

Wise & Faithful Servant

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: Jesus has been asked some very important questions. The disciples asked Him tell us about the future of Jerusalem, what's going to happen, when are these things going to happen. They said tell us when you will come. We want to know about the end of the age. For a believer our hope is not the things that happen in our life now. Our hope is set in eternity, and life is an apprenticeship.



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I want you to open your Bible with me, in Matthew, Chapter 24, Verse 45 through to Verse 51. I've been sharing a series of messages over two weeks and these messages have been along the theme of partnership so we can expand the kingdom in a much greater way. I've had quite some good feedback of people really enjoying what I've shared so I want to just pick up and I'm going to do two more. I'll have a slightly different direction or flow in it, but I want to stimulate and stir our thinking significantly.

So what I want to do is ask the question, who then is a wise - or a faithful and a wise servant? So let's read in Verse 45 and Jesus is speaking; Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food or meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, My master delays his coming and begins to beat his fellow servants, eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of the servant will come on a day when he's not looking for him, at an hour he's not aware of, will cut him two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So before we try to look in and see what that might mean and how it might apply we need to see what the whole context of it is. Jesus has been asked some questions. They're very important questions. The disciples asked Him tell us about the future of Jerusalem or what's going to happen or when are these things going to happen and they said tell us when you will come. We want to know about your coming and we want to know about the end of the age. For a believer our hope is not the things that happen in our life now. Our hope is set in eternity. Your life is very small compared to eternity. Your life is an apprenticeship for eternity, so whatever assignment you have in life now is small compared to the assignment you have in eternity.

So God always wants us to live with eternity in mind and so Jesus begins to answer and He talks about some of the signs of the end times. I don't want to go into that today - and He talks a little bit about the nation of

Israel. Then He begins to talk and begin share three parables and all the parables are connected to one another and He shares also one other story or event that happens. So the first He talks about is the parable of the wise servant. Then the second one He talks about is the parable of the wise virgins, then the third parable He goes to is on the faithful servant and finally He talks about the nations being judged.

Now all of them have this in common, very simple; they all span history from Jesus' first coming to a second coming, so they're prophetic. Not one of them has been fulfilled in its entirety yet. We are living in the middle part of the parables. That's the first thing to see. They have application for today which I want to show you what that is.

Second thing to see is that each of the parables brings out something different. This parable we're going to talk about is about how you relate to the house of God. It's a very important one - your attitude to God's people. It's about whether we will love God's people or not. The second parable is about whether we'll love the Lord or not. It's about intimacy with the Lord. The oil with the virgins was about intimacy, the oil speaks of the anointing or flow of the Holy Spirit gained by intimacy with the Lord. The third parable is about the servants in the talents and it's about productive serving, that you make your life count and then finally the fourth one involves the separation of the nations and it's essentially about practical love. Did you love people? Did you express it in a practical way? Did you get involved in social justice issues? Did you engage with the needs in the community and in the world?

Now here's an interesting thing about it, is that all of them are evaluated. In other words in all four, Jesus comes and evaluates people. You have to understand how we live our life is really important to Jesus. The kind of life you live is important to Him and we have to understand that every one of us, He will evaluate our life. Now if you're not a Christian then you're on a different playing field altogether in that God's desire for you is to come to know Him as your saviour, to receive His grace and love into your life, to acknowledge what He's done for you and to begin a new life with Him. But if you're a believer then it's a different deal; now we have a life with God we are responsible to be productive. This is what will honour and glorify the Father that we're fruitful, so this is why fruitful is a very important thing. So here's the interesting thing is that one, everyone is

evaluated; two, everyone experiences consequences. It's an enviable law of the kingdom you can choose to do whatever you wish, however you will have consequences. So everyone experiences consequences - and the third thing is that the consequences involve either reward and great gain in the future, or they result in loss of some kind. Now Jesus speaks right through - His message from the beginning of the book to the end of the book is consistently about the kingdom of God. Now most people, most Christians and people particularly in the western world, when they think about this whole area of the kingdom and think about Christianity, they think primarily in terms of getting into heaven. We're into heaven - we're not into heaven. The Jews would think of it completely different. They're not thinking about heaven at all, so when Jesus' talking about the kingdom they're thinking about the kingdom on earth. They're thinking about the nation being changed. They're thinking about Jerusalem and Israel being the centre of the world and a new global government in which Jesus is the king.

So who's right? Actually both are. Each was revealed a portion that's a bit different. If you look at Jesus' ministry and His teaching, He consistently emphasised one thing and that is the message of the kingdom; how to live in the kingdom, the values of the kingdom, how to relate to the king and then He talks about through parables and various teaching, about the life of the king and much of it He teaches about when that kingdom comes and what it will look like. And that's something that's well worthwhile doing some looking into - so let's pick it up and first of all just summarise what we learnt in the last time.

