

Fear and Fears - Part 8

The Fear of Responsibility

Luke 12:41-48

Well I suppose that we are far enough along in the year to make sound reasonable this statistic that I'm about to quote. And that is that 67 percent of the people that have gym memberships never go, 67 percent. There are 60 million people it is estimated that have gym memberships in our country and 40 million of them feel really guilty when you remind them of that. But you know they're only hurting themselves. They're only hurting themselves. I mean the gyms are glad to have them on their roles. Matter of fact it's those people that don't go, but pay their dues that is the reason that being a health club owner can be a lucrative business. Speaking of businesses can you imagine if 67 percent of the members of your staff at work never showed up? What would that be like? We certainly couldn't say they're only hurting themselves, couldn't say that. And I'm sure that your company wouldn't be glad to have them on their roles. No, there's a big difference there. There's a big difference between the gym and your workplace. See at the gym they you sign up, have you fill out all that paperwork so that you can come and serve yourself. But the office the HR department has you fill out all that paperwork and they sign you up so that you can serve the company. (2:00)

See responsibility at the gym, well, that's completely up to you. The responsibility at your office, well that's a full blown obligation. You see when it comes to motivation; I mean if you wake up on Monday morning and you don't feel like going to the gym, well, you don't go. You go when you want to. If you wake up tomorrow morning and you don't feel like going to work, you better go. When it comes to viewing myself as a member at a gym, I'm a free agent. Come and go as I please. But at work, I'm what the Bible might call a steward. I have responsibility, one that I'm obligated to engage in. You see where I'm going with all this? Because you know when you signed up to follow Christ when you became a member of the body as the Bible puts it, is it like you were joining the gym or was it like you were joining a company? Well, certainly we are not here to serve ourselves. We are tasked not with things that we do if we wake up tomorrow and feel like doing them. And we're certainly not free agents in the body of Christ; we are what the Bible calls stewards. You say, "Pastor Mike if that's the way it is, well then why are so many members of the body of Christ kind of treat this like they are members of the gym?" That is such a great and insightful question. I'm so glad that you asked that. You know what the answer is? The answer is the very thing we studied last time we were together in Luke chapter 12 and that is that the master is on a journey. That is that the boss is not standing at your desk, standing over your shoulder. You don't have that accountability. Now speaking of accountability I guess we have to add a third category because accountability when it comes to the Christian life is neither like the gym nor your work. See at they gym they never call me and say, "Mike we really miss you, where are you?" Never ask me that, no accountability. When it comes to work though, if I don't show up, well there's instant accountability. So gym, no accountability, work constant accountability, well what about the Christian life? Well, I guess we build a third category and that was the whole point of the parable last week and that is that our accountability is delayed, its not now, but its coming. (4:31)

See the whole point of that parable is you need to understand the master is coming back and it better be that you're involved in doing the things that are not just your free agent if I want to responsibilities. They are the responsibilities that you have been tasked with as a part of the body of Christ. That's how we're supposed to view it. Well after telling that parable, Peter raises his hand, and if you would turn there if you haven't already, Luke chapter 12 he asks this question in verse 41. He wants to know, now who does this apply to. Is this parable that you've just told, is this for us? Now, I assume he's speaking as the other gospels seem to make clear for the twelve, for the apostles, or is this parable for everyone? Take a look at that. Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" And the Lord said as he often does, not answering directly, he said, "Well let's just think about what I've talked about. The master is gone; the servants are tasked to do some work. Now let's just give an example of the kind of work that would be done well. Think about it Peter, who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?" And that's when you feel the finger of conviction in your chest. And Peter goes I guess you are talking about us as he'll explain it certainly is applying to everyone. But Peter wasn't he not someone who was appointed in the household of God to be set in a position of leadership. And talk about feeding, of course he was supposed to provide the food at the proper time and feed the



people. Yes, that was his job. He was a leader and a teacher. Well, you know then, it would be good if that servant whom his master will find doing so when he comes that would be great if you're busy about the work you've been assigned. How awesome that would be, why, verse 44. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all of his possessions. That spells promotion. You're going to have some sort of real promotion. Do your job, do it well, do it as the words say there, faithfully and wise, managing your task, assuming your responsibilities, I mean that will be great, you'll be rewarded for this. (6:36)

But, verse 45, if that servant says to himself, well, the accountability where is it? My master is delayed in coming. I'm not going to concern myself with this seeking this kind of work that I don't really seem to have to do. There's no zapping of my life if I don't do it, I seem to be getting away with not doing my responsibility. No one's calling me on it, so I can do whatever I want, which degenerates into some kind of conflict with the other servants. He begins to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk. There's a phrase, eat and drink, it's not just taking my sack lunch and sitting there and providing sustenance, but I'm feasting, I'm raiding the pantry of the master's house, I'm sitting there in the corner getting drunk with his alcohol. This is a picture of a guy that's full blown self indulgent; he's not taking his responsibility seriously at all. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him. That was the point of the parable last time. At an hour he does not know and he will sit him down and give him a stern talking to. Underline the word stern. Is that there? No, brace yourself this is not a Polly Anna text. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. Unfortunately that word is used in two ways in our vocabulary. In Greek what you would see if you have your Greek New Testament open, and maybe some of you do, you've got there a negation in front of the word faith. Not having faith. They don't have faith. Can it be used in that agitable sense is, you know, they stumbled here and there? Clearly that's not describing this guy. This guy is a guy though he seems to be in the team, he's serving himself here, and now he's assigned a place, dismembered, with those who don't have faith. (8:20)

