by dining extravagantly, drinking excessively, and beating his fellow servants immensely. He lives as if his actions do not matter, and as if he will never be called to account for them.

Imagine his surprise when the master returns unexpectedly, is not pleased at all with the actions of the faithless servant, and enacts punishment that is both severe and deserved. The point of the faithless servant is clear: the urgency (or lack thereof) in our service reveals the true condition of our hearts.

Please don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not for a moment saying that we are saved by our works. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We cannot add anything to His grace, nor should we take anything away from His grace.

What I am saying is that if we truly trust in Christ for our salvation and He has changed our lives, then there should be an urgency in our service. As we eagerly await His return, we urgently labor to see lives changed by the same grace that transformed us.

His grace doesn't stop with us, friends, but rather flows through us. A life poured out in faithful service to Jesus is a normal response to the extravagant grace we have experienced.

We may not know all of the details concerning the how, when, or what of the return of Christ, and that's OK. We do know that He is returning and that is enough. May the certainty of His return in the future fuel our mission for today, and let's serve Him until we see Him.

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