



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus
Wise and Foolish Servants

Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13

Lesson 9

Jesus is coming again! As Christians, we believe that. Yet, how many of us live in the daily expectation of His coming? How many of us live as the servants He has called us to be? How many of us will be ready when He comes? How many of us will hear Him say to us "*Well done, good and faithful servant*"? Jesus intends for the stories of this lesson to challenge us to *watch and be ready*. May His intentions for you be fulfilled.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last pages of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of these parables. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word (i.e. words used to refer to *Jesus, servant, or master*).

Key Words:

The Faithful Servant & The Evil Servant

Jesus (Son of Man, Lord), faithful/wise, evil, servant(s), master, watching/watched/ready, and hour

The Wise & Foolish Virgins

Son of Man, virgins, bridegroom, wise, foolish, watch/ready, lamps, and hour

3. The contrasting word *but* is used nine times in these three portions of Scripture. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times this word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

4. The term of conclusion, therefore, is used twice (Luke 12:40, Matthew 25:13). Mark each use and record the two conclusions stated.

5. The *servants* described in the two records of the parable of *the faithful servant and the evil servant* have markedly different behaviors. Contrast the two by making a list of what each does and doesn't do.
 - a. In the same way, behavior reveals the difference between the *wise and foolish virgins*. Summarize the behavior of each.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What sort of preparations have you been involved in making for an upcoming event?
 - a. What did you discover was important in those preparations?

2. Consider a time when you have been found not ready. What were the consequences?

3. What would you do if you hired a house sitter to watch your home and children, left for a week-long vacation, and then returned a day early only to find that your caretaker had neglected your kids, destroyed your property, and ignored all your other instructions?

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT & THE EVIL SERVANT: Read Matthew 24:45-51

1. Jesus told this story in response to the disciples' question *What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?* (Matthew 24:3). Read a portion of His answer in verses 36-44. Who knows the *day and hour*?
 - a. What will the days *before the coming of the Son of Man* be like?
 - b. What instructions did Jesus give in verses 42,44?
2. In the story of the *Faithful Servant and Evil Servant*, what responsibilities were they given? verse 45
 - a. Write Jesus' response to their obedience in your own words. verse 46
 - 1.) For those of us who have declared Jesus to be our Master, we each have responsibilities, some common to us all, some distinct to each individual. When you consider what responsibilities your Master, Jesus, has given you, what are some of them?
 - b. Record Jesus' joyful proclamation to His obedient servants from the following verses:
Matthew 24:47

Matthew 25:21

Matthew 25:34
3. This story is also about a servant who was not obedient. Using Matthew 24:48, describe his attitude.
 - a. This servant was so occupied with doing *evil* that he was not doing what the master had called him to do. Although you may not be *beating your fellow servants* and *eating and drinking with the drunkards*, what are some things that distract us or prevent us from doing our Master's will?
 - b. *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* (verse 50). According to the next verse, what will the master then do?

Challenge: Look up other verses that use the phrase *weeping and gnashing of teeth* and note what you learn.

1.) Record Paul's warning in 1 Thessalonians 5:2,3.

2.) Now record the comforting words of the next two verses, 1 Thessalonians 5:4,5.

WATCH AND BE READY: Read Luke 12:35-48

1. The words of this portion include instructions and warnings which are contained in Matthew's account of the *faithful servant and the evil servant* and the account of the *wise and foolish virgins*. According to verse 37, what will the *blessed* servant be found doing when the *master comes*?

a. What actions and attitudes would this kind of *watching* entail?

2. Note Jesus' instruction in verse 40. What does He expect of His servants?

a. Are you *ready*? When you consider your readiness for Christ's return, what are your thoughts?

3. The *evil* servant is occupied with the same attitude and actions as the one described in Matthew 24. His punishment is described in a little more detail. Describe that punishment.

a. Note the phrase in Matthew 24:51 *appoint him his portion with the hypocrites* and the phrase in Luke 12:46 *appoint him his portion with the unbelievers*. In what way can an *unbeliever* be like a *hypocrite*?

b. Jesus' teaching in these verses indicates that the *evil* servant is one who appears to belong to the master, but does not. As a believer, you have escaped stripes and weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those punishments have been reserved for those who have denied Jesus. What does Matthew 13:41-43 teach that confirms this?

1.) Does this truth motivate you to be a servant that is *blessed* by Jesus or are you content with simply escaping His judgment? Selah (meditate on this one for awhile).

THE WISE & FOOLISH VIRGINS: Read Matthew 25:1-13

1. In the story of the *wise and foolish virgins*, we find both similarities and differences. Those who claim to know Jesus and really don't know Him do have similarities with those who truly belong to Him. What are the similarities in this parable?
 - a. What have you discovered to be some similarities of those in the church who are believers and those who are not?
 - 1.) What differences have you observed?

2. In this story, all ten virgins had *lamps*, but only the wise had *oil*. Oil, in Scripture, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. How important is it to have the Holy Spirit? Romans 8:9

3. The bridegroom came, the wise virgins entered the wedding feast, and the door was shut. *Afterward the other virgins came also*. What did they say? verse 11
 - a. They called the *bridegroom* (Jesus) the right words, yet what was His response to them?
 - 1.) Write the awesome words of John 10:27 and 2 Timothy 2:19 regarding Jesus *knowing* those that are His.
 - a.) What is your response?

4. Go back to the beginning words of the story of the servants in Luke 12 (verses 35-37). What are the similarities to the parable of the *wise and foolish virgins*?
 - a. Notice the additional blessing as recorded in verse 37. What are some of your thoughts as you reflect upon the idea of Jesus serving you, possibly at the great wedding feast?

REVIEW: Read Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13

1. What if you were tipped off that a burglar was surely coming? What would you do?

2. From your study of these stories, what did you learn about:

Jesus' expectations of His servants

Jesus as Master

Jesus as the Bridegroom

3. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson?

*...And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.*

- Isaiah 62:5

Observation Worksheet

The Faithful Servant And The Evil Servant

Matthew 24:45-51

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰the 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, ⁵¹and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 12:35-48

"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. ³⁸And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. ³⁹But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." ⁴¹Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" ⁴²And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? ⁴³Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. ⁴⁵But if that servant says in his

heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, ⁴⁶the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. ⁴⁷And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

The Wise And Foolish Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' ⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹²But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.