Seems to be a third category here, servants with varying degrees of information, they don't seem to be doing very well. Verse 47, and that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. Brr, now that's bad, is it not? If you look this word up, do your homework, you say, okay how is this word used in the breath of definition in the New Testament. You'll find it all the way to the scourging that the Romans did on the apostles when they wanted to punish them with corporal punishment, all the way over to the slap in the face Paul speaks of in Corinthians. Either way I don't want that slap in the face or whip to my back. So it's bad. But in verse 46 the other guy gets dismembered. I'd rather you punch me then cut my limbs off. You with me on that, as unpleasant as it is? It's just an important distinction to make. Now the one who did not know, know what? Verse 47, didn't know the master's will and did what deserved a beating, in other words he does exactly what the other guy does he just has less information. He'll receive a light beating. Flag on that play instantly. What? Wait a minute, he didn't know. Got to untangle that, why did he get a beating if he didn't know what to do. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (9:50)

Now this is a tough text. But as I read it for you with a little bit of commentary, I hope you can recognize there seems to be three clear categories of people discussed here. Those that end up getting a promotion, rewards, those who end up getting dismembered and assigned to a place with those who don't have faith, and those that get a beating. Those are three different categories and I want to take them one at a time. Let's take the first four verses, verses 41 through 44 and think this through in terms of someone, we'll start with the good new here who seems to do a good job while the master is gone. He polices himself, he's a self started, he's looking at his life, he's doing faithful and wise things in the management given to him by the master. And when the master comes back he gets rewarded, promotion. That'll be good for us to summarize. Take the two words that are used to describe his management, his responsibilities in the discharge of his responsibility, faithful and wise. Let's give that one descriptive word in the first point. Let's just call it, serving well. Serve well, you and I, if we can serve well between now and the return of Christ we'll receive a reward. So let's just start with that. Number 1, serve well and be rewarded. (10:58)

1. Serve Well and Be Rewarded

Here's the promise of this text. Take the parable, apply it to ourselves, it certainly applies to Peter, it applies to all of us. You have responsibilities do that responsibility, do it well, you will get a reward. Well I guess we have to define responsibility and service here. That'll be good. Now for Peter as I said it's pretty clear, he's feeling the finger of

conviction in his chest. He understands, I am someone who's been appointed a leadership position and I'm also appointed this job of feeding the people in the household. I'm a teacher, I feed the sheep, I am this kind of preacher guy who leads in the organization and I teach. So I understand it's going to apply to me and when it comes down to it, I better be faithful and I ought to be wise in going about this and keep on doing this until the Lord comes back. And if I do it well, if I do it faithfully I will be rewarded, I will be promoted. You might want to jot down, as though you needed to, Romans chapter 12 verse number 4 which I'm sure you all know. But it's good for us to call to attention the simple truth that though there are many members in the body they all have different functions as in one body there are many members and the members do not all have the same function. So it is in the body of Christ. So in one sense I need to say specifically Peter was called to lead and to teach. You're not called to lead and to teach, if you're not called to lead and to teach, but you're called to do something. Matter of fact before we look at that because that's making you think about church work, I want to go back to the greater context. Look back up in your Bible to where we were a couple sessions ago when we looked at the description of the world that's chasing and seeking after all those things, because they're focus is to get into world make a comfortable living have the creature comforts and do whatever I can to be as wealthy as I can reasonably be and have a nice life. And he says in verse 30, look at it, all nations of the world they seek after these things. I said that's a strong word, they pursue them, that's what they're hunting for. Now your Father knows you need stuff, you need a place to live, you need some transportation, you need some clothes, he knows you need those things. But your passion and your focus should not be that. Here is your job, seek his kingdom, and all these things will come back to you. Now, we'll go from the very specific of Peter's job description as a preacher in this world all the way to the broadest explanation of what it means for you to serve. Ultimately the biggest definition would be this. Your life is about serving God by seeking his kingdom. Now, if you were with us last time we defined what that looked like. I want to promote his kingdom, I want to prepare for his kingdom, I want to express his kingdom values, I want to stand for the kingdom principles. We looked through some of that. But knowing that that's my primary goal while the others see themselves differently I think it helps me try to move the idea of my life service and my life's goals to a place where I start to line it up with my relationship with God. In other words, I'm not an architect or a plumber or an accountant or a butcher or a baker or a candlestick maker who happens to be a Christian. That's not how it works in the Bible. The Bible says, no, no, those invert when you become a Christian. Now it is that you are a Christian who happens to be a butcher, a baker or a candlestick maker. So I know you've got roles in this world but your primary role is to see your role as living for the kingdom. I am a follower of Christ, I live for his glory, I live to advance his cause in this world and that's who I am. So I know that's my goal. Now Peter is enlisted to be a preacher and a leader in the church to glorify God and advance his kingdom. You have a different calling I assume if you're not a pastor and you are involved in some other kind of – here it comes – vocation. Now I've explained this many times but if you're new, let me explain it again. (14:50)