The last time around we looked at the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds and we found several things; number one, God invites us all to be great, so greatness is the call - oh, He calls us to be great and we become great through serving. The second thing we saw was - in the message the last couple of weeks - is that everyone is given an assignment. You're given gifts, you're given grace, you're given opportunity, you're given a life, you're given freedom to choose. We have an assignment of God. Everyone has an assignment, something God wired just you to do, something He prepared beforehand just for you to do. So don't look at the person next to you and compare yourself. It's irrelevant, because what God has is for you and it suits you perfectly.

You're not required to copy someone else or be someone else. You can't. You're required to be an original and discover what God wired you to do and then get busy doing it and find a great and fulfilling life fulfilling the course of God. The third thing we saw was this, that all of the servants of God will be evaluated for their service. That's not about whether you get into heaven or hell or anything like that - got nothing to do with that. It's got to do with about do you qualify for promotion? It's as simple as that - or will you stay at a low level and will you just be content with far less than what Jesus had for you? You can imagine - I remember it was an interesting thing that when we were working with Uganda we had about \$60,000 in the bank at one point and I was just longing to put it in John's hands but he wasn't ready for it and it was the first time I felt this thing in my heart what it's like for God who's got so much to give to us but you can't put it in the person's hands unless they're actually able to handle it. They just will fail. It will ruin them, so your generosity can ruin someone if they haven't grown in the capacity to manage what they have and as Brian was saying, faithful in small, and faithful in great.

Okay then, so let's have a look at this story here and we'll read this story; Who's the faithful and wise servant whom the master made ruler over his household to give food in due season? Blessed is the servant whom his master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Let's just look at that part there, so the first thing is it's a picture of an Oriental household and so we don't tend to think of servants and slaves, but when you go to the Middle East and into Asia they have house servants and wherever you go there's servants. It's great. Even my son and daughter in Indonesia got servants. They'd come home, we got to say hey, wake up guys - we aren't your servants ... [Laughter] ... and there are no servants in New Zealand, okay? Not in terms of having someone run around the house doing something for you. You've got to pull your weight, pick up stuff after you, clean up your mess and take part in the responsibilities of the house - but over in Indonesia they quite like it because they got two people as servants and one does all the cooking and one does all the housework and what a life! So anyway, there it is. So they got servants but they pay them something for it - and so this is a picture of an Oriental household and every one of the servants has got a responsibility in the household. Everyone's got responsibility in the household and so you notice here it says the master has made the person ruler over his household, to give them their food in due season - so the words 'make a ruler' means to

appoint a person to a role or a function, to give them something to do in other words.

So - get the picture here - it's a master of a household. It's a household full of servants and each one of the servants is given an assignment, something to do with their life, something - a duty, a responsibility to discharge, right, got the idea? And the servant there is one who gives himself to the world. Interesting the word servant here is the word [doulos. 00.10.11] Remember when I shared the scripture on what Jesus said it took to be great? He said if you want to be great become a servant - [diarcena, 00.10.22] meaning literally a servant - but if you want to be the greatest, become [doulos, 00.10.27] the servant of all. So now what He's saying is this person is a person who's in the household of the master, he's got a personal assignment and he's got a life of loyalty to his master's wishes and intentions. That's the picture that's created, so anyone who understood what he was saying would know - they'd think of a household, a big household, many servants, people who are totally dedicated to fulfilling the master's wishes and every one of them's got a job and an assignment to fulfil and then the master goes away and comes back and checks them out.

Now what is the job the servant has got to do? Let's have a look at the servant first of all, because - good servant there - and here's a couple of things for us to see. The first thing is this; his responsibility was to give them their meat in due season. Well I read that a little bit and I think goodness me, what on earth does that all mean? And then I started to realise, I just looked at what the intention behind it is this, very simply it's this; he's calling on every servant to provide nourishment to the household and it's to be in due season or with the right timing, so you've got two things that they're called to do. Each servant has got a responsibility to provide something that'll build up the household and it's to be in due season, so that means timeliness. In other words it's not just a grinding on service. It's actually spirit-led, spirit-empowered serving, so putting it altogether the Bible tells us we are members of the household of God and every one of us are servants of the living God and everyone of us has a responsibility to the household of God to give meat in due season; in other words to be led by the Holy Spirit, to nourish and build up other believers.

See, what happens is the church has moved over generations from being a community or a family or a household, into something like an organisation and meetings. This is not what God has in mind. Neither is it what He's speaking of here. He's speaking of a household of the master, so He's talking about the church He's building. He's talking about the people of God and how every one of us is responsible to nourish, build up and provide for others out of what God has given us, being led by the spirit. Really quite simple isn't it?

