

A Tale of Two Servants (Mat. 24:45-51)

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Working our way through Matthew 24

1. **The overall context: Jesus is responding to questions posed by the disciples in verse 3 concerning three events yet future to their day.**
 1. The destruction of the Jewish temple.
 2. The sign of his coming.
 3. And of the end of the age.

2. **Describing conditions associated with His Second Coming in judgment at the end of this age.**

Today's passage (Mathew 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? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 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, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.¹

Shifting from information to application.

- Doctrine is always linked to practice.
- Straight teaching (orthodoxy) is intended to produce straight living (orthopraxy)
- Without teaching, application is for naught.
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Series of warnings to His *professed followers*.

1. **As in the days of Noah (Mat. 24:37-44).**

Not watching, house broken into by the thief, taken in judgment.

2. **Faithful and evil servant (Mat. 24:45-51).**

Master delayed, stops watching, parties with the culture, cut in two and lumped with hypocrites, weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3. **Wise and foolish virgins (Mat. 25:1-13).**

Unprepared, shut out from the wedding feast, "I do not know you."

4. **Parable of Talents (Mat. 25:14-30)**

Unprofitable servant cast into outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Two servants

1. **Not warning non-believers or skeptics who outright reject God.**

Jesus doesn't expect them to be listening to his teaching or reading the scriptures.

2. **This is for those who sit under some amount of biblical instruction, but don't make it their own: the ubiquitous church-goer.**

3. **The non-overcomers of the 7 churches in chapters 2-3 of Revelation.**

4. **The lukewarm ones in the church of Laodicea whom Jesus says**

He will "vomit out of His mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

5. **What separates these two servants?**

- Both hear, both know.
- One applies and perseveres.
- The other drifts away, befriends the world, and even beats the faithful servants!

6. **The difference is at the core of the person: in matters of *faith* and *heart*.**

A. **Only manifests with time, a gradual process: *while the return of the master is delayed.***

B. **Expectation wanes**

C. **Friendship and entanglement with the culture grows.**

D. **Self-deceived concerning their relationship with Jesus: embracing anti-Christ beliefs while calling Him Lord.**

- The 5 foolish virgins, "Lord, Lord, open to us! I say to you, 'I do not know you'" (Mat. 25:11).
- Involved in Christian activities, but not known by Jesus. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of My Father in heaven*. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, '*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

7. **Requires great discernment.**

- Here called a “fellow servant.”
- Yet ultimate destiny and response by Jesus indicates these were never true believers.
- Some we interact with on many issues may simply be disobedience or confused believers, others are ministers of Satan within the professing church.

Characteristics of the evil servant.

1. Feigned obedience

A. “. . . says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming'" (Mat. 24:48)

I. Obedience of the evil servant is only for show, not internal

- While the master is away, I can behave like the unsaved.
- How foolish: the master is omniscient and omnipresent!

II. “says in his *heart*” - his innermost soul betrays his true allegiance.

III. Grouped with the hypocrites

- Tries to appear one way externally.
- Lives (and therefore believes) another way in reality.
- A false brother, a deceived agent of Satan in the midst of the true people of God.

B. Since the master isn't coming back soon. . .

I. The master will come . . . when he is not looking for him (Mat. 24:50). *The servant is not looking!*

II. One characteristic of the evil servant is a lack or loss of interest in the coming of Jesus.

III. The importance of prophetic teaching as motivation for Christian living.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, *since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness. . .?*” (2 Peter 3:10-11)

2. Begins to . . . eat and drink with the drunkards (Mat. 24:49).

A. Instead of *servicing* he is *consuming*.

B. Hanging out with the drunkards, a friend of the world.

I. An ever-present danger: loving the world over Jesus

- Paul wrote to Timothy concerning Demas: “Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having *loved this present world*, and has departed for Thessalonica . . .” (2 Timothy [4:9-10](#)).

II. The evil servant purports to “love Jesus,” but actually harbors great disdain for His bride - the faithful church.

- Friendship with the world is enmity with God and hence, His followers “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? *Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God* (James [4:4](#)).”
- Faithful service to God will entail rejection by the culture.
- “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world*” (John [17:14-16](#)).
- If we love the world, we will not abide under the world's scorn of God. We will depart for the accolades of the world.

C. Signs of accommodation with the culture: the nurturing of an evil servant.

Embracing anti-Christ beliefs from the God-rejecting culture: a consistent pattern of bending what the bible teaches to fit the culture.

