

Lk. 12:35-48 (BCF 35) A Sacrament for Growing Believers”

For the Children: Some rides at theme parks require children to be over a certain height. If a child is too small, he might not be held in place, he might fall and injure himself. The people who run these parks are trying to protect children with these rules. It is also possible for someone to hurt themselves spiritually by taking part in the Lord's Supper before they are ready. So we expect our members to have shown a good understanding of the Bible and that they are living a life committed to the Lord, before they attend the Table. This is important for the good of our members, for the good of the congregation and for the Lord's honour. **Questions:** What is the problem with attending the Lord's Supper before you are ready? What does it mean to be "ready"? Does this mean that people who join in the Lord's Supper are better than those who do not?

Introduction:

First Point: The Principle of Accountability

- 1) The Steward Who Knows the Master's Will: Much is required of those who have been given much. As God's people, we have been given much knowledge regarding our Master's will, re doctrine and life. We are held accountable for how we respond to that – as is made clear in the 3 scenarios in the text.
- 2) Sins of Ignorance: Sins of ignorance still involve sin; but it is not deliberate and not punished as strongly
- 3) Application to the Supper: The Lord Jesus nourishes us spiritually, so that we grow and mature as we go on in the Christian life. The Lord's Supper is about that nourishment and growth. Therefore, it requires more than baptism, which is about *entrance* to the covenant-life. All members must be baptized; but evidence of greater knowledge and commitment is required for communicant members (1 Cor. 11:28-29). If this is ignored, those who come to the Table eat and drink greater judgement upon themselves. The church therefore fences the Table out of concern for those who may come carelessly.

Second Point: The Practice of Readiness

- 1) Three Cases of Readiness: There is also an emphasis on *readiness* in the 3 scenarios here – the servants' readiness for the master's return and the master's readiness for the coming of thieves. So Jesus' disciples must be ready and alert for His return (v. 40).
- 2) Temptation in Delay: It is hard, however, to be ready when there is an apparent delay in the event. Life goes on as normal, and we start to become complacent. See 2 Pet. 3:3f. This is the danger in all 3 scenarios in Lk. 12.
- 3) Being Ready: Being ready for Jesus' return involves trusting Him for the forgiveness of our sins; outworking our faith in doctrine and life – in how we respond to the Lord and how we treat others. Readiness also involves eagerly waiting for the Lord Jesus' return (vss. 36 and 40). These are also basic elements in regular self-examination. The same kind of readiness is needed for both the Lord's Supper and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. Fencing the Table reminds us of the need to be "ready."

Third Point: The Promise of Grace

- 1) Blessed Abundance: To prevent us from being overcome by the sense of our failures, we are assured of our blessedness in Christ (vss. 37, 38 and 43). His blessings are superabundant – the faithful servant is put in charge of all the Master's possessions (v. 44). The one who "has" is given even more (Lk. 19:26; Mt. 25:29). This is grace, since we are unworthy slaves (Lk. 17:7-10).
- 2) The Master Who Serves: Even more gracious, the Master allows the servants to sit at table, while he waits upon them! (v. 37). For Christ came as the Servant (Is. 53). Like a servant, He washed His disciples' feet i.e., He shares with us the honour and victory He has won.
- 3) Assurance for the Supper: This grace gives us confidence to attend the Supper in this life, and look forward to one to come. Yet this grace must not be "cheapened" by us attending the Supper carelessly, without self-examination, discernment, or faithfulness in doctrine and life.

Conclusion: