

Ready or Not, Here I Come

“Parable of the Faithful Servant”

Well done,
good and
faithful
servant! . . .

Come and
share your
master's
happiness!

- MATTHEW 25:23 -

“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”
Luke 12:40

This parable has a powerful message and many levels of interpretation. It is basically contained in Luke 12:35-48.

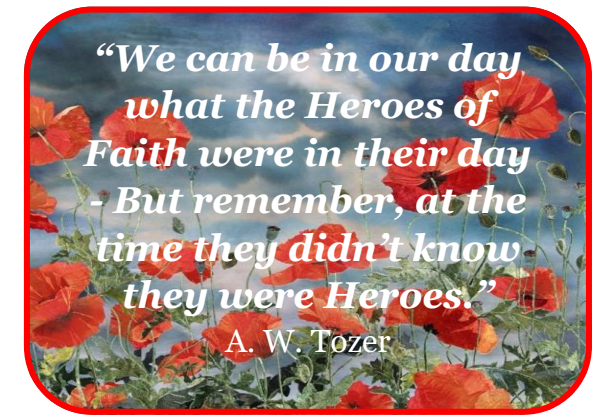
Have you ever been the first one ready, and then been upset that someone else has not even started to get ready? Many times we are short on patience. This parable reminds us that God is always ready, but often times we are not. I wonder how often God gets annoyed with our not being ready. Often we can work ourselves into a bad mood because we have had to wait for someone else to be ready. We may be late for an appointment, the food may be getting cold, or we are just impatient to get going because we quit what we were doing, or got up early. Now the other person is not ready.

We love the fast food service because

they are ready for us not because it is exceptionally good! We count on appointments being on time, but if an ice storm causes the airport to cancel or postpone a flight we are ready, but we have to wait. We like credit cards because we can be ready to charge anything at any time even if we don't have the money right then. Jesus asked His disciples to wait. They thought He was going to be the king the people had been expecting for years. In this parable Christ tells them about a master returning after the wedding feast. His staff is ready and waiting for him. They are eager to serve him as soon as he arrives. Luke 12:36. We are to be ready also. But what does that mean? What is expected of us? In Galatians 5:5 we read *“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”*

This parable can also be about the stewardship of time. Christ could have also been returning to His time to be crucified, and He could have been referring to His retuning after the crucifixion, or even His second coming to earth which has not happened yet. There is a lot of waiting! We do not have a choice. We have to wait. We can't do anything to hurry His coming again. It is not in our control. But we are told there will be a blessing that we cannot even comprehend with our finite minds.

Peter was confused with the story from Christ. Remember Peter sometimes stuck his foot in his mouth, just like we do sometimes. He wanted to know why Christ was telling them stories. He wanted to know the meaning. But Christ didn't give him an answer.

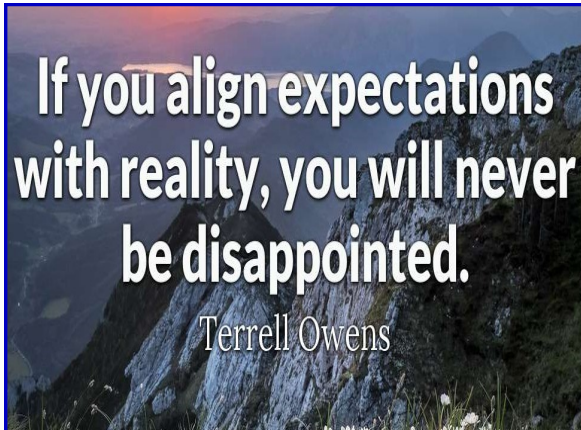


Instead, He asked him a question. Christ promises that those who wait will receive great blessing but also great responsibilities. This could have referred to the blessings the disciples were going to receive and their need to carry on after the death of Christ. It can also refer to our blessings and our obligation to reach out and tell others about the love of Christ.

Christ warns them to keep their lamp burning. That reminds me of an anthem “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning.” It has a double meaning for me. It is written primarily as a modern day African American Spiritual, but it also speaks to the coming of Christ for us to be ready. The black people were always singing we are told by those who have studied their songs and sometimes there was a very important message in their songs. Hints of when they would be able to find a way or time to escape to freedom. Their songs almost always had a Spiritual message. Even though they were confined to slavery they knew there was a freedom in Heaven waiting for them. What a wonderful promise for all of us. The words include:

“Keep your lamps trimmed and burning.

*The time is drawing nigh.
Lo, the morning soon is breaking,
Children, don't get weary,
Til your work is done.
Christian journey soon be over
The time is drawing nigh.”*



Luke 12: 43 tells us *“But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”* How often if we had only known what was going to happen we could have been ready. No one would have had to wait.

Parable of the Faithful Servant

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and

will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward day-break. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.’ Peter asked, ‘Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?’ The Lord answered, ‘Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Luke 12: 35-48



Prayer: Almighty God, You are always ready to hear us. You never keep us waiting. Yet we often want things on our time schedule. Please help us to be ready to tell Your promises to others and know that the time is unknown to us. Thank You for the promises that never grow old. Amen

1. This parable tells us to “Be dressed ready,” “Keep your lamps burning,” and “Be like men waiting for their master.” How does this apply to us today?
2. Have you ever noticed that your own impatience can cause you undo temporary unhappiness?
3. Is impatience sometimes justified?
4. For what all do we need to be ready?
5. If we are called to serve, does serving require waiting?
6. Can our waiting and not knowing the time of Christ’s return be a blessing and also a stimulus to us?