Vocation comes from the Latin language. Latin you look up voca in a Latin dictionary you'll find the word, calling. A vocation is someone's calling and Christians use to speak of their jobs as their vocation and though it's trickled down today and on LinkedIn they still say that kind of thing, really they don't even know what they're saying, because what that is, is a word that has the God factor in it, and that is that God has called me to do something to express his glory through my work. So you all have a vocation but let's use it in the way it use to be used and that is, I understand that I'm a butcher, a baker a candlestick maker, an architect, an accountant, a plumber. I'm that only as a secondary expression of my Christianity in this world because I'm called to be a Christian. I'm called to advance the kingdom. I'm called to live for kingdom values. Christian first, my occupation, what's on my business card, that comes second. And it is the avenue through which I'm called to glorify God. (15:46)

Then you come home, and you drive in the driveway and you go into your house and then you have another job. You have a domestic arena in which you live and the Bible is very clear about that. Hey, you want to glorify God? You have a role in that family, to fulfill that role, as a husband, a wife, a parent, a child, and there are rules that the Bible would say, here's how you can bring maximum glory to God in that domestic arena, just like in your work arena. Oh, then you can start thinking because Peter happened to see his work world and his church world merge. Now for you it may be distinct in that you're glorifying God in your career, you're glorifying God in your home, but now we need to think about the church. You might want to jot down 1 Peter chapter 4 beginning in verse number 7 which interestingly enough, a discussion that is motivated by the reminder that the Lord is coming back. Christ is coming back therefore, he speaks first of holiness and prayer and about our relationships with one another and then he says, "And by the way you better be a good steward of the very grace of God" and his context is how is God being glorified in your life as you serve him in the church. So that's important. (16:58)



Now when you read the word faithful, I don't know what comes to mind in this context where it says you got to be a faithful and wise manager. You got a job, you know what you do Monday through Friday, you've got a home life, you've got a church life and in those spheres of your influence you may be thinking how can I glorify God in that? And if you think of faithful, well just keep doing it, stay out of trouble, don't sin big, let's just get to the end of life, until the rapture without any big marks on the roster on the resume. Okay, that's not how you should do this, though that's a good start. You need to view your life as it would say in 1 Peter chapter 4 that whatever God endows to me as his favor or his giftedness I want to maximize and I want to maximize it with a sense of excellence. I want to do this really well because in that passage it says this and it applies not only to your church life but to your home life and to your work life. It is this, that whatever your calling is, you ought to do it in a way that it expresses the fact that you're doing this to the glory of God. And the expression there is that if you're a speaking kind of person you speak whether it's in work, I'm trying to apply it, or even in your home life or especially in the church you ought to speak as if you're speaking the oracles of God. If it's a kind of service, it ought to be done as though God had some divine power pack in your life. You're doing it tirelessly with the strength that God supplies. Why, so that God may be glorified in all these things. So my job to be faithful is not to see some static stay out of trouble perspective between here and the return of Christ but to say, "How can this be excellent? How can I do this in a way that really shines in glory for God, in the advancement of the kingdom and the living for the kingdom? How can that look in a way that people say that's an excellent job that reflects the character, the strength and the beauty of God." I mean we need to start there in all three arenas, church, home and work. (18:54)

There's another word there, wise. If you serve well you'll be rewarded, serving well is not only being faithful, which shows a sense of excellence, if I'm doing it for God, but it ought to be wise which means this, you look at your business card, you look at your address, you look at the post that you're serving in the church which some of you don't have one but you need to have some ministry post in the church, you cannot be a good steward of the varied grace of God without. But let's just say you've got that and in all three you know where you live, you know what you're doing at church and you know where you work. And you may say great, I going to be excellent in all three of those areas and be a faithful servant to the end. Well, that would be good but it may not be great. That might be the better way to live the life than you're living now but it may not be the best way. In other words, wisdom means I stop long enough to think about, am I really investing my life in the right place? I mean if I'm a butcher maybe I should be a baker, if I'm a baker I should be a candlestick maker. Maybe I'm involved in teaching in church and I should be serving. Maybe I'm involved in this ministry I should be involved in that one. Wisdom sits down and says this, how can I maximize my impact for the kingdom? To serve well is to serve not only faithfully but to serve wisely. (20:05)

Now think about this because the parable Jesus told about the four soils. I know we always make those distinctions between the soils and we want to interpret that passage all the way from the hard pavement, the rocky soil, the thorny soil and the good soil. We think good, as long as I understand the distinctions there I know I want to be the good soil, the good soil that responds rightly to the word of God. Great, that's good, I want to be good soil too. But do you remember that there are three divisions within the good soil? How is that distinguished in the Bible? It says you know among that good soil there's some soil that bears fruit some thirty-fold some sixty-fold and some hundredfold. In other words now we're talking about fruit. What kind of fruit are you going to bear? Well you maybe saying, well I'm going to do it excellently and in this job, in this place, living in this neighborhood doing these kinds of things with my money, my talent, my treasure I think I can bear thirty-fold fruit. And all I'm saying wise managers go is there adjustments that need to be made here? Is this the maximum leverage of my life between now and the rapture that I'm going to look at this and say, "I made the best investments of my time, I made the best investments of my career, I made the best investments of my ministry so that what I do for the glory of God it really is something that bears maximum fruit." You can only do what you're called to do, but is it really the best use of your time, to be in that specific setting? We need to give that some thought and I hope that 1 Peter chapter 4 might encourage you in that quest. (21:37)