Now you say well I don't have much. Well no, no, no, you've got a testimony, you've got giftings in your life, you can flow in prophetic, you have got heaps to build someone up and so if you think about it the householder is Jesus Christ and we're the servants of the household. He's made it very clear what our job is to do. It is to go make disciples. It's to build up people and it's to increase His household and then there's about 31 different statements where it says love one another, forgive one another, be kind to one another, be tender hearted to one another, have grace with one another, minister the gift to one another - all the one anothers are giving meat in due season. You can't do it alone. It requires being connected in relationships, so when we have what we call a small group it's just a group of people gathered together with a particular purpose in mind and one of that is that they build up one another. Everyone is called to build the church.

The moment in your heart you draw back from that, you miss then what one of the significant things Jesus taught about the end times, so He talked about the wise and the faithful servant and this is what the servant does; he gives meat in due season. In Romans 12, 3 to 8 it says we, being many, are one body in Christ, members of one another. We belong to one another. You can't get away from it. God puts us in a church together to help one another, strengthen one another. We all need one another. I need others. I've got a group that I connect with and they help me too. Everyone needs others to help them grow and help them build. In 1 Corinthians 12:18, God has set the members each one in the body just as according to His pleasure and He's given you gifts to build up the church. That's what He said, so you notice there, you know, as we take what God has given us and intentionally under the leading of the Holy Spirit work to build, bless, encourage, strengthen, develop, help others - for some it may be just in a practical way, but all of us can do something

to encourage another person and build up another person. And He said blessed is that servant who is doing that when the Lord comes - and that's a bit of a trick because we don't know when He's coming. Because we don't know when He's coming you've got to have a bit of a think about how you're going to run your life, because most people think He's not coming soon. Oh, might be 10 years, 20 years, who knows? Five years? But what He's saying is you'll never know. You'll only know the signs in the world, but you won't know so the key thing is what are you doing today?

What you're doing today is actually what you're doing. Should He come right now would He find you being the wise servant, the faithful servant who is giving meat to His household in due season - in other words, led by the Holy Spirit and working to invest in the lives of people? Now you notice interestingly the next two - He calls this one the wise and faithful servant; the next parable is about what it means to be wise and it talks about intimacy with the Lord and gaining the anointing and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit, but in the third parable He talks about what it is to be faithful and that's taking what you've got and using it to advance the kingdom of God in various ways. Okay, are we getting it? So let's move on.

So it says when He comes - now you'll notice here he's got his assignment. Now the thing is there's a reward associated with the assignment. When he comes if he finds him doing that - so here's the thing; whether you're alive or whether you're not - whether you're dead at the coming of the Lord, everyone gets evaluated. Everyone has an opportunity to receive something. This is the most amazing thing and the Bible is over and over and over and over again it keeps restating it, in various pictures, various forms, various ways. It's absolutely wonderful. It's actually a great hope for you and why as a believer you need to stay on fire and passionate for you for eternity, there's a lot at stake. Now here's the thing; if you don't know what's at stake it won't mean much to you and that's the problem is we don't tend to know what's at stake. So let's have a look. Notice what it says - it gives a clue to it here. It says he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Now who is the ruler here? It's Jesus Christ. All his goods. That's got to be a lot. All authority in heaven and earth he said is given to me. All his

goods is everything. If you can see it it's his, the whole universe is his, so we think oh well, so what? What's the deal? Let's just go through and have a look what the deal will be and I want to help you just shift and see a few things. Now you notice then that each of the servants in the three different parables are rewarded, so in here he's made ruler over all His goods. With the parable of the virgins, they enter into the marriage feast or which communion is a picture of one day - you see every time you have communion, have something to eat and drink, it's a picture that one day there is a great banqueting feast with the Lord - but you've got to qualify for it.

Well come on. It's just not - nothing's automatic. The invitation's there. The call is there. How we deal with our life is our responsibility. We've got to choose how we'll respond, so in the third one what's at stake is he said I will make you ruler over little - now ruler over much, in the parable in Luke 19, ruler over little, ruler over 10 cities so let's get a picture now of what is at stake for you. I can't give it all in one session because it's far too vast. There's too much in the Bible about it, but we'll open up a little bit today and see if we can just get a bit worked out with you. So in Revelations, Chapter 20, so go to Revelations, Chapter 20, alright? This is an event yet to come. This is the future. I hope I'd see it in my lifetime, it's fantastic if it does - however, the more I've looked at it the more shaky I've got. I thought dear Lord Jesus, I need to repent. I have. I was repenting this morning as I was preparing the message. Oh Lord Jesus, oh whoa whoa whoa ... [Laughter] ... why? Because you suddenly gain eternal perspective. Every time you gain eternal perspective it shifts how you think about what you're doing and how you live, so we need to get eternal perspective and this is not easy to put all this out so I'll just put some out so you've got some bites of it and that'll just get us - steam up our thinking a little bit.

