

Teaching Outline

Lesson #8

“Faithful or Faithless?”

Matthew 24:45-51

I. Historical Context of the Olivet Discourse: The Back Story

- A. Location: Mount of Olives
- B. Theme: The Second Coming of Christ
- C. Question: “When Will These Things Take Place?”
- D. The Danger of Expectations
 - a. Freedom from Rome
 - b. Old Testament Promises of Blessing
 - c. Safety and Prosperity
 - d. Restoration of the Kingdom

Principle: Our expectations often set us up for great disappointment when the reality of life unfolds before us.

II. Jesus Declares the Signs that Proceed His Second Coming

- A. Deception (v. 4)
- B. False Christ’s (v. 5)
- C. Wars and Rumors of War (v.6)
- D. Unrest in Nations (v. 7)
- E. Famines and Earthquakes (v.7)

Principle: Jesus’ teaching of his second coming is meant to compel and motivate believers to righteous living with the understanding that his return could take place any moment.

III. The Parables of Watchfulness, Readiness and Faithfulness

- A. The Parable of the Fig Tree (vs. 32 – 35)
- B. The Days of Noah (vs. 37 – 41)
- C. The Parable of the Thief in the Night (vs. 43 – 44)
- D. The Parable of the Householder (vs. 45 – 51)

IV. The Parable of the Householder: The Symbols

- 1. The Household
- 2. The Servants
- 3. The Food

Principle: Just as food is necessary for physical life, likewise the Word of God is vital for spiritual life.

Principle: The word of God contains all the secrets of life, living, and the kingdom of heaven.

Principle: Watching for Jesus involves feeding and being fed!

Principle: If we are not watching for his return, we WILL be deceived.

Principle: Faithful servants of God will receive kingdom rewards far greater than anything we can imagine.

Lesson #8
Series 3 - Story 9

Faithful or Faithless?
(Parable of the Household)
Matthew 24:45-51

**WATCHING FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS INVOLVES FEEDING AND
FEASTING UPON THE WORD OF GOD AND SHARING IT WITH OTHERS.**

Story Outline:

- I. Faithful Servant
- II. Faithless Servant
- III. Final Assessment

Life Application Principles:

1. Faithful servants of God will receive kingdom rewards far greater than anything we can imagine.
2. “Watching” means to feed and be fed by the Word of God.
3. Failure to watch for Jesus’ return will result in deception.
4. Faithful servants are those who feed themselves continually and plentifully and feed those entrusted to their care as well.
5. A believer who learns to feed upon the Word and feed others becomes stable, alive, vital and exciting.
6. An unfaithful servant is one who does not believe in the imminent return of Christ, therefore those he is responsible for are neglected.
7. The unfaithful servant will face God’s judgment for his sin of negligence toward those in God’s household.
8. Failure to know and apply the word of God results in a moral breakdown and eternal separation from God.
9. Without the Word of God we cannot see our sin and therefore will see no need of a Saviour.
10. The Bible is the mind of God revealed to the heart of man.
11. A biblical worldview is essential to understanding the truth of life now and the life to come.
12. The Word of God reveals the Person of Jesus Christ.

NAME OF JESUS

Devotional Reading

“JESUS, MASTER”

When I was growing up the famous American singer-songwriter, Bob Dylan wrote a song that, purposefully or not, carried a very true and biblically sound message. It was entitled “*You Gotta Serve Somebody*” and the chorus goes like this:

But you're gonna to have to serve somebody, yes indeed You're gonna to have to serve somebody. Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord. But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Then in each verse of the song, he sings of people's various title's, occupations, and hobbies, that, when added to the chorus, sends out the truthful message that no matter who you are or what you do, whether you are rich or poor, famous or a nobody, everybody in the world ultimately serves somebody or something. Even more to the point, he adds the Gospel truth that the somebody or something you serve really boils down to just two options . . . either you serve the devil or you serve the Lord. As a young, impressionable and worldly-minded teenager, I sang this song right along with Dylan, not understanding the deep meaning and significance of its words. In fact, it wasn't until I had spent a significant amount of time in the Word of God, studying the scriptures, that my eyes were opened to the life-changing truth that we really are all slaves to something. In our quest to find the love, joy, peace, acceptance and satisfaction that our hearts and souls were ultimately created for, we all willingly “yield” and “bow” in service to the person or thing we think is the answer to our deepest wants. And if that to which we bow appeases our desire, we will gladly yield to it time and time again. Eventually, without even realizing what has happened, we often find ourselves being “owned” by it . . . bowing to its demands like a slave to its Master in hopes of great reward. Thus, the big question we must all ask ourselves and honestly answer is not simply who “you gonna serve,” but rather who or what DO you actually serve right now? Who or what has “ownership” of your life? To whom or to what do you willingly bow down to in devoted service in hopes of having all your wants and desires met? Just who is your **MASTER**??

In his letter to the Romans Paul wrote: “*Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey . . .*” (Romans 6:16). Commenting on this truth Oswald Chambers said “when you yield to something you will soon realize the tremendous control it has over you. Even though you say, ‘Oh, I can give up that habit whenever I like,’ you will know you can't. You will find that the habit absolutely dominates you because you willingly yielded to it.” In other words, it will become your master, constantly demanding your service and devotion. From personal experience I know this to be all too true.

After a very difficult situation that left me feeling ugly, unworthy and unloved, I foolishly believed that the only way to gain anyone's attention, love and approval was to make myself more physically attractive. I fell for the lie if I was thin enough, smart enough and fun enough...if I was "perfect" enough... others would not only notice me and want to be with me, but they would also genuinely love me. As a result, I became enslaved to the work of achieving a "perfect" body. I yielded to the wisdom of the world and bowed to Satan's lies and began serving my flesh through unhealthy diets and extreme exercise. My every waking thought was focused on and devoted to this quest for perfection in hopes that the desire of my heart for love and acceptance might be met. Without even noticing it, my eating disorder soon became my Master and sadly, although it didn't truly yield the results I wanted, I was completely enslaved to it. Bound as though in chains securely fastened into the concrete walls of a prison cell, I couldn't seem to get free from its exhausting demands.

BUT GOD... in His great mercy, grace and love, did not leave me in this dark prison bound and chained to my evil taskmaster. One day while I was studying His word, He opened my heart to a verse I had read many times, but had dared not ever truly apply to myself: *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other"* (Matthew 6:24). In that moment God opened my eyes to the ugly truth that my devotion to my addiction was actually hatred towards Him. In listening to and acting upon the enemies lies and in serving my flesh, I was actually despising His every Word and spurning the great sacrifice the Lord Jesus Christ made on my behalf. Cut to the heart, I admitted, for the very first time that I was a slave to my sin and understood that my devotion to it was actually keeping me from receiving the love, peace and acceptance my soul craved. In that moment I knew it was time for me to let go of my masters, the devil, my flesh and the world to serve a new **MASTER, the Lord Jesus Christ**. Crying prostrate before the Lord, I confessed my sin and yielded my life to Him that day. I humbly bowed my prideful heart and submitted my whole self into His care and His control and asked Him to be the one and only **MASTER** of my life. At that very moment I felt His mercy, grace and love wash over me. And I knew without a doubt that I had been set free because I could literally feel the chains fall off my wrists, the shackles release from my feet and the weight of my addiction lifted off of me. On that day I rose to my feet with confident hope and unspeakable joy that my prayers had been answered and I walked away from my earthly master into freedom and a new life with my Savior, my new **MASTER, the Lord Jesus Christ**. (1)