Now of course the text is about promotion, here's the guy who does his job well, whatever that is, and I think wise and faithful should help us do it with excellence and real discernment whether it's the best use of your life. But then it says in verse 43, how great it will be when Christ does come back because those faithful and wise managers will be promoted. They'll be here it says, I say to you, he, the master will set him, the servant, over all his possessions. Now that's one very small phrase in a ton of what Jesus taught in the New Testament about rewards. Now I don't have time to work through this and show you all the proof from scripture but I've done it many times, I've even put some sermons I think on the back of the worksheet that deal with rewards and I'll spend time walking through that



very carefully in those sermons. But let me just summarize real quickly for the sake of what that means at the end of your life to be rewarded and give you the top four. The top four categories and if you've heard me on this before, these may sound familiar. Riches, Real Estate, Responsibility and Reputation. Riches, Real Estate, Responsibility and Reputation. If you look in the New Testament for the sake of remembering it, you can say the top discussions on rewards end up being that there will be various amounts of riches, various kinds of real estate, various kinds of responsibility and various kinds of reputations that are meted out and dispensed when we get there. Based on what? On how faithfully and wisely you discharged your calling in your work place, in your home life and in your church. You will be rewarded. Now it's going to be based on your faithfulness and your wisdom in taking what God has invested in you and leveraging that for fruitful ministry. (23:24)

Now, I know for some of you this is new. Especially if you've walked in, you've never heard a sermon on rewards which I believe, because you can go for years in a lot of churches and never hear any discussion of this because people as I often say they believe in a kind of spiritual communism. At least I call it a celestial communism. And that is we're going to get to heaven and every thing is going to be equal. Or like some of you, you just say "It doesn't matter what I have because, you know what, I'm just happy to be there." As John Westley says, "Do not let the slothful say I'll be just glad just if I get there." No, you won't be. Why, because the Bible says you need to understand the varying degrees of riches, real estate – these are just the top four – responsibility and reputation. Why? Well, why do you care what's in your bank account now? Why would it be that you might just in a worldly mindset say, "Hey, this job that pays more for the same work is better than this job over here that pays less." Well, why? Well because better to have a bigger bank account Why? Well because the gratification of the things in this tangible life and in the indulgence that I can have in those things, well that really is proportionately related to how much I have in my bank account. Well, that's true. Well it ain't going to be like that in heaven because I'm going to be see-through, playing a gold harp. No, you understand we're going to be in a very tangible real place. Well, everyone is going to get like the gold heaven express card and there's no limit on that right? No, there will be commerce, there will be a marketplace, there will be some things given for free I understand from the stream of life, I understand that. But the Bible speaks of real riches all the time when it speaks of reward. And let me just say this, daring as it sounds, your indulgence and your gratification will be dependent on what kind of, to the extent that you have a maximum amount of based on your heavenly riches. That's why Jesus says, "Store up treasure for yourself in heaven" It will make a difference in your eternal reality. (25:19)

Real estate, well I don't know. If you had two houses and you could afford both of them, and one was better than the other. Why did you choose the better real estate? Why? Well, because when it comes to earthly creature comforts and convenience and comfortable things, I mean, I just like that piece of real estate better. Well, you understand there's not going to be just some long uniformed street full of condos for people to live in the New Jerusalem. There's going to be real estate varying, that's going to provide real people with varying degrees of comfort and convenience. The Bible says you should concern yourself with that. And right now, you're investing your life and it will determine your real estate. (25:59)

Responsibility, every time I speak on this I know people lean back and say I just need a hammock and lemonade, I'll be fine. Why, well, because I don't want responsibility. I hate responsibility here on earth; I don't want more responsibility there. No, you will want more responsibility there, because the only reason you hate responsibility here is because you're doing it in a fallen world with fallen people. Have you noticed that makes it really hard? That won't happen there. As a matter of fact even when I think of overlooking the thorns in this fallen world regarding leadership and regarding responsibility I do recognize there's something about the authority and the influence that sometimes even in this earth can say well it'll be better to get that promotion because I could have that influence in that position and that would be better. You understand that in a perfect world you're going to see that as an attractive thing even more there than you do here? Yes, there will be varying degrees of authority and influence and that's going to be based on your performance now and parlaying your life in your work place, in your home life, and in your church to maximum fruitfulness. (27:03)

Reputation, well, God wouldn't be into varying reputations. Well, he had a great opportunity to make that just an absolute heretical thought when there's all these people asking him, "Can I sit at your right hand and your left?" And Jesus could have said, "Stop, everyone sits at my right hand in heaven." Is that what he said? No. He said, "No, it's not for you to determine this now, it's those whom the Father has appointed and by the way if you want to look at what it's attached to, can you drink the cup that I'm going to drink?" What's that mean? The poetic way of saying, hey, how much are you going to sacrifice and suffer for the cause and it's going to determine where people sit in the

rankings of heaven. When Peter looks at a guy who's not willing to give up a few bucks to be a follower of Christ, Peter says, "We left everything to follow you." And Jesus didn't say, "Stop with all that self interest in the next life." Jesus said, "You know what? You will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Oh, there will be a hierarchy and a pecking order there. Reputation will certainly bestow varying degrees of honor and prominence in the kingdom. Now if you're talking practical terms in that way, indulgence, gratification, comfort, convenience, authority, influence, honor, prominence, those are things that you're going to want a hundred years from now. And it will be based in varying degrees on what we do in this life for Christ. I'm talking to converted people now who trust in Christ by faith knowing that our salvation is not of works, but now as Christians your works matter. They matter a lot to God and he will reward you proportionate to the fruit that you bore. Well, I'm not as talented as that guy; I'm not as gifted as that guy. It's not based on giftedness or talent. This is based on faithfulness and wisdom. So I'd like to serve well, would you like to serve well? To the extent that you serve well you will be rewarded. (28:50)

