

42“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

45“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46“Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47“Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48“But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ 49and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

With little or no argument among true evangelicals, the greatest philosophical and brilliant mind, the deepest thinking scholar, the most important preacher after the reformation was a man who lived in the American colonies before the declaration of independence. Jonathan Edwards.

Edwards was converted in his 17th year and so fell in love with his new master, the Lord Jesus Christ, that he set about writing resolutions declaring the standards he would endeavor to live by for the rest of his life.

He wrote 70 of them, and if you ever want to feel like the most insignificant failure of a christian, if you even are a christian, I encourage you to read through those. I guarantee they will challenge you, and if you're even a tiny bit like me you'll say, No wonder God hasn't used me for any significant fruit to His glory. I'm a wimp.

I want to look at just one of them. OK, 2 actually but you could combine them and make a single resolution. Number 7 and number 19 of 70

7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.

19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.

Those words were written by an 18 year old youth who God used to lay the foundations of the great awakening, a massive revival in the American colonies in the 1740's and '50's that arguably, easily arguably was the baseline in which our nation was formed.

Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield set the eastern seaboard of this nation on fire for Jesus Christ. You might say they planted the tree from which we enjoy the shade, even in 2016, 275 years later.

19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.

He took Jesus words that we're going to consider this morning, seriously, and the results are still felt almost 300 years later.

We've been looking at Jesus answer to His disciples regarding when the kingdom will come. What will it look like. How long do we have to wait for it?

And Jesus gave them 4 picture windows into the future. Descriptions of the events that will surround the coming of the kingdom. Frightening images of cataclysmic events. Things that have never been seen before, nor never will be seen again.

But He doesn't tell them when. In their minds they're probably thinking 5 years, tops. Hopefully less! But He doesn't give them very many clues. The subtlest of hints. Like *But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time or Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep*

Subtle clues that they didn't add up and we only do because we're 20 centuries down the corridor looking back.

What He does tell them is there will be an element of surprise. Just like the men of Noah's day thought the days would go on forever, just as they had before, suddenly water bursts forth from the deep, and it's too late.

Therefore, just like Jonathan Edwards resolved. We need to continually be living as if it was going to happen before another hour passes. Be ready.

And Jesus launches into a series of warnings that all have something to do with that theme. Be ready. It could happen . . any time.

42“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

Don't you love it when you're standing on your head, covered with sweat and dirt, trying to put some impossible thing together, and the boss pulls up with visitors. You're totally engrossed doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing, and there's evidence that you were slugging it out, when nobody was watching. That's what we want.

Or does the boss come in stealthily, and you've got your feet on the desk, taking a little "safety" nap. Not impressed. Does this guy ever work. Why do we keep him around??

That's the idea here. And Jesus is going to give us several metaphors. Story pictures. Scenarios if you will. All of them help to define an aspect of His return.

43“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

The metaphor of a thief coming appears several times in the new

testament. Paul to the Thessalonians, 2 times, Peter writing to the church, and twice in Revelation. Revelation 3:3 is the classic.

Writing to the church at Sardis, Jesus says; *Remember, then, what you have received and heard. Keep it and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know the hour when I will come upon you.*

The idea is not that Jesus is involved in criminal activity. He isn't a thief. But He comes with the same element of surprise that a thief comes. Thieves don't give advance warning. They surprise. Nobody expects a thief to come tonight. When they do, we're surprised.

44“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

Jonathan Edwards had it perfectly right. We need to live in that suspense. If Jesus came, this moment, while I'm doing this, whatever it is I'm doing, would He be pleased? Like that boss that shows up and you're working hard at exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Or not.

So if we bore into vs. 44 with that in mind, there's one word in that verse that needs more definition. *44“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.*

We could turn it around and say; *44“Since the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will; For this reason you also must be ready;*

Jesus, OK, we've got the element of surprise figured out, but can you help us with this word; ready? What does it mean to be ready. Who is ready, and why. How do I know if I am?

And that's exactly what He's going to do now with these parables. These scenarios He's going to paint for us. Actually, Jonathan Edwards Resolution is the best place to start. I would commend us to begin there, but Jesus is going to show us what He's talking about.

45 *“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?”*

There's so much here that I know I'm not going to get to the parable of the virgins this week. It was in the bulletin, but I took it out of the reading.

The first part of the idea of being ready is bound up in 2 words in that verse we just read. And we're going to take time to do a couple of word studies.

The most common and easiest to understand view of our position, in the Kingdom of God is bound up in the greek word *doulos*. *Doulos* is the missing jewel in all of our english translations. It's a simple word and the meaning is undeniable and easy to understand. A *doulos*, is a slave. Pure and simple. A slave. A person owned by another person.

