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*Ask the bigger questions*

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## **Accountability**

***A cost benefit analysis of following Jesus:***

***What does Jesus require of me? Is it worth it?***

***- Session 4***

*Understanding that followers of Jesus will be held accountable for how they have lived their lives. Trust in Jesus for forgiveness is expressed in actions of obedience - from Luke 12:35-48*

The passage to be looked at in this session deals with the “return” of Jesus.

What do you know about the “return” of Jesus?

1. Jesus will return in the year 2500 ... true or false
2. Jesus will return by being born as a baby, like he did the first time ... true or false
3. When Jesus returns, everyone will acknowledge him as king ... true or false
4. Jesus will just judge those who don't believe in him ... true or false
5. Jesus will just judge those who happen to be alive at the time ... true or false
6. All opposition to Jesus will be quashed ... true or false
7. The earth will be destroyed ... true or false
8. Life for followers of Jesus will continue on as it did before ... true or false.

Here's some information about the return of Jesus that you might find helpful to know:

- The Bible doesn't say when it will be
- The Bible says be prepared for it (how to be prepared is in the passage below)
- When Jesus returns it will be in power and glory (unlike his first entry as a baby born in a backwater of the Roman Empire)
- When Jesus returns everyone will acknowledge him as king (either willingly or unwillingly bowing the knee)
- Jesus will judge both believers and unbelievers
- Jesus will judge both the living and the dead
- All opposition to Jesus' rule will be quashed
- The earth will be transformed (God/Jesus will rule on earth like they do in heaven and the new “earth” will only be a great place to live).

Followers of Jesus live between two key events – the death/resurrection of Jesus and the “return” of Jesus. Both of these two key events will shape/impact how followers of Jesus live now.

## **The words of Jesus in Luke 12:35-48**

35 *"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. 37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. 38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. 39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

41 *Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"*

42 *The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.*

47 *"The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

Jesus is not just interested in exploring relations between first century masters and their servants. He is speaking in two parables to make two main points about what discipleship (being servants of Jesus) is like. (Note: Parables generally have one main teaching point, so the idea is not to press the details too much).

### **Q1. What do you think is the gist of the first parable in verses 35-40?**

**(Note: The "Son of Man" reference is the way that Jesus refers to himself.)**

- Disciples (servants of Jesus) need to be ready for his return.

### **Q2. In verse 37, is Jesus saying there is a reward for good behaviour?**

- In verse 37, it is the master who will wait on the servants, rather than the servants waiting on the master (the master doing the waiting is good for the servants (verse 38) – if the servants were doing the waiting then they would just be doing their job). A master waiting on their servants would have been a completely shocking idea to Jesus' audience. In the first century, servants were the property of their master, and there to do the master's bidding.

- Verse 37 sounds like a reward for good behaviour – that if Jesus' disciples are good servants then Jesus will wait on them. However:

- In waiting on their master, the servants aren't exhibiting good behaviour as much as doing what is expected of them. Servants are to serve! To be a disciple is to serve Jesus.
- The master's decision to wait on the servants is his decision – it's the master being generous (rather than the master rewarding good behaviour).

### **Q3. What is the gist of the second parable in verses 42-48?**

- There are repercussions for disciples (servants of Jesus) who aren't ready for his return. The disciples/servants will be held accountable.

### **The death of Jesus in Luke 23:38-43**

*38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.*

*39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

*43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*

### **Q4. What gets you entry into heaven?**

- The criminal trusted Jesus and got in straight away. He didn't get the opportunity to do good acts of service.

- The 2nd parable that Jesus tells in Luke 12:42-48 looks like there's a performance review for disciples, and that bad behaviour could cause you to get kicked out. The problem with this is:

trust in Jesus + good service - > entry into heaven

(your good service is what you contribute to your salvation).

- However when you think about it, trust is demonstrated in action. For example, if you trust that a chair will hold your weight, you'll sit down on it. And in a sense that trust isn't there until you do sit down. So:

Trust in Jesus is demonstrated by good service

Entry into heaven is made possible by Jesus' death and forgiveness

That someone trusts that is shown in their actions.

A theologian once said: "Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone".

- So if someone wants to be a disciple, and they trust Jesus for forgiveness, then they need to serve Jesus. If they don't serve Jesus, then they weren't really a disciple in the first place.

### **Q5. What if someone isn't ready to make the decision to become a disciple? (verses 47-48)**

- There's a place for taking things slowly and considering carefully what Jesus requires if you want to follow him (the next session will show this really clearly).

- These verses imply that Jesus will judge you based on what you know (Even if you don't know much, at least you now know that!) The idea of being beaten is strange to our ears, but not so strange to a first century audience. Jesus is using picture

language to say that there are severe consequences for unbelief. There are also severe consequences for those who have been entrusted with much and misuse it (for example, people who have responsibility to teach the Bible but end up leading people away from Jesus).

- It's worth thinking about the decision to become a follower a bit like the decision to get married. You don't know everything about the other person, and you don't know the future, but you do know you want a future with the person in your life. With God, you'll never have get an answer to every question you have, but you may be able to work out whether you know enough to know whether you want a future with God or not.

#### **Q6. How do you feel after reading this passage?**

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