Oh, then I got a bad section to work with, thankfully it's only two verses. But if the servant says to himself, my master is delayed in coming. Where's the accountability. I can do whatever I want. He begins to beat the male and female servants. Eat, drink and get drunk, verse 46. The master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect him and an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. Wow, why would God do that to his servant? Here's a mind boggling idea, because he's not his servant. Well, it says "servant". So put that in air quotes then, "servant". Put it in ink quotes if you want, "servant". He's not his servant. You know what a servant is? A servant is someone who serves the master, look at this; he's not serving the master. Matter of fact you may have some confusion about the male and female servants that he's getting in fights with, clearly that is an indicator about who you're serving, because the Bible makes that connection all the time. In other words my amount of service to God, my real devotion to serving God is going to effect how I deal with his people. But looking here this guy is ready to go to war with God's people. He's going to beat them up if he doesn't get what he wants out of them. And then we know he's not over there taking his sack lunch getting ready to serve the master for the rest of the day, he's there raiding the pantry and getting drunk. That guy is in it for himself. He's a servant that doesn't serve the master, that's exactly what I'm saying. Matter of fact here's a good way to put it; he's a servant who serves himself. Well, what does he get? Well, look at it, verse 46, he gets punished. Let's jot it down that way, number 2, you want to serve yourself, you will be punished. (30:28)

2. Serve Yourself and Be Punished

You serve well, you'll get rewarded, you serve yourself, you'll be punished. Now, let me make this point, just as a sidebar. You understand how often the Bible talks about people that claim to follow Christ that don't follow Christ? All the time. You know how often the promises made that within the church you are going to be surrounded, hopefully not in large numbers, but at least every congregation is going to be punctuated with people that call themselves Followers of Christ but they don't. Who to put it in terms of Titus chapter 1, who profess to know God but by their deeds they deny him. People that are looking like sheep but they're really wolves in sheep's clothing. When Paul was leaving the church at Ephesus after three years of ministry there he sat the leaders down and he talked to those pastors and he said this. This is Acts chapter 20 verse 29, I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock. Well, great, put the perimeter up, let's get some barbed wire up, electrify the fence. No, no, no – next verse – they'll come from among your own selves. They'll be here, they will arise among you. Speaking twisted things and they will draw the disciples after them. See, they're serving themselves in this. And they're in the church. They're like the wheat and the weeds, remember that parable? They grow up together and they look the same. Although you'd have to look really closely and you might be able to detect, that's not bearing fruit, it looks like fruit but it's not fruit, because the motives and the intention is I do this for me. (32:04)

See when people serve, and they serve for themselves, when they attach themselves to Christianity and it is for their own pleasure, their own good, their own peace of mind, when they say I'm in this like a free agent at the gym, if I feel like it, I'll do it and if I don't feel like it, I know I'm not suppose to get drunk on the job, but if I don't feel like it, I'm going to do what I want to do. Well, then you're claiming to be a follower of Christ and your not following. You're claiming to be a servant of Christ but you're really serving yourself. See this is the phony Christian and there's a lot of talk in the Bible about that. As a matter of fact the phony Christian will always be among us, among the real Christians and they will sit next to us and at the end of life they'll say, "Lord, Lord did we not." And he'll say, "Depart from me I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness." If you look carefully enough you'd see, you could tell the wolves from the sheep, not because they don't look like Christians but because under all of that, you



know what? They are bearing bad fruit. It's just that we try to excuse it because they kept wearing the label, "Christian". You know how gullible our current evangelical culture is? All you got to do is name the name of Christ. All someone has to say is, "I'm on Jesus' team" and we high five and think, yeah, yeah, sure. You claim to be? Absolutely. You make any move to Christ and we're going to consider you a Christian. The Bible says you'll know them by their fruits. Here's someone who may hang out with the servants but they're really self serving. (33:29)

2 Peter chapter 2 speaks of them, they're like animals. Animals just care about whatever they want, creatures of instinct. And then he says this, do you know where they end up? They end up destroyed. They are born and caught to be destroyed. Oh, here's some of the symptoms, they blaspheme about matters they're ignorant of. They will be destroyed by their destruction. They'll suffer wrong as – now here's an interesting word – the wages for their wrong doing. You know the word wages, that's a work word for a paycheck is used here and it's used as the primary word translated in your New Testament, reward. I'm going to be rewarded and the paycheck I'm going to get will be based on my faithful and wise service to Christ but there's some among us that will get their paycheck and it will be destruction. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime, they're blots and blemishes, reveling in deceptions, and they feast with you. Oh, they're at church, they're at the potluck but really they're in it for themselves. Matter of fact their eyes are full of adultery. I know that's not suppose to happen but they're there and they are about themselves. They have an insatiable desire for sin and they entice the unsteady souls among you. Their hearts are trained in greed. They are accursed children! You can put that in quotes because they're not God's children. They forsake the right way, they've gone astray. Oh, they're among us, they've heard the sermons, they know the teaching. They may have read the Bible but they're not doing it. They've forsaken the way. They've followed after the way of Balaam, who loved the gain of wrong doing; they're in it for themselves. He was just a religious figure for hire and there are a lot of people that claim the name of Christ but they're in it for themselves. Serve yourself and the Bible says that phonies will be judged. And if you look close enough you can see some of that and you know I'm not calling you to look at everyone in this church and start making those evaluations I just like everyone in this church to make that evaluation regarding themselves. Is this me? (35:29)

