

Immediately!

Service: Sunday, 12/31 at 6 PM

Church Year: New Year's Eve – 2017

Our Regular Schedule Resumes on January 7 & 8

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: On this New Year's Eve 2017, I invite you to make a comparison in your life between **one year ago** and **now**: Are you *closer* to God or *further away*? Also, what are the reasons for your answer? For example:

- ✦ Are your priorities **better** or **worse**?
- ✦ Are your habits *spiritually* **healthy** or **unhealthy**?
- ✦ Is your time in the Bible **more** or **less**?

As you think about your comparison, you may have other reasons as well. If the news of our comparisons is good, *let us rejoice!* But if it is bad, *let us get serious about* ✦*the things of God,* ✦*the return of Jesus,* and ✦*eternity!*

1. **Warning: Be Ever-Ready**: ³⁵ “**Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning,** ³⁶ **and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, [in order that coming and knocking immediately they may open to him].**
 - a. Notice the picture: Everyone is “**dressed for action**” AND in action – *busy with their assigned tasks*. Jesus also said to “**keep your lamps**

burning,” thus – *in a spiritual sense* – to stay awake and be alert!



- b. Taking a break: When functioning as an hourly employee, *some breaks are allowed while others are not!* I remember this from many years ago: Sometimes I worked at the end of a conveyor belt, receiving and stacking 90 pound bags of concrete on pallets; *it was hard work but the person filling the bags and stacking the bags rarely took an unscheduled break.* However, when we did, *the boss would almost always walk in on us*, which was not a good feeling.
- c. Open right away: Again, notice the picture: They are all working, so, *as soon as the master knocked*, they opened the door right away – ✓ nothing to stage, ✓ nothing to hide, ✓ nothing to regret! May the Spirit of God so work in us that we are always ready to **immediately** welcome our Master, *the Lord Jesus Christ*, when He comes again!

2. **Encouragement: Blessings Are Coming:** ³⁷ **Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake** [*literally, watching*] **when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he** [*the master*] **will dress himself for service and have them** [*the servants*] **recline at table, and he will come and serve them.** ³⁸ **If he comes in the second watch** [*10 PM – 2 AM*], **or in the third** [*2 AM – 6 AM*], **and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!**

- a. Ready to serve: Think about the BIG picture: The Son of God came once to remove our sins; *then He will come again to usher in eternity!* Regarding the first time, Jesus said, “**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many**” (Mk. 10:45 NAS). When we think of the greatness of the Son of God – *we should have served Him*; therefore, *we should be **so amazed** that He came and SERVED US!* Now, if we are logical, *we could assume that when He comes again we will serve Him – it’s our turn!*
- b. Ready to be served: But did you hear what Jesus said? The master **will dress himself for service and have** the servants **recline at table, and he will come and serve them.** **WOW!** What an amazing God we have – *serving us with His suffering and death, and then coming again to serve us!* Therefore, He calls us **♦**to keep watching with gladness, **♦**to keep watching at the most unexpected times, **♦**to be found awake, and **♦**to be ready for more undeserved blessings!

3. **Warning: Be Wise like the Master:** ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

- a. The master: We could say that the master of a house has that position because he is *wise* and *faithful*; therefore, he has assigned a task to each person in the house **and** he is constantly ready for a thief.
- b. Our responsibilities: “**Faithfulness is defined as doing the work Jesus has given us while eagerly awaiting His return**” (TLSB). Therefore, as we have been assigned – thus “**created in Christ Jesus for good works**” (Eph. 2:10) – **and** as we have been instructed to be ready, let us – *by God’s grace* – be diligent in both ways ✓ now, ✓ in 2018, and ✓ until our Master returns!

Conclusion: Let us pray: Dear Lord Jesus, we can be so pulled and distracted by the devil, this sin-filled world, and our own sinful desires, *so come to our aid now and forever!*

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