

► **Read Luke 12:35–59.**

1. Through much of this passage Jesus is looking ahead to his second coming. He begins by telling two parables. Reread Luke 12:35–48 aloud. What themes do you see? (Look for how Jesus uses repetition to reinforce what he is saying.)
2. What characterizes servants that Jesus commends in the first parable? (vv. 35–40, 43; 📖* 1 Pet. 1:13)
3. Why is it important for the servants to be “watching” (v. 37)? (vv. 36, 38, 40)
4. What surprising thing does this master of the house do when he returns home? (v. 37)
5. In what ways does Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, practically and figuratively “dress himself to serve” (v. 37) his servants? (Jn. 13:1–5; 1 Cor. 11:23–25; Mt. 20:28)

6. The master in the parable is Jesus, the Son of Man (v. 40). The timing of his return is not for us, his servants, to know. What should we be occupied with while we await his return?
v. 40

Mk. 8:32–33

1 Thess. 5:1–11

2 Pet. 3:10–14

7. In verse 41, Peter asks Jesus to clarify whom the parable was directed to. Instead of answering, Jesus tells a second parable.

a. How is the behavior of the faithful servant different from the behavior of the unfaithful servant?
(vv. 42–48)

b. What challenges are there for the servants in this parable? (vv. 42–48;  2 Pet. 3:3–7)

c. Do you identify with any of these challenges? If so, in what way?

8. The “master” in this second parable does something that is utterly surprising. What is it? (v. 46)

9. How will the unfaithful servant be held accountable for his abuse in the master’s household?
(vv. 46–48)

10. Read verses 45–46. What tips us off to the fact that the unfaithful servant is not a true follower of Jesus? (v. 46b;  Acts 20:29) (Note: This passage might remind you of Luke 11:39–53 in which the Pharisees, who were supposed to be servants of God, are in fact in opposition to his purposes.)

“The [unfaithful] steward is not given a mere beating, but a mortal blow and a total separation. It represents a total rejection—a painful death as opposed to a punishment. This type of punishment is the most severe possible. ... This servant is rejected—as Matthew 24:51 says, placed among the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹

11. Read Luke 12:49–59. This passage is all about understanding the times.
a. Why is it essential for the “baptism” to precede the “fire”? (vv. 49–50)

Fire & Baptism

“The reference to fire appears to suggest judgment (Lk. 3:9, 17; 9:54; 17:29). In the Old Testament fire often refers to the stinging word that came through the prophets (Jer. 5:14; 23:29). ... [Baptism, on the other hand,] must be a reference to his approaching death (Mk. 10:38–39). So Jesus fully anticipates that the opposition forming about him will lead to his death. More specifically, baptism probably alludes to the ‘inundation of the waters of divine judgment’...²

- b. What are some of the signs of the times? (vv. 50–53)

12. In verses 56–57 Jesus is incredulous that the people are unaware of the time they are living in: God’s salvation through the long-awaited Messiah has come, and those who reject him will face judgment. In light of this, why is it important to be reconciled before appearing before the judge? (vv. 57–59; Jn. 3:18; 2 Cor. 6:1–2;  Heb. 9:27–28)

13. Reflect back on this week’s passage and read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. Describe how Jesus’ promised return encourages you, inspires you to live differently, puts suffering and struggles in a different perspective, challenges what is important to you, helps you with temptations, etc. Sharing this might be a way to encourage others in your life or small group.

* For further study

¹ Bock, Darrell L.; <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Luke/Discipleship-Trusting-God>

² IVP New Testament Commentary; <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Luke/Know-Time-Israel-Turns-Away>