

# To Watch Means to Serve

## End Times Series #3

### Sermon Notes by Forrest McPhail

Introduction:

Read & review Matthew 24:36-44.

We must be ready for the return of Jesus Christ. We must watch for His coming. If we are not ready when He comes, we face His judgment. We have studied this truth already, but we have not yet studied about what being ready for Jesus' coming means. What does it mean to watch for the Lord's return?

Obviously being ready and watching for His coming first has to do with believing on Jesus Christ. If we have received Jesus as our Savior and our God then we will believe in His promise that He will come again. If He is our Savior and Lord then we will set our hope on His coming to rescue us from wrath and take us to be with Him.

Those who believe on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior must learn how to watch and be ready for the Lord's return by being faithful to God and serving Him with their lives right now. Jesus saves us from our sins so that we may serve Him and be ready to receive Him when He returns. In Matthew 24:45-25:30, Jesus gives us three illustrations to help us to understand what it means to be ready and watch for His return.

#### **Illustration #1: The Faithful & Wise Servant (24:45-51)**

##### **Read Matthew 24:45-51**

In this illustration, Jesus is represented as the master and those who claim to be His followers are the servants. The servants were to be busy about their tasks and accomplishing their duties faithfully while the master was away. The master took a long time in returning. While he was gone, the true hearts of the servants were revealed. One servant was faithful to his master and did his duties out of love and fear, even though the master took so long in returning. One servant did not do his duty out of laziness. He did not love or fear his master and so he did not have a heart to obey while the master was away.

***The faithful servant*** represents the true follower of Jesus. He loves and fears his Master, Jesus Christ, even though He has been away a long time and the timing of His return was uncertain. He knows that he is owned by his Master that created him and saved him from his sins. He wants to serve God. When Jesus returns, He will find the faithful servant seeking to serve Him and will reward him. The faithful servant is a wise servant.

***The wicked servant*** represents the false believer. When Jesus returns, He will call these false believers "wicked" and "hypocrites" because they claimed to be servants of Christ but they did not love Him or fear Him. They were lazy and lived for pleasure and the things of this world. These Jesus will cast into hell where they will have intense suffering.

***Being ready and watching means to serve God faithfully while waiting for His return.***

**Illustration #2: The Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)**

**Read Matthew 25:1-13**

Before we can really understand the meaning of this illustration, it is important that we know about ***Jewish weddings*** during the time of Jesus. At that time, Jewish weddings were in some ways like Khmer weddings, but in other ways were very different. On the wedding day, the groom and his parents went to the home of the bride and her parents to finalize the negotiations about the dowry and give final consent (the bride's parents gave money to the groom, not the other way around like in Cambodia!). No doubt almost all, if not all of this was already completely discussed in advance already.

Once this ceremony at the bride's house is completed, the groom leads his parents, the bride, and the bride's parents on a procession to the groom's home for a great dinner party. During the procession all of those joining in the dinner party join in and walk together to the groom's home.

In this illustration, Jesus teaches about ten virgins who were waiting for the wedding procession to begin. It took a long time for the groom and his parents to come to a final agreement with the bride's parents and they were tired. Five of the virgins had purchased oil for their lamps in readiness for the procession (the procession was usually at night). Five of the virgins did not prepare ahead of time. When the procession began, the five wise virgins joined the procession, but the five foolish virgins had to try to find oil for their lamps. When the door closed at the house of the groom for the beginning of the feast, the five foolish virgins were left outside unable to join the party.

***The wise virgins*** wanted to make sure that they did not miss the procession and prepared in advance for the procession. Those who are wise will prepare themselves for Jesus' return when He takes His people with Him to heaven before the Day of Judgment begins on the earth. They will enter into the joy of heaven.

***The foolish virgins*** were careless and lazy and did not prepare themselves ahead of time. When the procession began, they were too late in preparing to join in and were left out of the dinner party. By this Jesus means for us to understand that those who are not ready for His coming, those who have not repented and believed on Him, will find that it is too late to go with Him when He comes again. Jesus will say to them: "I do not know you" no matter what their excuses are. "They will shut the door" reminds us of the day of Noah's flood.

**Being ready means being prepared right now, not waiting until Jesus comes!**

### **Illustration #3: The Three Servants & the Talents**

#### **Read Matthew 25:14-30**

In this illustration, Jesus tells us of a wealthy man who is going away on a journey of unknown length. Before he leaves, he entrusts three of his servants with his wealth. He distributes it to them according to their ability to make a profit. He gives five talents to one servant, two talents to another, and one to the third servant. While he is gone, the servants given five and two talents faithfully serve their master and do their best to turn a profit. The servant given one talent, however, was lazy and did not more than keep the talent given him. When the master returned, the two faithful servants were rewarded for their faithfulness, but the worthless servant was punished.

The master in the illustration represents Jesus who has gone away, ascended to heaven, and has not yet returned. Before he left, He entrusted the message of the Gospel and His Word to His followers, represented by the servants in the parable. Not only were they given the Gospel message, He also is the one who gave them life, possessions, time, health, and natural talents and abilities to be used to serve Him with—this is represented by the talents given to the servants. He commanded His followers to live a life of love and holiness and to spread the Gospel and make disciples.

One talent = at least 30 million Cambodian riel/ \$7,143.00.

Two talents = at least 60 million Cambodian riel/\$14,286.00.

Three talents = at least 150 million Cambodian riel/\$35,715.00.

***The good and faithful servants*** refer to true believers who use their life, their possessions, their job, their homes, their time, their energy, and their gifts and abilities to serve God. They are not all given the same amount of talents, but they use the talents that God has given them to serve God. Jesus will greatly reward these servants when He comes again. They will reign with Jesus when He comes to reign on the earth.

***The wicked and lazy servant*** represents those who profess to know Jesus or not who waste the talents and resources given to them by God and live for the pleasures of this world instead of serving God. They do not love and fear Jesus and have no desire to live for Him, no matter what they profess. When Jesus comes again, these will have no part in Jesus' kingdom on the earth. These will be cast into eternal hell.

***Being ready and watching means to serve God faithfully while waiting for His return.***

**Conclusion:** Today we celebrate our fourth anniversary together. My pastoral challenge to you, the members of Inheritance in Christ Church for this next year is to “Watch and be ready” and to learn how to serve the Lord with the life God has given you. The next step of growth for our church is learning how each member can be involved in serving Christ through serving one another and serving the lost.

Today we elect two deacons, Ti & Puek. These men have been chosen by the church to be examples to other members and to assist the pastor in the ministry of ICC. These men will be learning how to serve and they will also be helping each of the other members learn how to serve one another as well. We must watch and be ready as a church body. We must serve our Lord together and be found faithful when He returns.

Those who have not yet repented of their sins and believed on Jesus Christ as their God and Savior, I challenge you today to repent, believe the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and be ready for His coming lest you hear the words said to the unfaithful and wicked servants said to you: "I do not know you"; "You wicked servant"; "You lazy servant"; "Cast him into hell"; or "the door is shut."