

# Puzzling Parables

## *Unready and Robbed*

October 8, 2017

*Welcome to where we're learning to love others as Christ has loved us!*

**Do you have a servant's heart or a master's mindset?**



That will determine whether Jesus comes as a fellow Servant and faithful Friend, or an unexpected and dreaded Thief.

“Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who **stays awake** [lamps burning brightly] and **keeps his clothes with him**, [loins girded purposefully] so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed [when the Thief takes the soiled clothes that he trusted in].” – Revelation 16:15 NIV

**I've got good news and bad news: *He's coming.***

Last week we read the parable of The Good Waiters whose Master treats as friends.

Now let's read its counterpart: **The Dreaded Thief.**

Let's build to it by re-reading the first half from last week.

Be dressed **ready for service** [loins girded 24/7] and **keep your lamps burning**, [stay alert] **like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet**, [eagerly anticipating their faithful friend who loves to bring food and drink from the feast to serve to his servants] so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for [lit. *blessed are*] those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, **he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.** [They know this about him; that's why they eagerly await him] It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. **But understand this** [contrasting parable]: **if the owner of the house** [lit. *house-master* (as in: *the master of a house who serves only himself*)] had known at what hour **the thief** was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. **You** [house-masters] **also must be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. – Luke 12:35-40 NIV

**He comes unexpectedly to faithful-server and self-server alike.**

Those who lost their lives in Las Vegas last Sunday went to a music festival and suddenly found themselves before the Lord. **To some it likely came as joyful gain with an awaited Master. To others, no doubt, it came as woeful loss with a dreaded Thief.**

## Would you have been ready to meet your Maker?



On average, 6,316 people leave this world every hour.

From God's view, that's one death every *half-second!*

With that in mind, listen to Jesus *plead* with those who aren't prepared.

Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, **I will come like a thief**, [simply because you won't be ready and you'll suffer great loss] and you will not know at what time I will come to you. ... He who overcomes will, like **them** [“who have not soiled their clothes”], be dressed in white. **I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name** before my Father and his angels. – Revelation 3:2-5 NIV



What name will remain in *the Lamb's Book of Life*, (Rev 13:8) to be proclaimed to our Father by our Lord and Savior? *Bruce*? No. **Jesus records a new name on a white stone for those who overcome; also, He records His new name on them as well.** (Rev 2:17, 3:12) And, if you read carefully, it sounds like we all share the *same name*. And, *we do*. If what the new name represents is *true*.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “My **SERVANTS** will eat, but **you** [“who forsake the Lord” and “spread a table for fortune” (i.e. *who serve yourselves*)] will go **hungry** [when the Thief comes]; my **SERVANTS** will drink, but you will go **thirsty** [when the Thief comes]; my **SERVANTS** will rejoice, but you will be **put to shame** [when the Thief comes]. My **SERVANTS** will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will **cry out from anguish of heart** [because you didn't have a servant's heart] and **wail in brokenness of spirit** [when the Thief comes]. You will **leave your name** to my chosen ones as a curse; the Sovereign Lord will put you to death, but **to his SERVANTS he will give ANOTHER NAME** [and put them to life]. – Isaiah 65:13-15 NIV

And, when He came, He did just that.

At the Last Supper, after washing the feet of His disciples, the Sovereign Lord said:



My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. [“love each other as I have loved you”] **I no longer call you SERVANTS**, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, **I have called you FRIENDS** ... – John 15:12-15a NIV

**Our new name, friend, is engraved on the heart of our Rock, (Is 26:4) the Cornerstone, (Acts 4:11) who comes dressed in white, (Mt 28:3) when His same new name, Friend, is engraved on ours.**

Jesus said that many will say, on that day, **“Did we not serve you?”** (Mt 7:22) Yet, He will reply, **“I never knew you** (Mt 7:23) **... as friend.”**

**It’s not enough to serve – we must share His servant’s heart.**

We must be learning to love others as He has loved us.

**[The Apostle Paul writes about those]** ... who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel ... and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names are in the book of life.** – Philipians 4:3 NIV

**What will determine whether Jesus will come as loving Master or dreaded Thief?**

**Lordship. Who’s the true head of your house?**

If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... But **as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.** – Joshua 24:15 NIV

**But, it’s not *only* about lordship – it’s about relationship.**

**There must be a bond of *friendship* with the Lord.**

**He doesn’t want us serving out of guilt or fear or obligation.**

**He wants it to overflow from a joyful heart of appreciation.**

If there’s no desire to love others as Christ has loved us, then there’s most likely much ignorance regarding His great love, and where deep and lasting joy actually comes from.

**Our deepest joy will never come from *being served*.** That’s a lie perpetuated by all the self-serving house-masters of the world, who dread the thought of the loss death brings.

**But, to see a need and seize the moment brings deep joy.**

**Yet, we miss out on so many golden, God-given blessings simply because we haven’t sharpened our sensitivity and spontaneity.**



I used to run five miles from my house, up Burlington Hill to the cross and back. It took me *forever* to do it without stopping. And, the first time I really tried, I timed myself. Two miles to the hill! Up the hill! Down the hill! Home stretch! I knew I was going to impress myself. Until a girl waved me to stop along Hwy 20, pointed to an elderly woman, and asked if I would walk with her until help came. The woman was very confused.

**I agreed to help with the worst heart! I was *so mad* on the inside.**

**But, as I walked with her, my heart began to soften and change,** especially when a truck passed by with a big dog in the back, and I had to physically stop her from running out into traffic. She said it was her husband John coming to pick her up. I asked if he had a dog. She said, “Nope. But that’s just like John to pick up a stray!” **When I finally made it home, it was my worst time ever; and, the most memorable and satisfying run I’ve ever had.**

Jesus doesn’t demand that much from us. *He’s our Friend.*

**He only wants what we’ll wish we had done when we finally make it home.**

*... you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ... But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ... So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ... putting on faith and love as a breastplate ... – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-8 NIV*

All I really did on that running path was to put a pause on being the center of my universe for just a moment. **It doesn’t require a special gift or talent to care for others.**

**Just the right heart.**

But, *that* takes practice.



So, let’s practice serving each other right now; I need everyone to have three pennies. Dig in your pockets and purses and share. Your pennies have a head on one side and a house on the other.

**This week we’ll practice letting Jesus be the head of the house.**

Put three pennies in a left pocket; then, when you seize an opportunity to not be the center of your universe for just a moment, take a penny from your left side and put it on your right side.

That’s how Jesus separates the sheep from the goats. (Mt 25:31-33)

**It’s a penny for your thoughtfulness.**

One for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Spirit.

**And, at the end of each day, see if any “old goats” are left.**

Then, reset those on the right for the next day.

**Caring for others is an integral part of our created purpose.**

And, with a right heart, it brings deep and lasting joy.

**And, no one can rob you of *that*.**