I. Frog (professing Christian) in boiling pot (accommodation with the culture).

II. Championing the moral fads of the world over clear biblical teaching.

- Marriage optional for sexual relations.
- An unborn human is not fully a person.
- Denial of sexual role distinctions.
 - Women as leaders of the home.
 - Ordination of women as pastors.
 - Homosexual marriage.
 - Some may find this association of Christian feminism or egalitarianism with support for homosexual marriage offensive, but at their core these views have much in common in their shared rejection of clear biblical teaching.
- Self as the authority on all matters.
 - Rejection of biblical and church authority.
 - Intermittent participation in fellowship (rejection of Heb [10:25](#)).
 - The myth of the independent Christian.
 - If you are disconnected and have isolated yourself from local fellowship, how on earth can you, as a servant, be feeding *His*

household?

III. Redefining Jesus as a peacenik whose primary concern is the restoration of social systems and the environment, rather than the salvation of the lost.

- No such thing as just war.
- Opposition to capital punishment.
- Focus on social gospel instead of biblical discipleship.

IV. Seeking accolades and acceptance from the culture.

- Christian Schmoozers, often in positions of leadership. Schmoozing: “to chat in a friendly and persuasive manner, especially so as to gain favor or connections.”
- Pandering to the culture for acceptance rather than truth.
- Refreshing exceptions such as John MacArther on Larry King Live.

3. Beating fellow servants

A. Not passive, but actively hostile to the true servants of God.

B. Reminiscent of Jesus' warning in verse 10

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another” (Mat. 24:10).

- A unique time of betrayal at the hands of professing believers.
- All through history, the false saints have actively opposed the true saints.
- We fully expect opposition and persecution from unbelievers and atheists, but not from “fellow believers.”
- My own amazement after coming to faith.

C. Example: rejecting the biblical teaching of creation in favor of the world's love affair with the fairytale story of evolution.

- BioLogos: attempting to make Christianity palatable to those who reject the historicity of Genesis.
- “Christians and secularists alike are in danger of treating 'Darwin vs the Bible' as just another battlefield in the polarized 'culture wars'. This grossly misrepresents both science and faith. BioLogos not only shows that there is an alternative, but actually models it. *God's world and God's word go together in a rich, living harmony.*” -- N. T. Wright
- “We believe that the diversity and interrelation of all life on earth are best explained by the *God-ordained process of evolution and common descent*. Thus, evolution is not in opposition to God, but a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes.”
- When Ken Ham points out the complete travesty these people make of the Bible,

a number of whom deny a literal Adam and Eve, he finds himself permanently uninvited from all future conventions of a particular homeschool organization. (Good for him! Rejoice!)

- Pathetic: assuring the culture that the bible makes room for evolution while chiding those who uphold the biblical teaching of origins.
- Friendly with the world's God-rejecting notion of history while expressing enmity for those who uphold the clear teaching of Scripture to the contrary.

4. Unaware of the master approaching as a thief

- verse 50, "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" (Mat. [24:50](#)).
- Contrast with true believers: "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night" (1 Thessalonians [5:4-7](#)).
- Called a fellow servant [συνδούλος](#) [*syndoulos*], but only in name.
- The penalty is severe: "The master will . . . cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mat. [24:50-51](#)).
- This is not talking about mere loss of rewards!

Characteristics of the faithful servant.

1. **Wise: thoughtful, knows and applies the principles of God.**
2. **Actively serving - giving food to God's household**

All who use their gifts in the service of the body of Christ. Especially the shepherds who are to "feed My sheep."

3. **Faithful**

- Comparison is not between *good vs evil*, but *faithful vs. evil*.
- Faithfulness: the *unspectacular underrated* fruit of the Spirit (Gal. [5:22](#))
- Christians today seem to be about everything *but* faithfulness.
- Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man? (Pr. [20:6](#))
- And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2Ti. [2:2](#))

4. **Remains steadfast - continuing in service when the master arrives.**

How to be the faithful servant?

1. **See the big picture of the body of Christ in history and your part in the stream of faithfulness in the midst of apostasy.**

2. Become absolutely convinced you are called according to His purpose.

- “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called *according to His purpose*. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? *If God is for us, who can be against us?*” (Romans [8:28-31](#))
- Ability to continue to stand when inexplicable tragedy strikes.

3. Daily intake of the Word of God.

- This is our lifeline which anchors us and keeps us from being swept along in the mighty current of a God-rejecting culture.
- And do not be *conformed to this world* . . . [how?] . . . be transformed *by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. [12:2](#))
- We are either being conformed or transformed!
- Where are we spending our time and our focus?
- We can't find time for the Scriptures, but we idle away oodles of time with media and the internet. Is this idolatry?

4. Reflect on what it cost God to purchase you as His slave.

- Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders: “therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts [20:28](#))
- “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, *conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here* in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, *from your aimless conduct* received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter [1:17-19](#)).
- “. . . do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians [6:19-20](#)).

Endnotes:

1. NKJV, Mat. [24:45-51](#)

Sources:

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Links Mentioned Above

[a](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm) - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.