

## 080722 Sermon "Must Be Ready" Luke 12:32-40

A pastor of a church could not bear his father 's sitting at the front of the worship service and dozing off in front of the church members. The pastor told his young son, "When you're sitting next to your grandfather, poke and wake him up. Then I'll give you \$1." The son woke his grandfather up every time he would fall asleep. But a little while later, the pastor's son stopped waking him up.

After the worship service, the pastor asked his son, "why didn't you wake your grandfather when I said I would give you \$1?" His son answered, "Grandfather promised to give me \$2 for not waking him up!"

The Bible says "keep awake" so many times. In today's Scripture, Jesus said to be awake and be ready. Of course, I hope you don't fall asleep during my sermon, but "keep awake" here doesn't mean you shouldn't doze off during worship. Being awake means to be spiritually awake to the Lord and his teaching while we're living in this world. Dear beloved, I sincerely pray in Jesus's name that you are spiritually awake and ready for the Lord.

Today's text is like the parable of the wedding feast written in Matthew 22, to always prepare for the Lord's return and be alert. If you read the Bible carefully, Jesus said this expression twice, "You have nothing to do with it". First, in John 21, at the very holy moment when Jesus was telling what kind of death Peter would glorify God in the future, Peter pointed to the apostle John, who could be said to be Peter's rival at that time, and said, 'Lord, what about this friend John?' Jesus said, "What does that have to do with you? You follow me." In short, people often want to know about other people's lives rather than focus on their own life of following the Lord!

Second, it is written in Acts chapter 1. The disciples said, 'Are you going to restore the kingdom of Israel at this time?' Then Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father has set in his own power." People want to know when the end times will be. Even though Jesus clearly said that it is none of our business. Thus, false prophets who claim to have received a special revelation of the time of the Last Judgment continue to appear throughout human history, and people continue to be deceived even though they are eventually revealed to be lies. Again, people want to know when, rather than how to prepare.

Since Jesus already said that time is unknown, what should we do? Yes, we have no choice but to always be prepared! Jesus said that his second coming with his kingdom will come at an unexpected time, like you never know when a thief will break into your house. Therefore, always stay awake! Specifically, verse 35 says, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit;"

When asked about the source of his gifts, Pastor Moody answered, "for many years, I have reminded myself that whenever I preach, Christ may come before the sermon is over." The Bible commentator Campbell Morgan said, "I fall asleep every night thinking that tomorrow may be the last day." R. A. Torrey, an influential scholar and evangelist, said, "the truth of the Second Coming is the most precious of the Bible truths."

George Müller, the father of orphans, said, "When God made me realize the truth of Jesus' Second Coming, my heart was overwhelmed with love." Hudson Taylor, who went into China as a missionary for Christ, confessed, "the Lord's return was the greatest motivation for my ministry." Wilbur

Chapman, a powerful preacher of his time, said, "I preach the Lord's Second Coming because the truth of His return has changed my whole life and ministry."

If this is how so many Christian leaders think about the Lord's return, we must also awaken to this amazing fact. Jesus Christ is sure to come again. Today's Word tells us what we must do before the Second Coming!

The first thing we have to do as servants of the Lord is to be dressed ready for service, and the second is to light the lamp. Here, in the original Greek Bible, the expression "being dressed ready" is interesting.

[Perizonnumi] is a compound word. [peri] means, "around" or "close", [zonnumi] means, "to be determined about what is to be done or what is to come." It's not about "the Lord may come...", but it's about having a firm heart for the second coming of the Lord! Are you living like that now? Are you prepared?

Lighting the lamp means to light and burn *your* lamp; Waiting on the Lord is, in a sense, exhausting ourselves. It speaks of love, commitment and hard work. We must live a life of service with our time, our material, and our devotion. Jesus is our Lord and we are all His servants. He is reminding us that we are not simply servants who do work, but that we are servants waiting for the Lord.

The apostle Paul radically expressed his life of faith in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let me conclude my sermon with a story.

One day, someone came to visit a friend's house. Then, she walked through the greenhouse and saw a small flowerpot completely covered with several other flowerpots. Then, a friend said "Do you know why I have darkened around this small flowerpot?" It is for the plant to put down and grow its roots." It might sound strange, but the fact is that you need to darken around the flowerpot to get the roots deeper! It is the creation order of God.

There is a clear link to faith. Whether we want it or not, God sometimes makes us mature through suffering. In a time of darkness, we cannot see anything... At that time, I believe that you and your roots of faith must grow. I hope and pray that the work of Holy Spirit is always in your life.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, the Lord is indeed a patient Lord, but the wait will not be forever. Are you holding on to the truth that the Lord is coming again? In other words, how much is the truth of the Lord's return changing your life, your devotion, and your toil? Waiting for the Lord's return does not mean living in fear and misery. Rather the opposite. Live each day with gratitude and faith. We have to be dressed ready. Also, burn your lamp. Do not extinguish the fire of devotion. I bless you in the name of Jesus to be victorious each day with the word of the Lord! Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.