So Revelations 20, Verse 1; I saw an angel - now this is John in the spirit on the Lord's day getting vision of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, so don't get thinking the book of Revelation is full of beasts and antichrists and stuff. That's not the main focus of it. The book is the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ and a coming kingdom. That's what the book is really about. The others are part of it of course, an important part. Now - I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hands. An angel with a key and a chain - and

then what does he do? He laid hold on the dragon, the serpent of old who's the devil and Satan, bound him a thousand years, cast him in the bottomless pit, shut him up, set a seal on him that he should deceive the nations no more 'til the thousand years were finished. And then after that he's released a little while.

So notice, it's not even God that does this. He just sends an angel to deal with the devil. So that changes your thinking about who's got the power. Sometimes we think man, the devil's really strong and he's fired. God's fighting against him. No! The devil's just limited and Jesus already has provided everything we need for our salvation and so at the right timing God sends an angel, said here's your mission, go down there, chain him all up and all his mates and pop them down there and put a cap on them for a thousand years. That's how quickly it's over.

And it says what the devil's doing at the moment, the devil is deceiving the nations. That means behind all of the activities you see in the earth in every city, every town and every village, there is a spiritual world which is influencing what goes on in that city and town and village; that there is a structure of governance in the spirit world, demonic structure that is influencing the decisions that are made. Then it tells us that - Ephesians 2, the whole world walks according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is working in the children of disobedience - so one of the reasons we have such problems in the world is the influence of demonic structures in the spirit world. So what He's saying effectively is this; at the beginning of a thousand years I'll send an angel down and he's going to do these things, going to do four things to him - going to grab the devil. First of all he grabs him - grabs him like that - lay hold on him. Isn't that good? - lay hold on him. You change your thinking about the devil, just an angel comes down, lays hold on him and then wrapped him up in chains, downed him for a thousand years, cast him in the bottomless pit - down you go! Just like that, he's got no - and then shut him in, closed the door, put a seal on it, he can't get out. He's just stuck, can't do a thing, thousand years. Isn't that good?

And he's sealed up so he can't do a thing. He cannot do a thing. He's sealed, seal of God's on him, he can't do a thing. He's absolutely locked up for the one thousand years - and then at the end of a thousand years

he's released for a while. So that gives us a little bit of a picture about some things that are coming up. We say coming up - suppose coming up soon, so soon there comes a point and God's plan is for heaven to come down and to come near to earth. That's why everywhere you're getting messages on heaven and earth; heaven, thy kingdom come - because God is wanting to bring heaven nearer to earth and reconnect it like it was originally connected. And so let's have a look at some of the things that are in there. Let's read on what happens - and I saw - so he saw the devil put out of the way for a while; I saw thrones and they sat on them. So not even - its thrones. It's a place of governance, it's a positioning a realm in the spirit where someone governs from - and they sat on them and judgement was committed to them. Who are they? Let's have a look - then I saw the souls of those who'd been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and the word of God, had not worshipped the beast or his image, had not received his mark on their foreheads or hands and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. So if you live for a thousand years you have to have been resurrected and so you're resurrected, your body changes. Now that raises a whole lot of things if your body is resurrected, especially if lots of other people haven't been resurrected. Now can you imagine living in a world where you live in a resurrected body like Jesus did? I mean Jesus came in and out of rooms, He ate food, they touched Him, they could feel His body. He went in - he said where does Jesus live? I don't know but He just turns up, [sound effect 00.23.43] just like that, whoa! How do you that? Quite simply, because He now freely accesses heaven and earth. He lives in heaven but can walk into the earth realm like that and then just walk out of the earth realm like that - doesn't need a bed to sleep, doesn't need a house to live in, doesn't need a motor car, doesn't need anything because He goes [sound effect 00.24.00] there He is! It's not bad is it?

So what happens if the police turn up to try and arrest him? Well they can shoot all they like. It won't make any difference a bit. He's got a resurrected body. It's not going to affect Him one little bit - so what if they try and blast Him? It's not going to affect Him. Nothing anyone does could affect Him and likewise those with the resurrected bodies. Bullets just go straight through them. [sound effect 00.24.22] Ha ha ha - try again! Go on - something bigger, you know, that kind of stuff. So this is amazing.

Now imagine that - no sickness. Other people get sick, other people are living and dying, getting old and dying through the thousand years - but you're not. You've been restored to full health and you won't be that old either. You'll be younger. You'll be restored, probably to something around about the age of 30 where your body was at its max and there you are, all that hair and teeth back ... [Laughter] ... and no creaky joints or, you know, no kind of hip replacement stuff. I'll get the teeth back. You can get rid of all those old... You'll have a restored body. Now isn't that amazing? And that's for a thousand years and then forever - but can you imagine what it'd be like living in this world, entering in and out of this world in a body like that and no one else is? Gives you a bit of a heads up on everyone doesn't it really, but there's a purpose for it - so let's have a look and we'll just summarise what some of the things are because there's a task to be done. [Laughs] I was just thinking about it - it's just awesome.