That idea is so abhorrent to us that we refused to interpret the word in the english language. All of our english bibles say servant, not slave except for the modern Holman Christian Standard Bible which finally began to put the correct word, slave, in place of servant.

That's 500 years of watered down translation of an important idea that defines who we are and if indeed we are ready for the master to return. A critical idea, and I believe, a big win for Satan. Servants are employees who can leave and go do something else. The idea of human ownership is missing.

I'm in complete agreement. A human owning another human is a repulsive and repugnant proposition that must be fought against at all times.

Nevertheless, in the spirit world, you don't have a choice. Anyone that thinks they are a free spirit, is deluded. There are two and only two possibilities for men (and women). Satan owns you. We're born into that, because of sin. Or God owns you. If you think you are a free spirit not under any ownership but yourself, you are duped by Satan. Sin has

placed you in his ownership whether you realize it, or not.

The gospel, the good news of salvation is the good news that you don't have to be held in captivity by Satan any longer. Jesus has paid the price for your sin. Sin is taken out of the way. Therefore, you can belong to God.

Sin, and its removal, is at the heart of the gospel. Because before Jesus took our sin away, we were helpless.

Last year a couple of mormon boys stopped to say hello as I was working on something outside. They wanted to talk about everything else, and I was at a crucial moment and couldn't stop, but the idea I sent them away with is; your sin isn't forgiven. Your religion has a made up Jesus and he doesn't have the capacity to remove your sin. Your sin isn't forgiven. And they left with that and never returned.

Jesus didn't pay for your sin so you could be a free spirit floating off some place with no master. He paid for your sin, with His blood, so that He could purchase you.

You're still a slave, but a transfer of ownership is possible because of the blood of Jesus.

When Jesus says; *28Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls....*He isn't offering free agency. He's saying, I'm a good and loving master who will give you rest. Peace. Joy. Love.

It is a sweet slavery. A slavery in which my every need and desire is met. But, it is a slavery. I am a slave. Jesus owns me. Lock stock and barrel. And that's the best news you'll ever hear!

Paul tells the Corinthians; 1 Cor. 6:19 - 20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20you were **bought with a price.** Therefore glorify God with your body.*

You are not your own. You were bought. Paid for. This is the talk of slavery and you may as well get used to it, because every time I come across that word, *doulos*, in our text, I'm going to remind you.

If you are a christian, you are owned. By the Lord Jesus Christ. A sweet slavery, but, slavery, none the less. And those of us who know Him longest and best will be first to tell you, with this master, you will want to have your ear pierced against a doorpost making you a bond slave and belong to Him, forever!

The burden of sin is gone. The peace and joy of the master of the universe are mine in abundance. I am His. And He is mine.

So then, back to our text, with this idea of slavery fresh in our minds, Jesus says; 45 *“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?”*

So we've established that we're slaves. Slaves to Christ, but there are two other descriptive words here. This is the slave who is ready. So we want to investigate these two words that describe what quality of slave this is. Do you see them there.

45 *“Who then is the **faithful** and **sensible** slave*

The first descriptor of this slave is that he's *pistos*. Faithful. And the root is from the same word we translate as faith. And the ideas are similar. With faith we trust IN something because we believe it is what it says it is and it's capable of whatever we're putting faith in it to accomplish.

I have faith in my dilapidated wood trailer to always get a heavy load of firewood out of the mountains and back home. The trailer's doing fine. The wood-cutter; not so much.

This word is the same, but it's the person who is faithful here. Trustworthy. We can have confidence in this person to complete

whatever it is we've assigned for them to do.

We're in a planning meeting at work, sitting at a big table and the boss has got a bunch of stuff that he needs accomplished, and he looks around the table, and his mind is thinking, who do I have here that can get this work done. I'm looking for someone I can trust that will get it done without me having to check up constantly that they're doing it how it needs to get done.

The boss doesn't want to micro manage. He wants someone who, after giving him the task, will go out and do it, in a workmanship like manner. Properly, efficiently. Someone with a proven track record. Right. All of that is incorporated into this word; faithful. I ask this guy to do stuff, and I don't have to think about it again. He always gets it done.

We want to be that kind of slave. And indeed, the Bible is clear. Jesus is like any other boss. He doesn't give the giant jobs to people who don't get the menial ones done. God doesn't send His 5 star generals to do battle in Tonopah. Nothing against Tonopah, but you see what I mean.

I would add that I am stunned that the master has entrusted me with *this* much. Your lives are precious to Him, and I will give an account. Thank goodness for 20 instead of 2,000.

Then the next descriptor is phronimos. Sensible. Wise. And we'll see this word again in the story about the 10 virgins. 5 were phronimos. Wise. and 5 were dopey. Unwise. Stupid.

