

November 23, 2025 - Luke 12:35-59 - "Live Ready Today"

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Date: 23 November 2025

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0:00] The reading will be Luke chapter 12, verses 35-59. Stay dressed for action, and keep your lamps burning.

! And be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in a second watch or in the third and finds them awake, blessed are those servants.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Peter said, Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all? And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time?

[1:16] Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, My master is delayed in coming, and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.

And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating.

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required. And from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished.

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two, and two against three.

They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

[2:44] He also said to the crowds, when you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, a shower is coming, and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say there will be scorching heat, and it happens.

You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?

As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison.

I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny. This is God's word.

Thanks be to God. Such a joy to have the word of God open to us.

[3 : 48] There's a lot going on in this passage, especially how you emphasized and read that, the mother and the mother, and I was just like, wow. Wow. You know?

You could probably put that to a rap beat. As long as I get some of the royalties for the idea. But it's a large chunk of passage.

But I'm going to actually try to challenge us to see that it's not as complex as we may actually interpret it and see it as we unpack Scripture's meaning, and especially the point behind it.

I want to talk today about readiness. Because it's possible to spend your entire life getting ready for things that ultimately won't matter.

We're like really good at that. Stressing out over stuff that really isn't like significant in the grand scope of eternity. We plan.

[5 : 01] We prepare. We save. We organize. We strategize. We anticipate. All things, whether small or large. It could be job responsibilities or maybe a job interview.

Wedding. Vacations. Some of us stress about it and plan for that. Christmas. It's coming. You've been stressing about that since December 26th last year, right?

Oh, we've got to do this again? Retirement for those older in years. Or maybe for parents, you stress about the kid's schedule.

Or for all of us, just we stress about getting ready for next week. Or maybe even tomorrow morning. And yet at the same time, it is scary how possible it is to be tragically unprepared for the one arrival that matters most.

We get things backwards. I get things backwards. We know how to get ready for what is temporary. We got that down pat.

[6 : 13] But it's like we drift carelessly towards, carelessly from anything that's eternal. We feel urgency in what's passing, but numbness towards what's permanent.

And this inversion of misprioritization, that inversion may be one of the most dangerous conditions of the human soul.

Jesus tells us today that readiness is not a moment. Readiness is not a moment, but it's a lifestyle. Readiness is not a scramble.

Readiness is not a scramble. Any parents preparing to have a child? You got that go bag, right? That you're supposed to prepare ahead of time so that when that baby decides to come, you're ready to go.

Unless you're like us. We're just like, ah, we got some time. Surprise! That baby's coming. Right? Right?

[7 : 18] It's not a moment. It's a lifestyle. Jesus has just warned the crowds about greed.

Comforting them about worry. But now he presses deeper into this unfolding theme that began at the beginning of the chapter, relating to fearing the Lord.

Which, believe it or not, is carrying in all the way to verse 59. As this undergirding current throughout this entire, the past three sermons.

And so he's just been unfolding this, and he's moving now from these symptoms of greed and worry, and he's really getting to the point of readiness.

A heart check of readiness, which unveils a lot about our priorities. About what we worship and what we don't worship. And Jesus moves from exposing our symptoms to diagnosing the hearts.

[8 : 29] And that's where his call to continual readiness begins. The sermon title today and the main point is Live Ready Today.

Now I'm going to break this chaos of a passage in all its parts into three different sections.

Number one, because I'm Baptist, and there's a strange conviction for Baptist preachers to always have three-point sermons. Thank you, Carmen. One, the other is that I was tossing back and forth, how can I break this up to be helpful to you and to serve you with God's Word today?

I went between two sections and landed on three. I think that that will help us to observe and to follow along the best that we possibly can. If you're new with us, keep your Bibles open.

We have some in the chairs. And just keep your finger on the text as we go through this passage. Take some notes to remind yourself of the sermon tomorrow.

[9 : 42] But let us be helped by God's Word today. And let me pray as we begin this first section. Let's pray. Father, we are desperate to hear your voice.

We are desperate for you to fill the void of silence with your voice. We desire for you to speak to us.

And we know you speak to us by your Word. Help us to hear you today. We pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. The first section is the posture of readiness. Posture of readiness.

And this section covers five verses from verse 35 to verse 40. And so readiness for Christ's return, this eternal perspective, this eternal readiness, means faithful, ongoing stewardship of all that He has entrusted to us.

