

I reminded you last week, that from v36 (all the way to the end of chapter 25), our Savior describes His second coming. In fact, Matthew 24:36 to the end of chapter 25, is the longest section within Scripture where the second of Christ is described.

Our passage is actually the first of three parables that go together. The first is 24:45-51, the second is 25:1-13, and the third is 25:14-30. In the first one our Savior describes a faithful and wise servant; in the second He describes five wise virgins; and in the third He describes the faithful servant. Thus, this first parable is really an introduction to the other two. It contains within it the various seeds that are developed in the other two (faithful and wise servant).

I. A Description of the Faithful Servant (vv45-47)

II. A Description of the Faithless Servant (vv48-51)

I. A Description of the Faithful Servant (vv45-47)

1. Having exhorted His disciples to be watchful and ready, our Savior continues His instruction, with a familiar imagery.
2. The imagery concerns a faithful and unfaithful servant—the first is rewarded and the other is punished.
3. Thus, there's a sense in which, within vv45-51 our Savior is describing for us what being ready entails.
4. This connection is evident in the word "then"—"Who then is a faithful and wise servant"—that is, a ready servant (v44).
5. In other words, what our Savior meant by "being ready" (v44), is explained in the parable in vv45-51.
6. Within the first century, in Middle-Eastern culture, the relationships of servant and master was very common.
7. In fact, it's estimated that in first century Roman culture, as many as 75% of the people were servants of some sort.
8. In fact, even within the early church, there were servants and masters (thus, the NT gives instruction to both).
9. Thus, our Savior is here using a very common relationship to illustrate to His disciples spiritual truth.
10. Christ is the master and His disciples are His slaves (some of these are faithful and others are unfaithful).
11. That is, some of them are true disciples and others are professing disciples (false or fake disciples).
12. (1) He is faithful, vv45-46—"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to have them food in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing."
13. That is, he was faithful to do those things he was commanded to do—he was diligent in doing his assigned duty.
14. The master left him in charge over his household—he was responsible to oversee and feed the house.
15. He didn't do anything else—he simply did that which he was commanded—he simply fulfilled his duty.
16. Now, let me say before I go any further, there are some who limit these verses to the twelve disciples.

17. That is, they understand by "house" is meant the church, and thus, by inference, leaders within the church.
18. But I think this overly restricts the passage and overlooks its parabolic nature (remember this is one of three consecutive parables).
19. Thus, by master, servant, and house, our Savior is merely speaking about a regular master, servant, and house.
20. The master goes away on a journey (as we will find in v48), and he leaves one of his slaves in charge of his home.
21. And so, I don't think he's talking about elders who have rule within His church (though that's true), but all Christians who have responsibilities in this world.
22. Christ has gone away (but He will return)—in the meanwhile He has left us as His servants in this world.
23. He has assigned us all specific duties or responsibilities to do in His absence—He has given each of us a charge.
24. And the faithful and wise servant, is that person that Christ finds obedient to that charge when He returns.
25. (a) Generic duties—by these I refer to those general or common duties incumbent upon all Christians.
26. Every Christian is called to live a holy life, honor Christ, and serve as light and salt within this world.
27. Thus, these are duties binding upon every servant—every Christian has been called to do these things.
28. Christians are found faithful in dealing with their sins; serving and worshipping Christ; and letting their light shine before men.
29. (b) Specific duties—by these I refer to those specific or individual duties incumbent upon certain people.
30. For example, some of us are husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, employers, employees, and pastors.
31. And so, in addition to those generic or general duties (true of all Christians), these are duties true of some Christians.
32. Thus, the faithful servant is found by his master doing these things—doing those things entrusted to him.
33. Husbands are found faithful in loving their wives; wives are found faithful submitting to their husbands; parents are found faithful raising their children; pastors are found faithful in overseeing the sheep; employees are found faithful to their employers.
34. In the parable, the servant was running the house in an orderly fashion, which included giving them food in season.
35. This translates into being found by Christ (at His return) faithful at our callings—both general and special duties.
36. Now, this doesn't mean they are found doing anything perfectly—but they are found overall faithful in their duties.
37. John Legg—"To 'watch' is not to be always looking for Christ appearing in the sky, but to be ready and prepared by fulfilling our responsibilities to Him. It is to be spiritually awake, to have a spiritual readiness in the midst of normal life, so that whenever Jesus comes, He will find us doing what we ought to be doing."
38. (2) He is rewarded, v47—"Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods"—that is, he would reward or promote him.
39. He was first made ruler over the household, but now he's made ruler over "all his goods"—that is, all that he owned.