Dearest friends, is Jesus Christ your one and only **MASTER**? Or do you serve others? I encourage you today, do not be deceived like I was for so long. Examine what truly controls and dominates you. If it is anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ, confess your sin and ask Him to set you free from its power and control over you. God's Word is true. There is no other god, nor any other master who can save you. There is no other person or thing in the entire universe that will satisfy your longings and give you what your soul ultimately craves. Every time you yield to that thing that you have foolishly believed you need in order to fulfill the desires of your heart,

beware. . . for you are simply embedding yourself more deeply into the lie of Satan and driving yourself further away from the truth that will set you free. Like I once did, you will be wrapping the chains of bondage to your earthly “master” more tightly around your entire being thus making it harder to escape. Don’t fall for the lies! Humbly yield yourself today to the only One who can break the dominating power in your life. Yield your entire life to Jesus Christ. Make Him your **MASTER** and commit to serve only Him. The results are greater than you can ever imagine! As Paul explained to the church at Rome, there is much more benefit in being a slave to the Lord Jesus Christ than anything else in all creation because “*now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life*” (Romans 6:22). If you will choose to make Jesus Christ your **MASTER** and your Lord, and faithfully serve Him and Him alone, you will find the true and lasting freedom you have been searching for.

Truly, at the end of the day, is there anything in all creation that is better than your salvation from sin and eternal life in glory with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ? Is insisting on your ideas of “freedom” and selfishly choosing to serve your flesh and the things of the world now worth the loss of such bliss? I emphatically declare, IT IS NOT!!!! No sin is worth the price it costs you. No amount of money, power, beauty or fame can give you the happiness, joy and peace your soul craves. No other master will ever love you, bless you or serve you like the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark Driscoll explains it so well:

“Unlike an earthly master who uses you, **Jesus Christ your MASTER** blesses you; unlike an earthly master who demands you serve him, **Jesus Christ your MASTER** serves you; unlike an earthly master who motivates you by fear, **Jesus Christ your MASTER** motivates you by His love; unlike an earthly master who beats you down, **Jesus Christ your MASTER** builds you up; unlike an earthly master who has no good inheritance, **Jesus Christ your MASTER** has a bountiful and glorious eternal inheritance for you.” Wouldn’t you prefer to bow to a **MASTER** whose very name is Love and whose ways are always kind, full of blessing and lead to an abundant, joyful, and peaceful life, rather than to that, whose name is death and leads to a cruel, unfulfilling and destructive life? The choice is yours. “*Who you gonna serve?*” Will you do whatever it takes to make Jesus Christ your one and only **MASTER** today??

“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve the Lord . . . Choose this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:14-15).

*“Utterly abandoned to the will of God;
Seeking no other path than my Master trod;
Leaving ease and pleasure, making Him my choice,
Waiting for His guidance, listening for His voice.*

*Utterly abandoned! No will of my own;
For time and for eternity, His, and His alone;
All my plans and purposes lost in His sweet will,
Having nothing, yet in Him all things possessing still.*

*Utterly abandoned! It's so sweet to be Captive in His bonds of love, yet wondrously free;
Free from sin's entanglements, free from doubt and fear,
Free from every worry, burden, grief or care.”*

Author Unknown

Footnote:

(1) This is a personal testimony of Melissa Daniels

THE DOCTRINE “BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW”

Matthew 25:45-51

Pastor Alistair Begg told a story about how he and his wife were driving on an expressway when he remarked to her that the sun was going down in the wrong direction. For a moment he didn't know how to interpret this strange phenomenon – until he realized they had missed a turn and were on an expressway headed east instead of southwest!

Today, growing numbers of people are using their own judgment – doing what is right in their own eyes as their point of reference - and as a result, many today **FEEL** so right about their direction that they are deaf to calls for them to rethink their approach of understanding the world, humanity, history, and current events. Jesus was clear when he warned:

“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you came from.’” Luke 13: 24-25)

It has never been more important to realize that the God who created the world and all that is in it has left us a very specific point of reference. He has given us a revelation of Himself and the way to understand who He is and who we are. He has provided the means of understanding our world, humanity, history and current events. This understanding is what theologians call a “Biblical Worldview,” and those who follow Christ live their lives according to this particular way of thinking.