[10 : 59] He says in verse 35, look with me. Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning. This literally is translated as, let your loins be girded.

I love that. Cover them loins. Get them girded. This might bring up an image of these Jewish people who have these long robes.

That was in style back then. I guess it's still in style. Carmen's always harping about getting a robe to preach in and maybe a hat. I don't know what he's thinking. Long robes that they had back in this day.

And to have your loins girded, this would be like if you're about to run or do something back in that day, you would pull that robe up, kind of like a wedding dress, you know, with the train and, you know, go to the reception.

You'd have that thing up and ready. You'd be tucked in. This is literally what it means to have your loins girded. To be ready. Tucked in. Ready to go.

[12 : 07] And so this might bring a picture of maybe a runner. If you're a track runner or cross-country runner, you've got your shoes laced. They're not untied. You've got your stretches in.

You're warmed up. You're locked in. You might think of a soldier. Got your helmet on. Got your armor on. You've got your boots tied.

Everything's ready to go. Or firefighter. You've got your gear on. Your coat's zipped. Your helmet's on. Everything is ready. Stay dressed for action.

And keep your lamps burning. Now, Jesus doesn't say, get ready. He says, live ready. Stay dressed. This is significant. It's a tense of living in the present ready.

[13:07] Not a beginning, but an already ready. And then he says, to keep your lamps burning. Lamps are interesting because they show, in the context of Luke's gospel, this inner alertness.

To keep your lamps burning. So, maybe your spiritual wick, right, being trimmed. Your oil is all filled. You're ready to shine light.

Your eyes are open. You see this alertness. So, don't only be ready, but be alert. Have you ever stayed awake for someone to get home late at night?

Maybe for some parents here who have young drivers, it's that first drive where the kid's out on the road. Or maybe for kids, waiting for your parents to come home from a business trip or traveling.

I mean, it's in those moments where you don't fall asleep. You can't fall asleep. Your heart's listening. Your eyes are scanning for headlights out the door. You're alert.

[14:14] And Jesus says, this is how my disciples are to live. Stay dressed for action. Be alert.

And it says in verse 36, be like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast. And so, when he knocks, he doesn't have to knock more than once or twice because that door is going to fly open because the servants are ready in that house for that door to knock.

And it's interesting because there's a shocking twist in this. And this is very significant. And this is where things get Christ-centered.

It says, blessed are those servants. Why? Because they know how to stay awake? Why? Because they know how to open a door? No. It's because he will dress himself.

This master will dress himself for service and serve them. So, the end of their readiness is to be served by the master.

[15:28] Not to be prepared. It's not about opening the door, but about who's walking through the door. This reverses everything that the ancient listeners of this culture would have expected of masters.

Because masters don't serve. They're not expected to serve their slaves, their servants. But Jesus says, those who stay awake will be served by the master himself.

And this echoes this Christ-centered Last Supper wedding feast. And even anticipates that great banquet to come in the end.

In verse 38, it doesn't matter what hour of the night it is. This readiness is to be through the second watch, the third watch.

These are the late hours. Y'all know midnight shifts. This is the late hours. The deepest, most exhausting hours of life.

[16:37] Those who are awake are blessed. The parable shifts just for a quick moment.

And Jesus shifts from this wedding return, which is number one, unexpected. And number two, uncertain in timing. He turns very quickly to a thief breaking in as well.

Which is also unexpected. But it's also disruptive. And this further stresses the rationale for readiness.

And so what's the point between this master and this thief? Well, you can't predict the moment. You can't delay readiness.

You can't say, tomorrow I'm going to get ready. That's not what Jesus is talking about for his disciples. You can't gamble with tomorrow.

