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When I first read through Luke 12 a few months past in view of preaching on this chapter I thought to myself, this is sort of all over the place. What will I say. How will I approach all of this.

But usually when I think that, I say to myself, it'll be interesting to see how the Holy Spirit divvy's this all up. And now months later I can say, my goodness, how incredibly rich, for us, this portion, this meat of the scriptures has already been. And there's more for us here. We aren't done yet.

And that's true always, anytime we dig into what Jesus says with some depth. We always find there's just so much gold in this mine, my arms are full, I can't carry any more to the surface, but I've only scratched the surface of what is there.

This week I've been mulling and thinking about our current events, our current situation, a lot. I think I've got Jeff listening to Al Mohler's little daily morning news commentary, the Briefing, and there was one in particular this week that has had my mind spinning, along with other reports about the world health organization etc.

Trying to keep pace with our fast moving world, and trying to digest it all and to look forward to how it may interface with christians. I've been praying more this week for God to give me the necessary wisdom to approach and apply the scriptures to this problem we are living in. Daily wisdom for daily changes.

And we're insulated here in Tonopah. Not really affected very much. Pastor Jamie was telling me he went to Bishop and went in the Carl's Junior without a face mask and the people fled away from him as if his very breath would mean a certain death. It's getting very weird. Weirder than I initially realized.

Then you look at real numbers and who knows if we have any real information or not, we're depending on biased sources, and the numbers indicate, those folks who fled away from Jamie have a far greater risk of dying when they enter their vehicles and drive the 6 blocks to their house.

In a group of 10,000 people in one place at one time, the risk is about .02 percent of contracting this particular illness. 1 in 5000. You silly folks took your lives in your hands driving the 2 miles to get to church. That was a far greater risk.

I'm praying for wisdom. I would ask you good folks to join me in that. Ask God to give me the wisdom I will need as these things unfold. Because it looks like days are coming when we will have to make some more difficult choices than we have had to make so far.

Al Mohler's little morning briefing on Wednesday this week caught my attention. It's easy to find. albertmohler.com and then click on the briefing. But on the morning that has captured my attention he talks about the basic division in the worldwide population of those who are theist's of any stripe, and those who are not.

So, completely secular, there is no sky god, vss those who believe in some kind of higher power. That's an interesting division. And when you begin to

think of that division in terms of our current situation and who is in the driver's seat, it can get scary real quick.

Because the folks who are just secular are beginning to view the folks who believe in a higher power, as sort of an insane nuisance class. The 2 perspectives are getting farther and farther removed from each other, and tolerance is getting thin.

And then you throw Covid in the mix, and suddenly folks who believe there is a Sovereign God in charge of how to approach that problem, with some humility, are rapidly becoming a nuisance class of people to the arrogant secularists who have declared themselves large and in charge.

It's sort of like, we could tolerate you insane people when life was simpler and there was no threat to us, but now with Covid, you religious weirdo's are beginning to be a nuisance that we will have to eliminate somehow. We can't have you meeting in your germ factories and then spreading it all to us.

Now, how do I get this back on track to Luke 12? Simply to say this. Those of us who believe we are to order our steps according to what a Man whom the secularists have abandoned dead on a cross and glad He's dead, those of us who believe we have to do stuff, because He said we have to do it . . . we're insane, and rapidly becoming a problem to those who are in charge.

Just the fact that I believe Jesus rose from the dead, and that I further believe He is returning to this world in judgement, and that I believe that judgement will be based on the words of the laws of this book, and I believe I need to order how I live by this book and this man Jesus, that makes me a dangerous person. A nut job. And a person who will increasingly be in conflict with the demands of the ruling class of secularists in charge. Those who have authority over me.

Jesus is coming. First step in the sequence of events of His coming is taking the church out of this world. That is our hope. Ridiculous to the secularists who grossly outnumber us. Idiotic.

But after that event, Covid 19 is going to look like the good old carefree days. Panic and insanity is going to be the order of the day. And then a one world ruler is going to sort of put humpty dumpty back together again, and a sort of nervous peace will come for a time. And times. And half a time, if you get my drift.

Where are we in all of this, today, right now? Well, we're waiting for Jesus. Waiting for that shout from the clouds, come up here! Waiting for the trumpet sound. Waiting to meet Jesus in the air. But while we're waiting, the world is getting darker and uglier, and increasingly we are being separated into a group that is a problem for the rest of the world. And like I say, tolerance is getting thin. Tolerance could completely vanish away.

