

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

~ **The Master Who Served His Slaves** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Luke 12:22-59
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

New American Standard Bible (NASB) Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible. New Living Translation copyright© 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Luke 12:22-59 NASB	Luke 12:22-59 NLT
<p>And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span? ²⁶ If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.</p> <p>³³ “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.</p> <p>³⁵ “Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. ³⁶ Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. ³⁸ Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.</p>	<p>²² Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! ²⁵ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁶ And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things?</p> <p>²⁷ “Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ²⁸ And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?</p> <p>²⁹ “And don’t be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don’t worry about such things. ³⁰ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. ³¹ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.</p> <p>³² “So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.</p> <p>³³ “Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.</p> <p>³⁵ “Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and</p>

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

³⁹“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

⁴¹ Peter said, “Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?” ⁴² And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? ⁴³ Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; ⁴⁶ the master of that slave 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 assign him a place with the unbelievers. ⁴⁷ And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, ⁴⁸ but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

⁴⁹ “I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; ⁵² for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴ And He was also saying to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out. ⁵⁵ And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?”

⁵⁷ “And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right? ⁵⁸ For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.”

knocks. ³⁷ The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! ³⁸ He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.

³⁹ “Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”

⁴¹ Peter asked, “Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?”

⁴² And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴³ If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁴ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁵ But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁴⁶ The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful.

⁴⁷ “And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. ⁴⁸ But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.

⁴⁹ “I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning! ⁵⁰ I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. ⁵¹ Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other! ⁵² From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or two in favor and three against.

⁵³ ‘Father will be divided against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’”

⁵⁴ Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said, “When you see clouds beginning to form in the west, you say, ‘Here comes a shower.’ And you are right. ⁵⁵ When the south wind blows, you say, ‘Today will be a scorcher.’ And it is. ⁵⁶ You fools! You know how to interpret the weather signs

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

	<p>of the earth and sky, but you don't know how to interpret the present times.</p> <p>⁵⁷ "Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right?" ⁵⁸ When you are on the way to court with your accuser, try to settle the matter before you get there. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ And if that happens, you won't be free again until you have paid the very last penny."</p>
--	--

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

The following insights are from Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels by Malina and Rohrbaugh

- Although many people certainly were anxious about their future, most people were anxious about daily bread. These would normally be the peasants.
- Although the statements not to fear or be anxious would comfort the poor, they were also addressed to the rich who had an abundance. We must remember that Jesus had just dealt with a man who wanted him to settle a family dispute about the inheritance. Jesus identified greed in his life and told a parable about a rich man who stored up treasure on earth, but not treasure with God. The statements would speak to the rich as well as the poor.
- The lily that Jesus refers to is thought to be the Crown Anemone, a crimson flower that blossoms in late February into April around the Sea of Galilee and throughout the Jordan Valley.
- Although parables of masters and slaves were common in the ancient world, there is no other parable or story that mentions a master serving his slaves!
- Casting fire upon the earth is an idiom for "getting things started."
- The family divisions described in verses 50-53 could be matters of life or death in a world where family or clan relationships were of the utmost importance. Allegiance to Jesus cut across even these important social units.
- The west wind brings moisture from the Mediterranean. The south wind brings the desert heat.
- The background to verses 57-59 is most likely losing land over debt. In AD 66, when the Zealots took over the Temple, their first action was to burn the records of peoples' debts! If the background to this passage is Roman law, a person in debt would have two choices – pay back the debt owed by further work or be thrown into prison where one would stay until family members paid a ransom for release.

The following insights are from Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*.

- When Jesus told the people to "be dressed in readiness," he was referring to men and women wearing robes that nearly touched the ground. People would wear them without belts. The hot climate made loose fitting clothing preferable. Strenuous activity would

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

require the robes to be tied about the waist. Moses told the Israelites to have their robes tied so they would be ready to go (Exodus 12:11). Elijah did this before he ran from Ahab (1 Kings 18:46) and God told Jeremiah to do this in preparation for his ministry (Jeremiah 1:17). Today we say, “get your boots on.”

- Keeping the lamps lit is essential because in a world with no electricity, it is very difficult to light a lamp in the dark.
- The master knocks – why? In the Middle East, a person would call out before entering a room because his voice would be familiar. Only a stranger knocks. But the master knocks within his own house, presumably because he does not want his voice to reverberate through the house. He has left the great ballroom or party room where the wedding feast has been held, and he has entered the private quarters of the servants and does not want to call attention to himself.
- In a wealthy household, there would be this order of rank – the master, the mistress and children, the steward of the house, the foremen, hired staff, day workers, servants.
- The master comes in and does the unthinkable – he serves the servants! A master would serve his guests, but not his servants. This idea is not found anywhere else in any writings of the ancient world.

The following insights are from the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*.

- “Do not be afraid, little flock.” God’s people were referred to as a flock in Psalm 78:52; Isaiah 40:11; Micha 2:12; 5:4
- A master returning from a wedding feast late into the night or even at daybreak was common as weddings would often be held at night and last many hours.
- Many Jewish parables use the motif of a master going on a long journey, returning home, and catching someone unprepared. Gluttony and drunkenness were signs of squandering a master’s wealth.
- Cutting one to pieces, dismemberment, sometimes occurred before an execution or after an execution where a body would be mutilated.

3. Answer these reflective questions.

Four times Jesus told his disciples not to worry or be afraid. Do worry and fear show up in your life? Do they control you? How can Jesus’ words help you to lay aside worry and fear?

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

Jesus commands us not to be afraid, to seek the kingdom of God above all else, and to be generous with our goods with the poor. How well are you obeying these commands from Jesus?

	Not obeying	Partially Obeying	Complete Obedience
I do not give in to fear			
I seek the kingdom above all else			
I am generous with the poor			

In the Parable of the Master, why do you think it was important for the master to come to his servants and personally serve them? What lesson was Jesus trying to teach?

The three parables of a master returning from a wedding banquet, a thief coming in the night, and a master returning from a long journey were about Jesus coming to his people and the need for them to be prepared for his kind of kingdom. Very few were ready for what Jesus was doing. Why do you think this was so?

After he told the parables, Jesus said that his mission would divide families? What did he mean by this?

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – info@WGSministries.org

Jesus said the people could read the signs about the weather but they could not read the signs about the times they were living in. Why were they blind to those signs? Are you aware of the importance of the times in which you live?