You know Judas was the treasurer of the twelve. Did you know that? He kept the moneybag. Now I know in your organization you try to pick the most shady, questionable character to be the CFO. What does that say about Judas? He must have been someone with a reputation that people thought this guy's got it together. Want a trustworthy guy to hold the treasury position in our organization, that's Judas. And by the time John wrote his gospel, the last gospel to be written, he looked back and I guess he checked the balance sheets and the P&L sheets and he realized, now it all makes sense why I thought we'd have a profit in that quarter and we had a loss. And as he writes that story in the gospel about that expensive perfume that was spent on Christ and he gets angry and he says to the other disciples, "This perfume could have been sold for 300 denarii" Now that means nothing to you but think of it this way, 300 days wage. That's a year's salary almost. He said it could have been sold; we could have given that money to the poor. "Ding" payload. And John who's now apparently gone through the books and figured this out after he revealed himself for who he is, he says to quote very carefully, he says in John 12 verse 6, he said these things not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. And having charge of the moneybag he use to help himself to what was put in. He was in it for himself. He would get away with whatever he could get away with, without getting kicked out of the organization. And when it was clear that the master said he was going to be betrayed and crucified in Jerusalem he said, "Well then, there's nothing in this for me", so what did he do? He conspired with the enemies of Christ. For what, you remember what he conspired for? 30 pieces of silver. At least I can get 30 pieces of silver out of it. (37:25)

You serve yourself you'll be punished. Jesus reserved some of the strongest language that he ever used regarding lost people for Judas. Matthew 26, Jesus said this, "It is better if he had never been born." He called him in his High Priestly Prayer in John 17 the Son of Destruction. I mean he is and that's the phrase in the Hebraic phrase it's in Greek, I understand, it's that Jewish phrase of, he is equated with destruction. He is Mr. Destruction. So this may seem harsh that this servant is cut into pieces. And if you're concerned over the label servant that gets cut into pieces, all I'm telling you is that he's a servant in quotes. It's like those people who tell me they're followers of Christ and in reality they don't follow Christ. So be careful with that. As Paul would say, test yourself to see if you are of the faith. You don't want to get assigned a place with the unbelievers. You want to be in the kingdom and so I want to be category one servant who serves faithfully, who serves wisely. I don't want to be someone who just associates with servants of Christ and I'm actually serving myself. (38:35)

Verse 47, Luke chapter 12, there's another category here. The servant who knew his master's will but did not get



ready nor act according to his will. So he's a servant, he's there serving the master but he didn't get fully prepared here, he didn't follow all the instructions carefully. He knew his master's will but he didn't act according to the will of the master, now there's got to be a distinction here between the guy in the corner who's getting drunk all day long and the guy here who's, he just didn't follow the instructions very well. Well what does he get? Dismemberment? No, he gets a beating, a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserves a beating, he didn't have as much clear explicit instructions, he received a light beating. Everyone to whom much is given, of him much is required and to him who entrusted much they will demand the more. (39:31)

Now, what's this category all about? Let me make this case if I can prove this to you. There's a distinction between those who end with dismemberment and a lot with the people with out faith, the unfaithful. And these people that continue their relationship with the master as servants but they receive a beating. Now, I know that's harsh for our, you know, our 21st century sensibilities that don't believe in corporal punishment, which is working out for this generation too, isn't it? That's a different sermon. But this is a relationship of a master to a servant saying you've done wrong and I'm going to correct you. And here's someone else who didn't do what they were suppose to do and he deserves a beating, but he has a light beating because here's the master saying, "Well, I guess it wasn't as explicit with you." So I've got someone who maintains a relationship while the other is killed, dismembered and allotted with those who don't have faith. I mean I can't take this parable without seeing there a big difference between those two. I don't want a beating but I mean it's different than dismemberment and that's why I try to make that point as clearly as I could when we read the text. My conclusion then is that the one who served himself and the other just served poorly. One was rebellious and the other was failing, in other words, one was a phony Christian and one was a sinning Christian. (40:56)

Now, if you buy that, which I think is the right answer to interpret this text then you need to make this very important distinction because if all you're thinking about is eschatology, the end of time, your death and then the judgment you need to understand this. If this is a switch between those that are rebellious and Christians in name only versus real Christians that just didn't follow the instructions very well, then you need to know this. When it comes to retribution and punishment that happens after people die, the books are open, Revelation 20 the dead are called before the Great White Throne and they are judged according to their deeds. That happens after people die. When it comes to failing Christians, when it comes to stumbling Saints, when it comes to people that are not paying attention to the instructions and they're not doing the service to the master they way they ought to, if this is discipline, well then that happens in this life and the Bible is very clear on that, Hebrews chapter 12. So let's jot it down number 3, here's the third category. If you're serving poorly and perhaps you might feel conviction in this point as I do when I read it. Well, then you're going to be disciplined. (42:02)