Christianity is the one story of the world that actually happened and is true! As C.S. Lewis said: “The great myth (Christianity) turned out to be true!” The Christian story is the Bible's view of the world and humanity as revealed by its Creator, and this revelation has been given to mankind. The story of the Bible – God's Story - is true and can be summarized in 5 categorical words:

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. Redemption
4. Return
5. Commission

A biblical worldview can be summarized in 5 simple truths:

1. God is personal
2. God has made himself known
3. God has created all things

4. Human beings are fallen in nature
5. God redeems through His Son.

Who is God?

The God of the Bible is a personal God who has made Himself known to man through both general revelation (the creation) and special revelation (the Bible). The existence of humanity and the manner by which humans were created reveal aspects of the Creator's character. The biblical God created humans in his own image and charged them with the task of stewarding His creation. He is self-aware, creative, volitional, rational, relational, and communicative. In contrast, other worldviews claim their gods to be pure energy, consciousness, a noble path, the worship of nature, or a god who must be appeased. In these contrasting world views, these gods have no personality or will. God is instead a tool to be used to benefit the person- not a Person to be known by man. Unlike all other religions and all other false gods, the God of the Bible is a personal God.

God's General and Special Revelation

God has made Himself known through general and special revelation. He can be known generally through the creation, and He can be more deeply known and understood through special revelation. He not only revealed His plan for humanity in the Bible – He has revealed Himself. He is transcendent - both above and beyond the universe, but He is also imminent and fully present and at work in the world. Every aspect of the universe speaks of His creativity and presence. A miracle beyond our human perception took place in the beginning when “Nothing” became “Something” because God spoke (Genesis 1). The stewarding of God's world was given by God to man. Work however, was not a result of the fall, it was woven into the fabric of God's original plan for mankind. Companionship was also part of God's design. Human beings made in God's image were created to steward the earth, relate to each other and to God, and reproduce. The Bible therefore is an explanation and an accounting of universal history. The Bible declares that human beings are born in sin because they are descendants of Adam, the first man, who rebelled against God, thus breaking faith with God. Thus, sin entered the world through Adam. Nevertheless, in spite of our sin, we still bear the image of God. Adam and Eve's disobedience broke all of the key relationships in their lives – their relationship with one another and their relationship to their God. As a result of their sin, they hid from God, and their unity with one another dissolved into guilt, shame, and blame. In the midst of this misery, it was God's mercy to shorten the length of their lives forever. The biblical view of sin is that it deceives, corrupts and will eventually destroy humanity apart from a remedy that only the Creator God could provide. The Bible teaches that the God of this world is a redeeming God who made provision after the fall of man to buy back (redeem or purchase) His wayward creation. At the end of all things, abides the promise of God of a new earth and heaven where all things caused by man's sin will be made right before a holy God. God's beautiful thread of redemption runs through the entire Bible from beginning to end with the promise that all things will be made

new as God brings human history to a close. The Christian story therefore is the story of a personal relational God who created optimal conditions for human flourishing against which humanity rebelled and continues to rebel. It is also the story of the Creator God sending his only Son, Jesus Christ, into this world by becoming human (one of us) in order to redeem us and deliver us from our sin and restore us to a right relationship with Him. The Bible is the story of Jesus buying back the rebels (sinful mankind) in order to set things right with the Creator God once again. This is good news! This is the gospel message. Understanding this simple summary of “God’s story” provides the foundation and the framework of a biblical worldview – how we understand God – how we understand ourselves - and how we understand our need for redemption. A biblical worldview enables us to understand our world and how we are to operate in it.

How Do We Know the Above Information about God is True?

Christians believe that God revealed himself in a general way through creation and in a specific way through his divine words and acts contained in the Bible. Many discover God through the general evidence of a structured universe (ie: the intricate and meticulous orbits and placement of the stars and planets) or the purposeful nature of reality (ie: the mechanisms of the human eye, or the fluttering wings of a hummingbird). One of God’s divine purposes of general revelation therefore, is to remove one’s excuses for not believing in a Creator God (Romans 1: 19- 20). GENERAL revelation therefore is the basic knowledge of who God is - God’s revelation of himself to all people generally through His creation.

