

Title: YOU MUST BE READY, LUKE 12:35-48.
(Chatham, NJ; 08/08/10, AM) [Pc – Exegesis]

Theme: Anticipation of and preparation for Jesus' return demands vigilance and good stewardship of what God has entrusted to us.

Purpose: To exhort us to be alert and ready despite what seems to be a long wait for Christ's return.

Introduction:

1. Jesus taught us about the Kingdom and about preparation for his return.
2. Lightening your ties to this world and strengthening your ties to the next is a significant part of that teaching (12:32-34).
3. Worldly possessions become an encumbrance, something that weighs us down and crowds out our desire for Kingdom living (the weeds in the Parable of the Sower).
4. Our hearts' desires (34) also play a role in readiness and anticipation.
5. Jesus now addresses readiness.

I. Stay Dressed, Keep the Lights On (Two chairs: one with messy clothes, one with neat piles or in suitcases).

A. The Passover Picture.

1. Deliverance and salvation were at hand.
2. Israel was dressed and ready to travel, Ex. 12:11.
3. An enduring image of anticipation and preparation
4. Was it humanly possible to sleep that night?
5. Anticipation was at a fever pitch.

B. How do we stay dressed with the lights on?

1. Pray daily. There is no better way to keep yourself alert to spiritual matters. Paul associates alertness with prayer, Eph. 6:18.
2. Love one another! Nothing indicates communion with God more, John 13:34-35.
3. Humble yourselves before God, 1 Peter 5:6-8.
4. The rest of what he says explains further how we must keep ready.

II. Be Ready, Anticipate (Devote yourself to doing good. We must not grow weary, Gal. 6:9.)

A. Anticipating the master's return.

1. Old RCA logo shows a dog hearing "his master's voice" through the megaphone.
2. Jesus portrays the men in his model as those who are attuned to and alert for the return of their master.
3. They are keeping watch so that when he returns, they can open the door for him (vs. 36).
4. Ironically the master serves them (37). This is not the usual arrangement of things in a household.
5. However, it demonstrates the reward that God will give the faithful.

B. Anticipating the thief

1. This illustrates a different kind of readiness and anticipation.
2. A more heightened awareness because of danger (1 Peter 5:8)
3. The degree of uncertainty demands more of us.
4. Jesus will come when we do not expect him: the Second Coming.
5. And like the foolish rich man, he may come to each of us individually.

III. The Picture of Faithfulness...and Its Opposite.

- A. Providing for others. Do good, not evil.
 - 1. The faithful and wise manager
 - 2. Joseph earns the respect of Potiphar as well as the jailor in Genesis.
 - 3. He practices good stewardship over what is entrusted to him.
 - 4. Integrity and prudence characterize such a man.
 - 5. Not only does he care for the master's goods but for the master's other servants.
 - 6. Because he is trustworthy, he will be entrusted with even more, 44.

- B. The unfaithful manager.
 - 1. He cares for his own pleasures, not for the needs of others.
 - 2. He abuses the other servants; he indulges his appetites.
 - 3. His punishment is severe: cut in pieces, put with the unfaithful.

- C. Much is required.
 - 1. Much is expected of those to whom much is given.
 - 2. More is demanded from the one to whom much is entrusted.
 - 3. We dare not betray the sacred trust of whatever God has given us.

Conclusion:

- 1. "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home."
- 2. Such is Jesus' counsel to the disciples.
- 3. Readiness is like a pair of shoes in the spiritual armor, Eph. 6:15.
- 4. The midnight watch can be a lonely one; don't let the loneliness defeat you.
- 5. Keep watch. Jesus is coming soon.