3. Serve Poorly and Be Disciplined

Well I don't like that, I don't like it either but you need to know there's a big difference between the ultimate judgment of the picture of dismemberment and allotment outside of the household than those that are disciplined. Why would a master discipline a servant? Well, because he wants to correct him. And I really need to assign as a homework that you spend a little time in Hebrews 12 this week. Because in Hebrews chapter 12 it makes it crystal clear that the Father disciplines every son he receives. Why? Because he loves them. Why? Because if we're going to talk in categories here, he wants to move people from the third category to the first category. He wants the poorly serving servants to serve him well. Why? Well, that a win for him, brings glory to him and it's a win for you because then comes promotion and rewards. Why would God discipline us? Well because Hebrews chapter 12 so that we will be trained by that discipline and we will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. And that righteousness comes with great reward. Riches, Real Estate, Responsibility, Reputation. (43:08)

Severe beating let me tie this together for you, who asked the question, is this about us? Peter, Jesus responds with something that fits Peter to a 'T'. Set over the household, he had a very important leadership position in the household of God, distributing food at the proper time, that's your calling. Leader and teacher, you are a leader and teacher, Peter. Was there ever a time when Peter didn't take that instruction, knowing the will of God, it came straight from his mouth, Peter on this rock I'm going to build my church. I mean all the things Jesus said about him being a feeder of the sheep, was there ever a time when Peter didn't do that very well? Oh sure, matter of fact, at the most inopportune time after the Great Commission. After assembling on the mount and being told as it says in Luke 24, Matthew 28, get out there now and preach the message of repentance to all nations. Get out there and make disciples of all the nations. And Peter says, "Mmm...I'm going fishing." Think about that. John 21, I'm going

fishing. Half the disciples go with him. When he's out there fishing, Jesus shows up in John 21. Jesus shows up and it says in that picture he sits on the shores and he makes him breakfast on the shores, and I'm thinking, oh, that's so sweet, DaySpring, Hallmark, Kodak, Whoo, I love it. Jesus loves Peter, oh he does, but you know how this turned out? Two words, severe beating. It was a beat down. No, it wasn't, come on. Now you're stretching the words. Severe beat down. Matter of fact very strong word used in this text for Peter's grief. Why? Because Jesus came on the scene and three times said to Peter, "Do you love me?" Now, I know, If your spouse on the way home asks you three times, "Do you love me?" it does not spell for a great afternoon for you I don't think, right? This is a bad sign, this is not good. Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? Jesus is saying that not because he's not omniscience and can't see through it but he's trying to tie in his mind the thing that comes after every single time that he says that, "Feed my sheep. Tend my lambs, Feed my sheep." Feed my sheep, teaching responsibility. Tend my lambs, leadership responsibility. Feed my sheep, Peter. Teach them, you should be, you know the will of God and you're not doing it. It's a big beat down in John 21. Oh, it looks kind of loving, it is. Every beat down God gives you is a loving beat down. When you are disciplined it's because God loves you. Now here's the travesty. You suffer as a Christian and many well meaning Christians will write their Christian books and preach from their Christian platforms and they will never mention that you might be suffering because you're in the middle of a loving beat down from God. That never occurs to them, either that or I don't know, they just don't want to mention it, I guess because it doesn't sell books as well. But think that through, what an egregious travesty, talk about clergy malpractice for a pastor to tell you, hey you're suffering let me give you now a book and all it will do is try and make you feel better and overcome your pain. All I'm telling you, is you ought to have at least one chapter in that book that asks the question, is there any thing in terms of the revealed will of God that you're not doing because you know God's economy according to Hebrews 12 is if you don't live up to the information God has and you try to fall down on the job, you do not get ready, you do not act according to his will, one of the things he does, is he disciplines his servants. (46:48)

Now, did Pastor Mike this morning say that every act of pain in my life, every season of suffering is God's discipline? Did I say that? No, but you'd be a fool to not look at seasons of suffering in your life and ask the question God is there anything I as your servant am not doing? I thought I was bearing thirty-fold fruit. Well, yeah, John 15, he sees those branches that bear fruit and he prunes them so that they might, you know the rest of that? Bear even more fruit. Maybe it's time for you to go from thirty-fold to sixty-fold and you know what lies between those two? God's going to do a little bit in your life and say you are not sitting down acting according to my will and one of the things according to my will, according to the passage we read last week was that you should sit down and discover what is pleasing to the Lord. Maybe there's something you can do to leverage the remaining years of your life for fruitfulness. And maybe you're suffering right now and hurting right now because God wants to say, "How are you going to live for me in a more fruitful manner between now and the return of my Son?" Serve poorly and you'll be disciplined. Peter had a real stinging beat down there. (47:55)

