KINGDOM of HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Community Group Material – *from Zwai Zulu*

Matthew 25:14-30

Week of Sunday 22nd September

Watchful Waiting!

Leader Preparation

Last week, and this week are ALL about the **'So what?'**. From 24:36 to 25:30, Jesus **teaches** what the reality of his return, and final judgment, means for us now, **while we wait**. Because we will have to wait, and we don't know how long we will have to wait. 'Could be long, not in our lifetime.' Could be short, in our lifetime. We don't know, so **we must live** in a constant **state of readiness.**

Group Time:

This parable is part of Jesus' last discourse in Matthew, which focuses on His return and what we, as His followers, should do while waiting. Jesus emphasizes readiness for His return, not just through awareness but through active, faithful active living.

Exploring the Passage

READ Matthew 25:14-30

Key Themes:

1. **Jesus' Return** – He will come back, but we don't know when
2. **Stewardship** -Each of us has been entrusted with gifts, abilities, and resources to use for God's kingdom

Some guidance

Theme of Readiness

We have become familiar with Jesus using stories and parables to teach important truths about God's kingdom, as the third discourse, chapter 13, was ALL parables, six of them, all designed to get us thinking, feeling, scratching our heads and wrestling over the implications.
Here we have two examples followed by three parables.

First, we have Jesus giving a summarizing statement, on which the stories will be based:
"*But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only*" (Matt 24:36)

The example of Noah (24:37-41)

- Two men working in a field (v40)
- Two women grinding at the mill (v41)

That example concludes with the **first imperativ**e, what we must do:

"***Therefore, stay awake***, *for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming*" (Matt 24:42)

A thief in the night (24:43)

Peter says the same thing in 2 Pet 3:10 about 'The Day of the Lord' coming like 'a Thief in the night'

The second example concludes with the **second imperative**:

"***Therefore you also must be ready***, *for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect*" (Matt 24:44)

3. **Faithfulness over success** – God values faithfulness in how we use what He has given us, regardless of how much or how little we've been given

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Parable

v.14-15: Jesus likens Himself to a man going on a journey, leaving His servants with responsibility. What do the talents represent in the context of our lives?

v.16-18: Two servants use what they've been given and see it multiply, but one buries it. Why do you think the third servant chose to bury his talent?

v.19: The master returns and "settles accounts". What does this teach us about the importance of our actions during Jesus' "absence"?

Faithfulness with What We've Been Given

v.20-23: Both the servants with five talents and the one with two talents receive the same commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant". How does this challenge our understanding of success?

v.24-27: The third servant blames the master for being a "hard man". How do fear and excuses sometimes prevent us from living out our responsibilities to God?

v.28-30: The master takes the talent from the unfaithful servant and gives it to the one who has ten. What lesson can we learn about God's expectations for productivity and faithfulness in our lives?

Personal Application

In your life, what has God entrusted to you? Think about:

- Material resources
- Time
- Abilities and spiritual gifts
- Relationships and influence

Being Faithful: How are you using these areas to serve God's Kingdom? Is there an area where you feel you could serve God's Kingdom? Is there an area where you feel you could be more intentional in using your resources or gifts?

Dealing with Fear: The third servant was driven by fear. Is fear holding you back from being faithful with what God has given you? What would it look like to step out in faith and trust God more in those areas?

Closing off

God does not expect equal outcomes but faithfulness with what we have been given. He rewards our efforts, not necessarily by giving us more but by inviting us into His joy. The call of this parable is clear: be faithful stewards of what you have been given, and trust that when Jesus returns, He will settle accounts. Let's live ready for that day!

Some guidance

The wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13)

This parable reminds us, for the last time in this discourse that the time of Jesus' **coming is unknowable**, but the emphasis is that Jesus' disciples should be ready for His arrival, no matter when He comes.

The wise virgins are prepared in **case there is a delay**, while the foolish ones are unprepared when there is a delay. The point is our readiness for the arrival of Jesus, which is on His Father's schedule, not ours.

The foolish virgins underestimate the time of the arrival of Jesus, while the wicked slave overestimates the arrival.

The **wedding feast** begins and the door is locked, blocking admission to the foolish virgins. Their appeal to the groom and his refusal to permit them entry, ominously recalls the judgment scene of Matt7:21-23.

In the days of our Lord's return, there will be a division (v40-41). Believers will be caught up to glory and eternal life and unbelievers left behind in misery and everlasting contempt.