So first of all he says there a thousand years, so what's commonly called the millennium is a one thousand year period of time and it'll begin at some time and then it ends at another time, then after that there's eternity. Now there's something happens in that one thousand years, so the millennium is a one thousand year period of time when Jesus will physically appear in the earth and manifest His kingdom on the earth. That's the thing you have to understand; the prayer is constantly your kingdom come into the earth. We tend to think of 'get out of it! No, you're abandoning the kingdom assignment. So when we withdraw from the community we abandon our assignment, the eternal assignment and the current one. That's why Jesus' assignment was to go, go into the earth, make disciples, win people, build the house, advance the kingdom of God by adding people to the house, discipling them, raising them up, then releasing them to go out and advance the kingdom of God. That was the mandate so here's the first thing; it's the millennium's a thousand year period of righteousness and peace. See, no devil, so that makes a huge difference to wars and battles and things doesn't it? Second thing is the kingdom of God will manifest openly, globally, in every sphere of life. Now we see hints of it, you know, the presence of God will come and when there's a very intense meeting there'll be a great atmosphere of God, but the Bible says the whole earth will be filled with the glory so that means glory will come in and out of the earth, heaven will be really close to the earth and every sphere of life will be affected.

In South America when they had a revival and they broke down the power of the ruling spirit, the ground produced - and still to this day produces huge produce, out of proportion to anything else, huge fruits, huge vegetables. The land changes because at the moment the whole of the world is bound by this thing of Satan influencing it, producing poverty, so ground will produce in a way it's never produced before - but it's every sphere of life will be affected. It affects everywhere - the physical realm, where people live, it affects everything. The political realm will be affected, anything you see right now, no matter how unjust it is, no matter how it is in the political arena, will all change. The educational area will all change. The economic system will all change because it's unjust and it oppresses the poor. All of these things must be changed. He is going to bring His kingdom into this earth, His kingdom. Daniel saw it as a stone made without hands that rose up and became a mountain that filled the whole earth!

See, we're not talking about something little here. We're talking about something - you can't hide because it's going to be everywhere right through the earth and no one can stop it, no one can stop it and it's bad if they ever try because if they try it'll be a problem. Technology will change, families will change. Think about this; society at every level will change, education change, the legal system, law enforcement - every area of society is to be changed. We mentally think when you have a going to heaven mentality, we just think you just leave all those things behind, you go there and that's it. But he's saying no, no, no, no, no, that's only the temporary holding place. See what I really want to do is bring you here and change the earth.

Now you understand why God wants Christians to be involved in every part of society, because that was always the intention. It was always the intention. Why? Because He wants to redeem it. He's paid the price - now we can redeem it partly now, but at the coming of His kingdom it'll be properly redeemed because there'll be nothing to stop us. No one could stop us. Oh, don't you love that, isn't it aye? So God's purpose is that heaven start to become and invade earth, heaven beginning to invade earth, so that the realm of the supernatural becomes accessible and then miracles are happening in the great dimension, economic things change,

lots of things begin to change. Why? Because the supernatural dimension is coming around the earth as God always intended it.

John saw it as the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, but its heaven invading earth - something happening - now what's the crucial thing of course is what we're going to be doing there. So one of the things that we tend to think is we tend to think that somehow Jesus will just crack a wand or something, I don't know - bang a Bible or something, who knows? But we don't think about this. We kind of think that all life processes will just suddenly change. They didn't change when He came the first time. He actually came and He engaged in His culture and set about advancing the kingdom. When He comes the next time He'll not come as the lamb, He'll come as the lion and no one can resist Him. Tell you what the Bible says in a couple of places - so the natural resources or natural process is going to continue on, so guess what? The education system will continue on. Someone's going to have to get in there and change it. Law system's going to continue on, someone's going to have to get in there and change it. Political systems, they'll still continue. You can't just suddenly - ever been in a government where they lost all the government? The whole place falls to pieces. You can't change a nation by just dismantling all the authority structures. You've actually got to change the structures and that means change the people, change the thinking, change the processes.

So step one, remove the demonic influence in it so that that's not there. Now release people who are in resurrection bodies and accessing heaven, in and out of heaven, to go and begin to work to change these things, to begin to educate them how they need to set them up so justice is available for all. So there's huge things - so what'll happen is every sphere of life there'll be a change and so that means that existing leaders in areas of society will be replaced. Think about it. I'll just show you a scripture here, this scripture here in Psalm 110, notice what it says; The Lord is at your right hand - Verse 5 - He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. It says it in there. It's spiritual. He will judge among the nations - sounds like the second coming doesn't it? It says, and the places will be filled with dead bodies. And then it says, He shall execute the heads of many countries. There'll be no one resist Him. No one can resist His coming and no one can resist His purpose. The devils are out of the way, so now it's just human beings arrayed against the Lord and His anointed.