SPECIAL revelation involves God’s unique unveiling of himself through the scriptures, miraculous events, the account of God’s working through the nation of Israel and the Church, and the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible offers personal and saving knowledge of God through his Son, Jesus. Christians view the Holy Scriptures as sacred, infallible, inerrant, and inspired by God as He moved ordinary men by His powerful Spirit to record His thoughts as they wrote what we know today as the 66 books of the Bible. Scripture relates the way God revealed himself over the course of 1,600 years in words written down by numerous leaders, prophets and sages over multiple time periods throughout Old and New Testament history. These special writings express precisely what God desires to communicate to mankind (divine inspiration). These scriptures are meant to open our minds to understand God, ourselves, our world and its workings, and how we are to live life by God’s holy standards – how we are to live according to a biblical worldview.

Special revelation centers around the answers to 5 basic questions:

1. How are we to understand the Bible?

The meaning of scripture depends upon God’s intention, not our interpretation. Therefore when we study the Bible, we must begin with what the Bible says to us – not what others say about the Bible. God speaks directly through His word. It is only after we discern what God is saying to us that we can begin to understand what God means us to

understand through a certain text. This interpretation of meaning then leads to personal life change or what is called application. Therefore there are three basic questions that comprise a powerful way to move the text on the sacred page into the heart of the reader resulting in life transformation. 1. What does the passage say? 2. What does the passage mean? 3. What does the passage mean to me? As we apply these questions faithfully and daily to various texts of the scriptures over a lifetime, eventually our worldview becomes biblical. Our understanding of God, ourselves, the world, and how we are to live will take on a distinctly biblical pattern.

2. What does the Bible say about humanity?

A biblical worldview acknowledges an all-knowing God who ordered the universe into a beautiful symphony of light, life, sound, and color. God declares, “Let us make man in our image after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Even Charles Darwin, known for his theory of evolution, recognized the problem faced by adherents to such atheistic and naturalistic explanations of the origin of life. Darwin said; “With me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of a man’s mind (*which has been developed from the mind of lower animals*) are of any valor or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey’s mind - if indeed there are any convictions in such a mind?” (Charles Darwin)

A biblical worldview acknowledges that God created the universe and everything in it. There is no place for the theory of evolution in the biblical worldview as God declares in Genesis 1 that He created all things. The Creator God therefore is the one true God and Creator of order, purpose, and design of all things.

3. What does the Bible say is wrong with us?

A biblical worldview includes understanding that the moral code given in the Bible is a window through which we can discern the evil and corruption in ourselves and in the world at large. The Bible explains where evil originated and how it infected humanity. It is also a mirror by which we can see the details of our own utter sinfulness and God’s incredible remedy for man’s greatest problem – deliverance from sin and salvation through the sacrifice of Christ. The Bible’s ethical code (the Mosaic Law) points out our sinful nature and introduces us to the only One who can save us, the only man whose blood was sinless and who could pay for the sins of man, Jesus Christ.

4. What does the Bible say about how we should live?

Once we embrace the ultimate sacrifice God made for our redemption through his Son and our Savior, Jesus, we gain power through the Holy Spirit of God who indwells us. His presence and power enables the believer to follow Christ and live life by His power. Through the Holy Spirit, we have the capacity to “..... Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good” (Romans 12:9).

5. How are we to understand differing worldviews based on the Bible?

There is no neutral zone in the endless war of worldly ideas – particularly ideas regarding various worldviews. To reject one worldview is to automatically choose another. The five basic worldviews include – Secularism, Marxism, New Spirituality and Postmodernism. Each of these worldviews came about long after Christianity, therefore although the Bible doesn't address them specifically, it does address the godless ideas found in them generally. These four alternative non-Christian worldviews are based on the basic principles of the world and not upon the teachings of Christ. Colossians 2:8 warns us of becoming involved in this deceptive, false thinking: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit. According to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."