40. Here's the principle—having been faithful over "some things," he's now made a ruler over "all things."
41. This simply means this—when Christ returns, every faithful servant will sit with Him as His bride on His throne, and rule over the new heavens and earth.
42. Jn.12:26—"If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My father will honor."
43. Rev.3:21—"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcome and sat down with My Father on His throne."
44. Rev.21:7—"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."
45. These verses all teach the same thing—every Christian will rule over the new heavens and earth with and in Christ.
46. Thus, we will rule over all things because of our relation to Christ—because He is our husband by covenant.
47. And whenever two people marry they become one flesh—all that he has is hers and all she has is his.
48. Christians are at present betrothed to Christ, and we are waiting for the wedding feast and consummation.
49. As most of you know, according to Jewish tradition, marriage took place in two stages—first there's betrothal and then consummation.
50. How much time was there between these? Well, it depended on how long the groom needed to prepare a place for his bride.
51. Well, Christ is at present preparing a place for His bride, and guess what that place ultimately will be? The new heavens and earth.
52. Thus, when Christ returns, there will be the wedding feast and consummation, which simply means the bride and groom live together.
53. All that is His becomes ours, which means, we will sit with Him on His throne and rule over the new creation.
54. And so, before I leave this first point (and the faithful servant), let me briefly suggest two things: judgment for the faithful will be just, blessed, and gracious.
55. (a) Judgment will be just—by this I mean, Christ will justly reward the faithfulness of His beloved people.
56. Matt.10:42—"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."
57. Heb.6:10—"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
58. We have to remember, Christ is our master, and any just master would properly reward his faithful slaves.
59. Furthermore, we have to remember, that our Savior has already promised to reward His faithful slaves.
60. Thus, it would be in this sense, unjust of Him not to reward them—it would run contrary to His promise.
61. (b) Judgment will be blessed, v46—"Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing."
62. The term "blessed" is a common word found throughout our Bible—it fundamentally refers to "inner bliss."
63. Thus, by "blessed" is meant "the inward enjoyment of God's favor upon us"—"the joy of the LORD."

64. It's for this reason, our Savior in chapter 25 and a similar parable, describes this blessedness as "entering into the joy of your lord" (v21, v23).
65. This is often called the Beatific Vision—the blessed sight and enjoyment of God we shall have in heaven.
66. Matt.5:8—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—they shall see Christ physically, and know God perfectly.
67. (c) Judgment will be gracious—by this I mean, every reward given, will be the result of God's grace.
68. Lk.17:10—"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"
69. All that we've done is what we've been commanded to do—thus, our obedience doesn't earn us anything.
70. Thus, our judgment will be just (it will be in keeping with His promise), blessed, and it will be gracious.

II. A Description of the Faithless Servant (vv48-51)

1. In contrast to the faithful servant, our Savior then describes a faithless servant (or as he's called in v51, a hypocrite).
2. (1) He is faithless, vv48-49—"But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards."
3. In other words, he no longer concerns himself with his master's return—he waited for a while but gave up.
4. Instead, he begins to beat his fellow servants—this he does because he has been given rule over them.
5. He then begins to eat and drink with the drunkards—this of course is in place of his assigned responsibilities.
6. (a) He stops watching—that is, his religious zeal and commitment fizzled out—other things became more important.
7. It's likely that he started on fire—he loved to attend the meetings of the church and discuss theology with others.
8. But as time progressed, these things became less important to him and they eventually became secondary.
9. (b) He stops working—he begins to live a double life—he's one thing at church and another at home.
10. Now, it's important to notice, he never ceases being a servant—he's just a "faithless" and "evil servant."
11. This means, he never stops claiming to be a disciple—he may even remain as a member of a solid church.
12. But he is a hypocrite—a hypocrite by definition, is a person who claims to be something they are not.
13. For example, someone may claim to be your friend to your face, but behind your back they talk about you—that's a hypocrite.
14. So too, a religious hypocrite is someone who professes to be a Christian, but lives differently in private.
15. Now, we will have plenty of opportunity to discuss this further over the next few weeks as we look at the next two parables.
16. But let me say here in passing—there are generally two types of hypocrites—those that are deceived and those who are deceiving.

17. 2Tim.3:13—"But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."
18. They will "be deceiving" (that is intentionally) and they will "be deceived" (that is unknowingly)—both will be true.
19. Some people know they are hypocrites and they are in it for personal benefit (Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copland).
20. Others will go to the day of judgment deceiving themselves that they are a Christian when in fact, they are hypocrites.
21. Now again, we are going to speak about this in greater detail next week as we examine the parable of the 10 virgins.
22. But let me say here—remember what the faithless servant does—he stops watching and he stops working.
23. And the reason he stops watching for Christ is because he stops loving and fellowshiping with Christ.
24. And because he ceases fellowshiping and loving Christ, he no longer serves or obeys Christ as Lord.
25. You see, it's rather simple to judge ourselves to see whether or not we are a true Christian or hypocrite.
26. Just ask yourself—Do you love Christ and want to be with Him, and do you thusly, serve or obey Christ?
27. It's not even at this point about the intensity of love or obedience—Do you love Him and do you obey Him?
28. Do you want to love Him more and serve Him better? These are the longings and desires of a true Christian.
29. (2) He is punished, vv50-51—"the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
30. The phrase "will cut him in two" likely refers back to several OT accounts where this actually happened.
31. I think our Savior here is speaking figuratively or parabolically to refer to the worst possible punishment.
32. The phrase "and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" is explained in the last phrase—"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
33. Thus, the portion of the faithless servant is contrasted with that of the faithful servant—the faithful servant has eternal bliss and joy, whereas the faithless servant eternal pain and sorrow.
34. Thus, in closing I want to suggest three broad observations about this parable—because though it's a parable it nevertheless is intended to teach us vital truth.
35. Observation 1—Christ is a Master and we His servants—there is only one Lord and the rest are slaves.
36. Scripture uses various imageries to describe our relationship to Christ—He's our Groom, Elder Brother, and King (but He's also our Master).
37. Observation 2—Christ's return is a single event in history—that is, His return is literal, future, and single.
38. Brethren, as I said last week, we have to let Scripture inform our eschatology—there are only two comings of Christ—one is past and the other future.
39. Observation 3—Christ's return results in one of two destinies—some are eternally blessed others eternally cursed.
40. When Christ returns, He separates the sheep from the goats—the sheep go to heaven and the goats to hell.