His anointed is the body of Christ, people who are serving with Him, so think about that. So what will happen then is people - someone's got to take over managing the food, water, the education, the finances, the political system, government - someone's got to actually be appointed in there to run it right and someone's got to help them make it go right and the people who'll be helping make it go right are those who have now got resurrection bodies, able to enter in and out of the earth's realm and instruct and teach and minister and empower and impart and bring heaven to earth. Isn't this extraordinary? Yeah and just think, you know, Jesus could eat food while He was here, enjoy food. He sat down and had a feed with them. That raises a whole lot of things doesn't it aye? So during the millennium period all the kings of the earth will bow down to Jesus Christ, all the kings of the earth. See, have a look in Psalm 72. You can search - there's so many scriptures, I just brought out a couple to just get you thinking down this line. Great to think about this though isn't it? Aye? Because then you've got to say well what am I doing now? And if I'm waiting for it to burn up, I haven't got the kind of attitude that would make me of any use in that day. Seventy-two, Verse 11; all kings - all kings will fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him and He will deliver the needy when He cries and the poor also that has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy and save the souls of the needy and redeem their life from oppression and violence, and precious shall be their blood in His sight. So He's talking again about the millennial kingdom, He's talking then about the attitude God has towards oppression and poverty. He will engage people. If they will not change they will be destroyed. It's very clear. You can see it in Revelations where it talks in Chapter 20 about Him coming on a white horse to make war. Now that's not nice, but He's determined that this earth, the kingdom will advance on this earth and so what you've got is you've got the period now where we're in now and that period covers two thousand years of history and it's where the servants of God prove out and run their assignment, so they prove whether they're faithful for the thousand years, during the thousand years they work with Christ to redeem the earth and bring every part back into government order, into the order of the kingdom and so there'll be a time of unprecedented productivity, creativity, blessing, peace, absence of wars, absence of conflict, everything coming to order and then when it's all in order then the end comes. They let the devil go one more time and that's when there's an

almighty battle and then there's a new heaven and a new earth and everything is delivered over to the hands of the Father.

What do the people of God do? Well they've already had the best thousand years they've ever had. Now they've got all eternity and God has got much more, probably the rest of His universe to govern. So this is not bad is it? This is pretty good. ... [Laughter] ... This is pretty good don't you think? Said the resurrected saints then will rule with Jesus, in Revelations 5, Verse 10 - let's have a look at that and so He said: you have made us priests unto our God. Get it? You have made us kings and priests to our God, we shall reign on earth. Where will we reign? ... On earth. ... On earth. We'll reign on earth. We'll reign on earth. So you can look around you and realise then that the earth we're in now, no matter how difficult it is and how upset and how much injustice and poverty or whatever, the mandate of the church is to be salt and light because one day we take it over. In 1 Corinthians it actually tells - I think 6 - He says don't you know the saints will judge the world? Judge the world? Judge the world? That means you put it into order. That means that those who do wrong are dealt with. This is a huge thing ahead of us. This is unbe-, this is amazing and scripture abounds in it. It's so great and so magnificent that Paul says Oh! Thou would anything that I might obtain unto that day and that resurrection! He said oh, run the race that you might win a prize! It's nothing to assume that we get this thing. Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne. You've got to overcome. There's some part we play in all of this now. Ooh ho ho, isn't that glorious aye? So resurrected saints will be doing all of this. So now that brings us back - we'll close up with this parable. What a great thing, so that's what's at stake. I've only given you a little bit. It's a bit inadequate, but I've given you a little glimpse of what that could look like.

Now go back into Matthew 24. We'll just finish there because we heard the wise servant was very simply the one that caught the heart of the master and actually did what the master wanted, built the household, built the household of God, took his gifts and loved on the people of God. That's what he did because he loved the master. He just applied what he had to build people. It was an intentional part of his life to do that and he was led by the Holy Spirit in it.