CONCLUSION

Too often today, compassion and tolerance override our better judgment as we find ourselves accepting ungodly lifestyles and alternate worldviews and thereby compromise the biblical worldview that Christianity espouses. We tell ourselves that we don't witness about our faith and our biblical worldview because we fear offending someone. We are therefore silent in the face of political and moral decline and an ever - darkening culture because we want to be thought of as non-judgmental. We don't want to let people know that the way into the kingdom of God is narrow, and there is a cost to following Jesus and living biblically. We must seek to live our lives according to the revelation of God found in one place -- the Bible. We must become those who seek to stand for the truth of the Bible but who express that truth in love and grace. We must be willing to choose to be identified with the cross of Christ and all that it means, despite the possible backlash we may be forced to experience as do our brothers and sisters across the globe. How we are perceived on earth is not as important as how we are perceived in heaven by the God who created us. Will we be found faithful? We will be those known to have lived with a biblical worldview? The day of casual commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ has come to an end. We must pray that our light will shine more brightly than ever before in an ever darkening world where false teaching and confusion reign. That can be accomplished only one way – by living according to the word of God which is known in theological circles as adopting a biblical worldview.

Back to the opening illustration from Pastor Alistair Begg, there is one final application. Driving down the freeway in the wrong direction can cost you a beautiful sunset, but driving down the freeway of life with the wrong worldview will certainly cost you an eternity without God.

Questions for Reflection

Read: Matthew 24:42-44

1. **Read** Matthew 24:42, along with v.36.
 - a. What does Jesus say about His return?

 - b. (Challenge) Why do you think even Jesus, although He is fully God, does not know the day or the hour of His return? (see Philippians 2:6-8 for help)

2. **Read** Matthew 24:42-44.
 - a. In light of Jesus imminent return to earth, what 2 things does He command His followers to do?

 - b. What do you think He means by the term “watch” or “stay awake?”

 - c. Why is it important to do so?

 - d. (Personal) How are you fulfilling these 2 commands?

Read: Matthew 24:45-47

3. In this parable, who do the “faithful and wise servants” represent? Who does the “master” represent? What does the “household” represent?

4. According to v.45,
 - a. What has the master appointed the servants to do?
 - b. What do you think the “food” represents? (see also Matthew 4:4, 1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:12-14)
 - c. Why is feeding and feasting upon the Word of God and sharing it with others so important?
5. According to vs. 46-47, what are the results of these servants’ obedience?
6. (Personal) Would Jesus call you a “faithful and wise servant”? Why or why not?

Read: Matthew 24:48-51

7. a. Who do you think the “faithless” or “wicked” servants represent?
 - b. What does this servant do to those within the household?
 - c. (Challenge) Why do you think the servant does so? (There may be more than one reason)
8. What happens to the unfaithful servants when the Master returns?

9. (Challenge) What lessons do you learn about the importance of being faithful and obedient to feed on God's word and obey His commands? (See also Hebrews 5:11-14, 2 Peter 3:1-7)

10. Why do you think the Master delays His coming? (See 2 Peter 3:8-10 for help)

11. Christ's return is indeed imminent. To whom, do you need to take the life-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ today? Tomorrow may be too late!

12. (Personal) Recall a time in your life where a decision or action revealed a pattern of a lack of knowledge of the Word of God. What steps do you need to take to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God so you can better apply His truth of to your life?

13. (Personal) Do you feel equipped and confident to fulfill the Lord's command to feed and nourish others with the truth you have received from His Holy Word? If not, will you commit to finding and remaining in an in-depth study of the Bible where can be adequately prepared to feed others and together properly watch for the Lord's return?

JESUS OUR MASTER

How has this week's reflection impacted your understanding of Who Jesus is and WHY He came to earth? What truly dominates your thoughts and controls your actions? To Whom or to what do you yield and bow to serve that is hindering your faithful devotion and service to Jesus Christ?

SALVATION CHALLENGE

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Has your faith been truly awakened by hearing the Word of God? Do you know the One who has given you this Word? If not, will you come to Jesus today, confess your sin and ask Him to be your Savior and Master of your life? Will you commit today to spending the remainder of your life reading, meditating and studying this precious treasure?