- [17:38] You have to be ready. And before we move on, Jesus won't let us keep this from getting dry.
- As if it's theoretical. I believe that this is intended not only to press the disciples' heart of who do they serve.
- To prioritize their lives. But I think it presses our lives as well. I think it really does. Do you live the call to this continual readiness as Christians?
- Are you spiritually awake? Or maybe have you spiritually been drifting? Has your Bible remained closed while the lamp is sort of growing dim?
- Has secret sin that we would be absolutely disgusted over? If we would actually hear the confessions that we just went through?
- [18:45] Of the sin that is secret to man but known by God. Has that been smothering your wick?
- Have excuses made you spiritually sluggish? Are you assuming that maybe you'll get serious later on?
- The level of our preparedness says a lot about the priority that God has within our hearts. A lot. Jesus is diagnosing the heart.
- And the fear of the Lord. See, Jesus says, live as someone who expects me today. Not paranoid.
- But prepared. Not fearful. But faithful. Not scrambling. Like the Becks expecting this child that suddenly decided to come.
- [19:50] And scrambling to get that go bag. To get going. To get going. No. Standing ready now in the present. I believe that this is already beginning to prod our hearts.
- As it should. But readiness isn't just about staying awake. It's about what we do while we're awake. So Jesus turns this imagery from the master and the thief.
- He turns this imagery of waiting to imagery of working. So closing the book on waiting. So closing the book on waiting and alertness.
- Now he talks about working. In other words, the posture of readiness to responsibility of readiness.
- And that's exactly what we see in this second section. From verse 41 to 48. The responsibility of readiness. Peter opens his mouth in verse 41.
- [20:56] That's always an interesting object here. He says, Lord, is this for us? Like, never mind.
- I'll have words with Peter someday in eternity. Peter says, Lord, is this for us? Are you talking to us? I mean, we're ready. We're with you.
- We left our fishing business to follow you. We're ready. Jesus doesn't answer directly. Instead, he tells them a parable.
- Which this is why the text kind of complicates itself. Because it's like parable on parable. But he answers that question of who this is regarding with another parable.
- And so let's wrap our heads around this. So this is the faithful and wise steward. In verse 42, a steward manages the master's household and distributes food at the proper time.
- [22:02] We see that in verse 42. So, in other words, yes, Peter. Yes, disciples. This has everything to do with you.
- You are stewards of my house, right? You are responsible for my people. Well, this really hit me this week.
- As I think it should as well. Because this speaks to leadership as a principle. Anyone in leadership as a principle. Especially leadership in Christ's church.

Who no leader in this church building owns you guys. You are Christ's people. We are merely stewards of Christ's people.

As shepherds. He owns the flock. We tend. Right? A pastor doesn't own the sheep. And y'all don't own the ministry that you serve in.

[23:06] You don't own it. And guess what? We don't own the glory either. Christians, I think you should understand, are servants that are entrusted with the master's property.

Literally, theologically speaking, everything in your life you are a steward of. It isn't just about money.

It's about responsibility. In verse 43, we see faithfulness as servants of Jesus Christ have this ongoing obedience.

What are we stewards in? Well, it says doing this until the master comes. Having, distributing food at the proper time.

Doing this until the master comes. And what's the reward of this work? More trust.

[24:10] Greater responsibility. He says in this verse, He will set that servant over all his possessions.

Fully entrusted to them. You see, this is where this parable is not merely moral. Of be responsible.

Because Christ told us we're going to be responsible. No. It's actually Christ-centered. It's Christological. This parable. The returning master is the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

All glory to God alone. But, verse 45 and 46, we see the parable turn, kind of a dark turn, to a negligent servant.

Some servants abuse their authority. They beat others. They indulge themselves.

[25:16] They forget their master is returning. These would be the self-absorbed leaders. I don't think we have to look far to see the wreckage that happens, unfortunately and sadly, within the church.

Of negligent leaders. Stories of leaders who have used their position to abuse that which they are called to steward.

Through sexual abuse. Through spiritual abuse. Emotional abuse. Verbal abuse.

You see husbands abusing physically. Wives abusing physically. I mean, we have lost our minds. Sin has corrupted us.

Right? These leaders who manipulate and devour the flock. Negligent leaders. Negligent servants.

[26:26] Jesus uses strong language here. He will cut him in pieces. And assign him with the unfaithful.

Now, you probably heard David reading this text and being like, what? Who's getting chopped up? You know, you just like zoned out for a minute. You know somebody's like reading and something's going on.

You just tune back in. What? Are we in the book of Judges? No. He says these negligent servants will be cut in pieces.

And assign him with the unfaithful. And this is not cruelty. This is justice. It's justice. It's justice. It's justice.

For spiritual predators who harm the vulnerable. Who neglect those that they are to steward. Vengeance rests within the hands of the Lord, doesn't it?

[27:33] And victims will be avenged one day. Maybe you're here today and that's your story.

You probably find it surprising that you even stepped back into a church after what happened to you. Vengeance is in the hands of the Lord.