Now it says - there's another one there - and it says and the evil servant - now that evil servant, so it's not talking about a different person. It's talking about one servant who could be good or could be evil. In that case it's talking about all servants and we all have the potential to do this. Now notice what the servant did. The evil servant said in his heart my master delays his coming. The first thing is the heart attitude you notice. Now get this; the heart attitude is very simply this - Jesus ain't comin' soon. I got all my life ahead of me. Mate, I'm gonna have a great life and do what I want. I need God to help me get my things done. That's virtually what he's saying - not living his life carefully as though every day counted to eternity, not living his life intentionally so that he's doing something to advance the kingdom of God, to have his life count. He's just saying oh, my master delays his coming. Oh well, you know, been hearing the end-time teaching for ages, you know, one day he'll come. I guess he'll come but I don't know what'll happen after that - don't really want to know. No, no, no. There's something very important at stake and so we saw what the faithful servant got. This one then, because of his attitude the Lord delays his coming. I'll put it to you another - there's a scripture, I can't remember. It's probably in Ecclesiastes and it says something like this; when punishment is not executed speedily against an action the person's heart rises up to do more. So because we don't experience consequences for our actions - we don't always connect the consequences of our choices to the things that happen in our life, we actually become hardened and deceived. So he said, this is what he did, now notice he says the servant said oh, my master delays in coming. Oh don't worry about it, one day, you know, it's the big pie in the sky stuff, don't worry about it. I got to get on and pay my bills, do my stuff - and you see, so that's the kind of attitude. So then it says he began to beat the fellow servants. Now the fellow servants are people of the same household, so he's talking to the relationship with Christians, the relationship with other Christians. I think it can be extended to include those that God intends to add into His household too, because I think when God looks He sees the householders, not wondering what is but what is - He's already written out in our city to be, so it's actually your attitude to people.

And so it says he begins to beat them. Now that word beat is the word literally to give a slap in the face, slap 'em, or another way to put it is this; he begins to insult them or treat them in a way which is insulting. When

you don't keep commitments that is insulting. When you speak behind someone's back that's insulting to them. When you're one thing to a person's face and another thing behind, that is insulting. When you have a hidden agenda to manipulate people to get what you want, that's insulting. It doesn't treat them as a person of dignity. It actually insults their personality, their humanity.

Now there's probably lots of things we could think of which you would consider insulting. They just actually offend you and hurt you and distress you when you're treated that way. Do you realise when someone does an act of love and service and we don't express gratitude that is insulting; that when people do good and we forget it and don't remember it and honour them and value them, that is insulting. When we look at people and we see oh, how much money's that one got and what position do they work in, that is insulting.

There's many things that are extremely insulting to people, that dishonour, devalue and treat them badly. Anything that is insulting to someone else in the body of Christ, anything that insults them and offends them, comes into this category here and it's because in your heart you're saying the Lord's not coming soon, He's going to wait for a while. It didn't matter - no one saw, I'll do what I like. And people do this all the time. They never stop to think that actually heaven is watching all the time and you're positioning yourself either as that good servant who actually encourages and builds up the body of Christ, or that evil servant that actually their behaviour is destructive.

When you say you're a Christian and then go into the community and you treat people in the community and your workplace and so on in a bad way, you are insulting them, offending them and turning away from Christ. You become that servant. That's quite sobering isn't it? I couldn't get this parable out of my mind for about the last four or five days. I kept reading it, reading it, couldn't get anything out of it. It was only really last night and this morning I just started to see that God's wanting us to get a handle on what it means to mistreat - so began to beat them and then to eat and drink with the drunkards. So there two things; the first was concerning the household - bad attitude and bad treatment of believers. The second was lifestyle - eat and drink with the drunkard was literally to just have a lifestyle exactly like the world around you. You're living the

same way they do. There's no one can tell the difference between you and someone - it's not that we're not to mix with people. It's just the lifestyle is the issue and it says - the only other reference in Matthew 24 to eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah they were eating and drinking and didn't know when the flood came. They had no idea - so what he's saying in here simply is this; is that we are called to an incredibly great inheritance, eye has not seen or ear heard nor has it entered in the heart of man what things God's got prepared for those who love Him. It's absolutely extraordinary what God has ahead for us and all that we have to do is just be faithful in our part now and in this case, this particular servant here who was faithful and wise, he was wise because he looked ahead and he was faithful because he did what he needed to do, build up the body, build up the believers, build up the church, being led by the spirit to help one another.

The evil one just put it all off, said it doesn't really matter, I don't have to be accountable to anyone. I'll just do what I want to do, and then what he did was one, he began to have a bad attitude and treat the body of Christ badly and secondly, his lifestyle began to be similar to those in the community. He become no longer salt and light. He says now when the master comes guess what he does to this one? You don't want to even go there and I've tried to figure it out, but I think I need more insight on it - but notice what it says here; it says the master come to him and this is what the master did. He said - here's the first thing - the master comes when he's not looking, so here's the deal. If you live carelessly here's one thing that's absolutely certain to happen; when the Lord comes you will not know it. It'll catch you by surprise. See - what he says - come when the day's not ended and second thing you notice here is he cuts him in two. That's pretty severe isn't it? Now I don't think it's literally cutting them in half. What the cut in two referred to, how they treated severe criminals. What it means is that the treatment is quite severe because the crime is quite severe. He said he appointed him his portion with the hypocrites because he's just play acting, he's not genuine. There's no genuine love for people, no genuine love and expressions of love for the household of God; actually he's acting out a lie. He's just a Sunday person but the reality is in his heart, his actions and the way he runs his life, he's actually hurting what God is trying to build. That's what essentially it's saying.