The word has within it a wisdom based in a term I never heard until just the last 5 years or so. But I like it. World view. World view. The wisdom is based in knowledge. A wisdom with a basis.

The best other use of the word, for sake of clarity of understanding, and this works as well here as it does with the 10 virgins, is Jesus parable about the 2 house builders.

Remember. Daniel used this parable in his message two weeks ago.

Jesus says; *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

Jonathan Edwards was uncommonly wise as an 18 year old when he said; *Resolved: to always live as though I knew that Jesus was going to show up before the hour was over.*

That was wisdom based on what. The word of God. Jonathan Edwards world view was based in the words of this book. At 18!

To sum up so far. Jesus is coming. We don't know exactly when. We need to be ready. Readiness is likened to a slave who is faithful, capable, and has a wisdom based in God's book that he lives by, and the slave is given a stewardship, a task to perform for his master.

45“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?

All of us who belong to Jesus are doulos. Slaves. All of us are equals. We're just slaves working for our master. And all of us are given some kind of a stewardship. The slave owner has entrusted every single one of us to work at something that the Master wants for us to do. For Him. For His Kingdom, not ours. His best interest, not ours. His wealth, not ours.

Trustworthy. Wise in the things of this world. Shrewd, because our basis is this book. Working for the master. That defines the word ready.

*46“Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.
47“Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.* This master rewards wise, trustworthy slaves. Blessed are those slaves.

Most commentators see this parable especially directed to ministers. In the example this slaves task is to feed the other slaves.

Indeed, James says *Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.* in 3:1

There is a sense in which teachers are more at risk for judgement. No one made Jesus more angry than the false teachers who were like shepherds leading the sheep into harm and death. Leading the sheep over a cliff. Or maybe the sheep are starving. The sheep are not thriving for lack of food. So much so that James says, do something else unless God calls you into this most serious charge.

I'm painfully aware of that. This is a serious business.

Paul tells Timothy in 1T5:17 *The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

You folks already give me triple honor. But the reverse logic is if you do not rule well, particularly in preaching and teaching, the negative is doubled.

There's some truth to that, but I would be quick to point out once again, I believe the warning applies to all believers. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given spiritual gifts that the Master expects them to put to use for the good of the body, for the glory of God.

I believe every christian has a stewardship. Find out what that gift is, and use it to benefit the other slaves, and bring glory to the master. The example the Lord gives goes beyond preachers and teachers. Every one of us has a stewardship, a task to perform for the good of God's household.

48“But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ 49and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;

This is gross mis-use and negligence of the stewardship entrusted. And it isn't talking about a one time offense. This slave has slipped into a lifestyle of abuse and neglect. He treats the other slaves like Satan's

world treats them.

Instead of giving the slaves their portions and meting out care, this slave abuses the other slaves.

The horror stories are plentiful and easy to find. Millions of dollars for luxury homes and jet airplanes while the doctrine declared by these same folks is anathema. Sordid stories of prostitutes and long running sexual affairs. Alter boys sodomized.

Vs. 49 mentions eating and drinking with drunkards, but the stuff we hear about every day is such that the drunkards wouldn't want their good names sullied by keeping company with some of these folks. The drunkards are classier than the folks we hear about on TV. Christ is made a laughing stock.

What will happen to those folks, and a whole lot of others that aren't as awful as what I just described, but are nevertheless not caring properly for God's sheep. What happens to folks who dis-regard the stewardship of caring for their fellow slaves, who live just like the rest of the world?

50the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is pretty graphic. The greek word here for cutting in pieces is the same word we still use. Dichotomy. Literally to cut something in half. But that's the easy part.

Folks who are not ready, when the master returns, will suffer and weep and gnash their teeth . . forever. This is the description of hell.

Therefore, application, for us, is beyond critical. It's eternal joy or eternal weeping at stake.

So where do we fit in this scenario? Are we like Jonathan Edwards constantly aware that Jesus might return before this hour we're in is

past?

Do we understand and embrace our position as slaves to a beneficent master, but slaves, none-the-less.

Are we faithful slaves. Working for the furtherance of our Masters interests? Is that job one? 2? 3? 48?

Are we wise slaves? Are we expending effort to grow in our knowledge of our Master and do we take His book as absolute authority over our lives? Sorry AirBNB I am slave to another Master. His book has authority over what I can and cannot do.

Are we working to learn what His book says, so we're ready in every situation. There's a banquet feast like no other generation has ever had available, waiting for us to engorge ourselves. With that opportunity also comes greater responsibility. *To whom much is given, much will be required.*

Jonathan Edwards didn't have the internet and library's of great books. He just had his Bible, and he was born again at 17, and by the time he was 18, he had written 70 Bible based resolutions that he would read and live by, for the rest of his life.

We'll finish with these familiar words written by Edward Mote;

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.*