And you may say, well okay you may explain that but how do you explain verse 48, the one who did not know? And he did something that deserved a beating; he will receive a light beating. Well, let me put it this way, when Peter sat there and said, "I'm going fishing" He knew full well because right out of the mouth of Christ came you are going to lead and teach, in so many words Jesus made that crystal clear. Now there's someone maybe in this room that needs to be leading and teaching, needs to be in another zip code, needs to be in some other kind of career and you didn't hear it from Christ lips, it wasn't that clear. But you know what? You know, you got that thing in your life that is bringing conviction to you and I shouldn't call it a thing because really the person that brings that to you is the indwelling Spirit of God, who when He knows there's a way for you to be more fruitful to glorify God better in your career, your home or your church. He's putting the pressure on you. Oh you don't have the memory of Christ looking you right in your eyes and saying, "You need to do this." But you know, oh maybe it's not big terrible season of suffering, but maybe it's a light beating your going through right now. Based on the fact that you haven't really sat back down to even think of your investment, or what you're going to do with your time, your resources, your talents, your giftedness for the Lord. And by the way, there are some people who have very little clarity about the will of God. And I don't think we fall in that category. I don't mean to be self aggrandizing or anything but there are places where the preaching is not as clear, you understand. Not as convicting. I've heard there's a few churches like that. So when your preacher gets up and says things like, you ought to test yourself, you ought to figure out what it is that you ought to do to find out what's pleasing, you ought to try go maximize what God has invested in you, you're not going to be able to convict ignorance. Oh, yeah, Jesus didn't show but to tell you what to do. But you do risk discipline, because I think on the spectrum of not having information and having information, you're much further down the line of having clear information than a lot of people. Some people don't even have the Bible



in their own language. Not only do you have it in your own language, but you got it on your phone, you've got apps you've got software you got a bookstore full of wisdom from godly people trying to help you discern the will of God. I think we got a lot and that's how this ends, you know to whom much is given much will be required. And from him to whom they entrusted much they will demand the more. I think you've been entrusted with a lot, I think you've been given a lot. I think it behooves everyone of us to spend some time on our face before God asking questions about, God how is my service is going? I'm I treating this like a gym membership doing what I want to do when I want to do it, coming and going like some free agent or do I recognize that you are the king, I'm a servant, you're the master, I'm living for your kingdom, not my own comfort in this world. Maybe God I need to look at my life and readjust a few things, maybe I need to stop running from the will of God and just give in and do what's right. (51:05)

Well it may be hard for us to see ourselves in verses 47 and 48 the erring servant, but if you are a servant praise God if you're an erring servant the whole point is to get you up to verses 41 and 44. That section that's where God wants you to be, we can move this morning from the third category of this sermon to the first category just by responding to the word of God or maybe the light beating or the severe beating you might be getting from the Holy Spirit right now. Well we are called to be members of the body of Christ, I assume most of you here have repented of your sins put your trust in Christ and you are drafted into the membership of the body of Christ. I'm not just talking about this church, I'm talking about you are a Christian therefore you have been given a responsibility. You ought not to be afraid of it, you ought to embrace it, you ought to seek it out and try and refine it and clarify and turn that thing into clear focus and say, "What am I here for?" And then you want to work on serving well. Two words, faithful and wise. That's the goal and the problem for a lot of you is you'll hear this sermon and you'll leave and just, ahh, I should probably do that and nothing will happen. And you know why that is, because we're not now at the company headquarters. You're not at the office where the boss or the manager is standing at your desk, saying get this done by 5 o'clock. I mean you're working remotely, right? I mean you're at a Starbucks right now, with a laptop trying to get work done. You're manager can, I don't know, IM you I guess but he's not here. But much has been given, you got a great WiFi connection, to stretch this illustration way too far, I mean you do, you've got a pipeline that's coming from God's eternal truth, and it's coming to you in the Word and in preaching and in discipleship and in council. And though there's not that immediate and constant accountability of the master standing there, he is coming; don't think just because you don't feel the immediate constancy of accountability, it is coming. You need to get ready. You need to get ready. So we might serve the master faithfully and wisely. Let's pray. (53:27)

God, help us in this day, in this time when so many around us seem to be lulled into a sleep regarding their service to the king. They are like in many ways the servants we read about here who know the will of God but they just don't do it, they don't get ready. Of course there's always those that are wolves in sheep's clothing and that frightens us to think about, but God for many of us here we just know there's things that you've revealed clearly to us in your word and through the conviction of your Spirit that we're just not responding the way we should. Let us recognize what a comfort it is to not take lightly the discipline of the Lord but to see your loving hand in those things that we might say, Yeah, okay, it's time, I'm going to get this straighten out, I'm going to get to work on this. God I thank you for your saving grace, that our salvation is not contingent on our works but let that great doctrine of the Protestant reformation never blind our eyes to the reality of the necessity of us living out our salvation with fear and trembling. Knowing that yes it is the Spirit within us and he will work within us to carry out the good that we purpose to do but God we've got to get serious about working out our salvation. There's so much at stake there are rewards that you want to lavish on us and it will effect our eternity if we would just get serious about our service to you in our work in our home in our church. So God motivate us please let the service here in this sermon to be a challenge to our Christian life do the hard work of prayerfully considering and evaluating our lives, looking to your word maybe even having good honest conversation with others that know us well. See if we're leveraging what you've invested in us for the kingdom. And God do good things through the lives of the people in this auditorium and those that hear this sermon to advance the kingdom and promote it in this world. We know we're living in a day that desperately needs it. In Jesus Name Amen. (55:36)