

That's the punchline to Jesus' second parable, and it has sobering implications for both believers and unbeliever. For the unbeliever, it means the more you hear about Jesus and do nothing about it, the greater shall be your judgement. For the believer it means, the more you know and understand of God's will as revealed through Scripture, the more fruitfulness God expects from you. Lots of knowledge and little fruit will rob you of your heavenly reward. I Corinthians 3:15 "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames.

APPLICATION

What part of the teaching did you find most challenging and why?

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- What areas of your life need immediate attention if you are to be ready for the coming of the Lord?
- Which non-Christian are you going to share the gospel with before the year is over?

PRAYER

- You may need to start by repenting of being casual towards Christ's return
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what needs to change so that you are 'ready'
- Pray for the people who God has put in your life as a witness to them. Ask him for wisdom and grace to befriend them and share the gospel with them.

NOTES

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WARM UP

Have you ever missed an opportunity because you were not as ready as you should have been?

WORD

You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him

Luke 12:40. (Read V35-48)

We all have areas of our lives that are not fully aligned with God's Word – whether they be patterns of thought, habitual behaviour, or 'sins of omission' – things we know we ought to do, but are not doing. It's not that we don't want to change as such, it's more that we tend to think that there's plenty of time and we'll get around to it before too long. The Bible has a very different view on that; James 4:14 says 'What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears.' And this is why Jesus' words in Luke 12:35-48 are so important. The gist of his message is this – stay ready, because you don't know when I'm coming back! And remember, the day of his coming will be different for all of us because it is effectively the day we die (or the day he actually returns).

1. TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE

Like servants waiting for their master to return... Verse 36

If the owner of the house had known... Verse 39

As human beings, we love classifying people. We do it according to gender, age, race and ethnicity, nationality and so on. In this text we see that there are in effect only two categories of people; those who are ready for Christ's return (the servants in V36, and the wise manager in V42), and those who aren't (the owner of the house in V39, and the unfaithful servant in V45). And what does readiness look like? Well from Luke 12 alone, we can see that it means avoiding hypocrisy (V1), fearing God not people (V4), publicly acknowledging the Lordship of Christ (V8), trusting the guidance of the Holy Spirit (V11), avoiding all kinds of greed (V15), trusting in God's provision (V30), seeking first the kingdom of God (V31), being generous towards the poor (V33). In short, being ready means receiving Christ as Lord and being empowered by the Spirit of God to bring glory to the Father in all things, at all times.

2. REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions Verse 44

He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unfaithful Verse 46

There are two groups of people – so what? The faithful (believers in Christ) will be rewarded and the unfaithful (those who don't believe in him) will be punished. In Luke 16:11 Jesus promises 'true riches' (in the new heavens and the new earth) if we are faithful with worldly possessions. Heaven is not going to be a 'one size fits all' deal; we will have different responsibilities according to how well or how badly we handled the things entrusted to us in this present age. This promise of a reward is intended to motivate us to give up everything (Luke 9:23) for the sake of God's kingdom! If there were no reward, we should live hedonistic lifestyles and secure for ourselves as much pleasure as we possibly can here and now! But that is not the case. Yes, we can and must enjoy God's creation and the life he's given us, but all the while understanding that enjoyment is not the highest priority just yet – one day we will know true, unfettered, unending joy; but for now, we must 'work while it is still day' (John 9:4).

As it shall be with rewards, so too with punishment. Jesus says in V46-48 that some will be cut to pieces, others beaten with many blows, and other still, beaten with few blows – all according to how much they knew of God and his ways, and how they responded to that knowledge. (Remember that even those who haven't heard the gospel are exposed to God's 'general revelation' through creation, and also have a conscience by virtue of being created in God's image (Romans 1:20; 2:14, 15). This strong language is not literal, but is faithfully represents the horror of facing God's judgement. This is the reality of the people sitting around you at the office – don't you think you should say something that could change their eternal destiny?

3. THE DANGER OF KNOWLEDGE

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Verse 48