You see it from Christ's own word. You will be cut into pieces. You will be avenged.

And so whether this is symbolic language or not, I don't think that this is a prescriptive of capital punishment to people to just go and chop people up. But it's symbolic.

But I think the point is certainly clear. Those who use Christ's name and Christ's people for their own gain will face a very serious judgment.

[28:32] Very serious. Terrifying judgments. And there's not even excuses for the negligence. Like while these are negligent, there's no excuses for these people who are like, I didn't know, but I was brought in.

I don't know what I'm doing. He says the one who knew the master's will and ignored it receives many blows. So there's a pretty significant act of vengeance to the one who knew and did not do.

But the one who did not know still is judged for being a dummy and not learning God's will. Right?

He receives few. And so there's a degree of judgment for leadership, for those who are stewards. And so ignorance reduces the punished, but it does not remove accountability.

Right? And it ends in verse 48. The principle that hangs over pastors, that maybe hangs over parents, because you know that you were entrusted to your own little flock as parents.

[29:44] It hangs over you. Anyone who's been entrusted as a steward says to whom much is given, much will be required.

There's not much dancing around with that. The passage is, like, awfully clear in this. Let's ask our hearts right now.

Where are you neglecting what God has entrusted to you? I want to speak directly to a couple different categories of people today.

I want to talk to husbands. Have you stopped shepherding your family? Parents, have you settled for just being a referee in the household rather than a discipler?

That one hurt. Church members, are you using your gifts actively or just kind of cozing in your seat?

[31:06] Kind of blending in and burying the gifts that God has given you? My fellow pastors here and leaders, are you feeding the sheep or are you merely just feeding yourself?

For all of us, are we stewarding the gospel or wasting opportunities? Church, Jesus is not playing games with leadership.

He's not. Neglect is judged. Abuse is judged. Laziness is judged. But faithfulness is always blessed.

From Christ's own words. Now having shown us personal accountability to Him, Jesus shows us the urgency of responding to Him.

Now in the third section, we see the urgency of readiness. It's important for us to know that Christ brings fire and division before He brings final peace and repentance.

[32:19] Repentance cannot be delayed. And I think that this is both in the scope of Christians and non-Christians.

If you're not a Christian today, welcome. This is for you too. But it's for both of us. We all really need to think about this. In verse 49, He says, Now in Luke's gospel, fire is equivalent with judgment.

Symbolic to represent judgments. See that in chapter 3, chapter 9, chapter 17. And so what this is saying is a lot of people are probably like, Well, I thought He was the fluffy Jesus holding the lamb, right, on the stained glass.

There used to be one back here. I don't know what happened to it. But maybe John Calvin crushed it, if you know church history. But, you know, this is saying that Jesus came to earth and it casted fire.

Judgment. This is significant because Jesus' ministry is not neutral. It is offensive.

[33 : 43] Jesus Christ, His ministry, divides wheat from chaff. It divides true from false. And His mission is absolute.

Verse 50 even goes on. He says of baptism. And this isn't water baptism. But it's a flood of suffering. A flood of suffering.

The agony that we see upon a blood-stained cross for the redemption of humanity. He says that He is pressed. This word pressed can be translated hemmed in.

He is stitched to that purpose until He completes it. In other words, He's bent towards the cross. His readiness is bent towards the cross.

And so, since God's judgment passes through Jesus before it ever comes to us, in the scope of redemption, readiness then is not just a moral effort.

[34 : 49] It's aligning with the one who walks through the fire and sinks under the flood for His own people.

Christ was ready. And He says in verse 51, Do you think that I came to bring peace? No. No. I came to divide.

This would shock the first century hearers. I mean, they expected this Messiah, the Prince of Peace of Isaiah 9 to come. And He will bring it.

That's not saying that He won't fulfill Isaiah 9. But, He will bring it, but not by smoothing over sin. Not by comforting, keeping sinners comfortable.

That's not how it's going to be done. But only through repentance and the cross is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

[36 : 00] When the real biblical Jesus comes, I don't care what you saw in the Super Bowl commercials about this social Jesus Christ sitting next to the immigrants and things like that, and that He gets us.

I'm not talking about that Jesus. When you look at the biblical Jesus here, when He comes, He does not just come to calm things down, to make sinners feel comfortable.