And so it says he appoint him his portion with the unbelievers - what that means is that he will then be disqualified from his inheritance. Paul wrote and he said oh, he said I run the race that I might win. I keep my body down through prayer and fasting and I don't let my body rule me. I don't let anything rule me that I might obtain the prize.

So I encourage you to read the word of God and look for the prize, look at the prize! Look at the prize! Look at the prize! Look at the thing that has to be won ahead of us and has to be won by passionate, zealous, fiery lifestyle that loves passionately the Lord, loves people passionately and practically gets out and gets involved in ways to minister to people and build them up! What a great, exciting challenge we have ahead of us! Oh, don't look around you what anyone else is doing! Get in the word of God and see what is at stake because whether you're alive on the earth when it happens, or whether you've already gone, what you do now counts for eternity! So make your life count! Make your life count! Say God, which servant am I most like? Am I taking what I have and consciously intentionally led by the spirit to build people, or do I have negative attitudes, bad attitudes and down the line one day there's the shock of my life, He's going to come.

Oh, Father we thank you that you are leading us and helping us to see the great destiny we have. Lord we dream of the day when heaven will come to earth, when our bodies will be changed, when Lord we can engage in changing the affairs of the world. We thank you Lord even at this little extent now we've been privileged to be able sow into nations and take our part with the orphans, with social justice, with micro finance, with bringing the Gospel, with raising leaders, with teaching and educating. We thank you Lord we've been able to do a sample of it. Lord, we expect that in the days that come, Lord our influence will increase and grow, that Lord we will be involved in many different ways in changing this world to advance the kingdom of God.

God, we long for your word to be fulfilled and the day came when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, when the day came according to Daniel, when the saints possessed the kingdom and began to advance the purpose of God. Oh we long for a day when the economies are thriving, when technology is created, when justice rules. We long to be part of it. Teach us now to

vigorously do the part we can right now, because of the greatness of what lies ahead of us.

I wonder just while we're just here quiet if there's any heads about, I wonder if there's any person here doesn't know Jesus yet? You're not in the kingdom of God yet, but it's very near to you, very near. It's actually one decision, one choice you are away from the kingdom of heaven. From everyone who received Jesus to everyone who believed on Him, trusted him, sin is the issue. Sin keeps us out of the kingdom but the moment we come to Christ and acknowledge what He's done for us on the cross and turn from our sin, a life without God and turn to begin to walk with Him, oh my, everything begins to change.

The spirit of God comes into your heart, you come alive. I wonder is there any person here today and you say I'm right at that point, I want to give my life to Jesus, I want to become a Christian, would you raise your hand, let me know? I'd love to just pray with you. Is there any person here right at that point of wanting to give their life to Jesus, become a Christian? Any person here? Know God loves you. You may find that you're having something tugging at your heart right now and you're feeling kind of full of - stirred up inside, it's because God is reaching out to draw you - so where are you? Is there anyone here today, anyone here today? I wonder today just in this last moment now when eyes are closed and heads are bowed, I wonder how many people felt God speak to you about your heart attitude and the need to have a change, the need to change, to re-look at how you relate to God's people, how you serve God's people because in serving them you're serving Him, re-looking at how you relate to the community because in serving them you're serving Him.

I wonder how many people got spoke to, the need to discover what you're called to do, prepare yourself for it and give yourself to it. I wonder how many people are right at the point where you're discouraged in whatever area you're serving or whatever, but God has just challenged you to stand up and persevere and be faithful to the end. If you felt God speaking in one of these ways or another way, why don't you just raise your hand, just let's acknowledge God, you're talking to me, I'm hearing you today. God bless, God bless, God bless, God bless. Many, many people.

I've got to thank you for those that have responded and I pray for every other person who didn't respond today but you love them and they're part of your family. I pray for increasing revelation of your purpose for their life, that they would grow in your love and know how much you love them and Lord, be inspired to make their life count, to break out of the limitations and become great in the earth, in Jesus' name. Church just pray for the person next to you. We'll just finish up. Anyone like prayer at the end of the service feel free to come up and we certainly want the Raro team to come up, so won't it come on up, the Raro team.

Praise the Lord! Hey Jean, you're going to Rarotonga. Isn't that magnificent? It's a women's team. Wow! And a bright colourful looking team they are too. Isn't that fantastic? Church, why don't you stretch your hands - if you have to get your kids feel free to go but if you can stay a moment longer, why don't you stretch your hands out. Can we just have some of our exec team just come up, lay hands. Father, we just thank you. Halleluiah! Praise the Lord. Where's the microphone son? Can you get a microphone over there? Thank you Lord, Hallelujah.

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