He forces a division. A division that divides people because of their decision. In verse 52 and 53, this is experienced in families.

Families will be divided over Him. In that rap song David just wrote today, Jesus echoes Micah 7, verse 6 here, that says, As judgment nears as the time is running out, homes are going to be fractured over loyalty to God.

I don't know if you were sleeping in the announcement, but Thanksgiving is this week. Crazy uncle's coming. It's not Uncle Carmen.

[37 : 26] It might be. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what your plans are. I don't know what Carmen's plans are, but... No, Lord. The Lord does sanctify us.

But homes are going to be fractured. There's going to be division. Jesus is not telling us to be jerks to people who don't believe in Him.

Not to be obnoxious. Or to even seek and lean into family conflict. To tick your Hindu married-in cousin, some brother of somebody.

You know, tick them off just because they're not a believer. No. He's telling us that following Jesus will reorder our loyalties. And sometimes that will result in a rupture in our relationships.

We should expect that. So following Jesus may actually be costly to you. Many of you probably feel it. Some of you have lost family relationships because of your faith in Christ.

[38 : 37] Some of you will walk on eggshells at this next Thanksgiving meal. Some of you will be actually mocked and misunderstood and pressured to shut up about Jesus.

But how much of a comfort is it that Jesus sees you and He warned you today?

None of it will be wasted. Because loyalty to Christ always costs something. But loyalty to anything else costs everything.

In addition to that cost to Christians, Jesus turns to the crowds, talking to the unbelievers to count the cost as well.

In verse 54, this crowd had people who literally could interpret weather. They were amateur meteorologists.

[39 : 45] Paul Wetzel would have been on the edge there. I love mentioning Paul Wetzel. I don't know Paul. I hope I meet him someday. I love Paul.

These people were amateur meteorologists. They could tell all these things that are happening. They could read the weather. They could tell if rain's coming or if there's heat waves coming. But they couldn't read.

In verse 56, they couldn't read the present time. These are the crowds that surrounded Jesus Christ. They were clueless.

The signs were everywhere. There were healings, exorcisms. There was authoritative teaching, fulfilled prophecy, rising opposition, but they refused to connect the dots.

In other words, the same people who would say that a storm is coming, I need to repent. There's a storm coming, I need to prepare. The same people that he's saying that they're not seeing that judgment coming and they need to repent.

[40 : 49] Like, it's just completely opposite. Those who fail to see the signs fail to realize the danger that's ahead.

If you're not in Christ today, there is danger ahead. There is legitimate danger. All of us, here in this room, are on our way to court.

Satan, the plaintiff, is dragging us to court. We will see the judge.

We will see the adversary. But this is the call. If you're not in Christ today, you can settle this case right now.

You could win it. If you settle now, you will be free from God's judgment. If you wait, you will lose everything.

[42 : 04] You will lose everything. What signs is God flashing in your life? This crowd had the miracles.

They had all these things. They knew that a storm was coming and they needed to prepare, but they couldn't see that judgment was coming and that they need to repent.

Is God flashing that warning right now for you? Maybe a conviction that you keep ignoring or a warning that you just keep brushing off time and time again.

Jesus says, settle now. Have faith in Christ. Repent of your sin and cling to Jesus Christ.

Cling to him and come. And you can settle the case now. So whether it's the call to readiness or the weight of stewardship or this crisis in the moment, Jesus is not calling you to something that he himself will not sustain you in.

[43 : 17] That's the good news about this entire passage. We can be negligent servants, but our story doesn't have to end that way. We are a moment of repenting and turning from our sin, from making the difference and coming to Christ.

Jesus will sustain us. Ceaseless vigilance. I mean, that stuff can be tiring. I mean, I think he's trying to actually put that on us. Like, this is hard to do.

The first, the second, the third watch of the night. It can be tiring. Staying spiritually awake is very exhausting. It can be exhausting. But Jesus never calls us to a readiness that he himself won't sustain.

He will sustain you. The master who keeps, sorry, the master who asks you to keep your lamp burning is the master who trims your wick.

He will sustain you. The master who asks you to stay awake is the master who he himself is awake over you. The master who warns you of fire is the master who walked through the flame on behalf of you.

[44 : 33] And the master who warns you of coming judgment is the master who settles the case by his own blood. Live ready today.

Live ready today. Staying awake and alert, faithfully managing what he gives, and settling with God now.

Let's pray.