That brings us to Luke 12, then, doesn't it. Actually my introduction this morning may need to be a do-over for next week also. Read ahead a few verses. Not now. Later this week.

41 And Peter said, "Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?"

Peter's question is helpful, because from it we can learn something about interpretive understanding. Jesus said something, but Peter, trying to get the application right for what He said, needs more information.

Jesus has just given a series of metaphor's that we looked at last week. Get dressed in readiness. Keep your lamps filled with oil. Be watchful with readiness for when the Master arrives, and remember, He's coming like a thief.

And then the "parable" that I think Peter is asking about. When the Master returns, those whom He finds ready, He is going to set a table and wait on them. He's going to serve them.

And Peter is like, who are we talking about here. You'll recall that in vs. 1 we are told there are multiples of 10 thousands and they're stepping on each other

to see and hear Jesus.

Then we noted too that Jesus is speaking to His own, and He calls them, little flock. And Peter says; who is the parable about. Just us in the inner circle, or everyone else. Can you clarify, please.

And I love that Peter defines his groups, them or us, and Jesus just says; yes.

Is there anyone in that group of 10 thousands who can't come into the kingdom? Anyone who Jesus wouldn't gird Himself to serve? No. Everyone who has kingdom garments, white clothing bright and clean, anyone who has the Holy Spirit living in them, a personal relationship with God, anyone who has the blessed hope of Jesus return and who is waiting and ready, can come to the feast where Jesus serves.

There's not a special table for Peter and the apostles. That promise is for anyone who is ready. Anyone who loves His appearing. Paul says; *7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.* 2Tim. 4:8

And John the apostle says; *2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.* 1John 3:2,3

And so the answer to Peter's question about, is this parable for them or for us, is Yes. Yes. No either / or necessary. Because ultimately, every knee will bow before Jesus. Some now, in clean garments not our own, waiting in hope, and others in defiance and rebellion who hate Jesus and hate His coming.

The parable is for every created soul that God has granted breath. If you're ready He's going to serve you at the feast. If you're not ready He's going to judge you and punish you.

But then, almost as if to have a little poke at Peter, Jesus does some parable pushing to re-define what it means to be Peter. Like I'll adjust the parable so it's about you Peter.

42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?"

OK, Peter, now it's about you. You asked for it, and you got it. What did Jesus say three times to Peter when He restored him to fellowship after his failure at the trial. Peter, feed my sheep. Peter, feed my lambs. Peter, feed my sheep. Peter is the quintessential sheep feeder. And he finished faithful.

But even here, there is a broad sense that still includes every christian. We're all in here somewhere. *"Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?"*

Show me the christian that doesn't have some sort of stewardship given to them by the Lord. Just the very term Kurios, Lord, is loaded. If He is Lord, then we are doulos, slaves, and what slave out there doesn't have some job assigned to him by his master.

Well, apparently, most of them. Because it's rare to meet a christian that is either aware of or cares less about the possibility that maybe Jesus has a job for them to accomplish.

Most so-called christians just think, He died for my sins, I believe, end of story. That's the beginning and the end of it. Doing stuff is for a different class of christians. Like my boss out at work used to say. People who are working for "extra credit". Not required, but you're the type who wants some extra credit.

Ultimately, every christian is in this parable. From simple mom's who are

tasked with teaching their children about Jesus, to preachers who are responsible for gigantic ministries that reach around the world via the internet, and everybody else in between. Jesus is going to define that too.

Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?

There is a fascinating word use in that phrase of Jesus. It only shows up in Luke's account and perhaps because Luke was a physician himself.

We have a Master, and we have stewards. And the stewards, the overseers are charged with the responsibility of giving the servants their rations in a timely manner.

But the word that's interesting is the word for rations. *to give them their rations*

and it's the word; *therapeia*. It's a medical word and it means care. Needed care. Healing care. We get our word therapy, obviously. The Master has charged stewards to give the rest of His slaves, care. There are stewards who take care of the slaves. They give the slaves rations of what they need. Care, like a medical caregiver gives.

Therapy for those that are in the long process of gaining strength and getting well. That's your job Peter. But it's also the job of every person that Jesus has given spiritual gifts to, to be used to edify the rest of the body.

All of us are in here at some level, some place. Every one of us is responsible for the wellbeing of the rest of the body of Christ. So then, to anyone who Jesus gave any spiritual gift, here is your responsibility defined;

Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?

There are levels of responsibility here, but there is no christian who has been given a spiritual gift with which to edify the rest of the body who isn't in here

somewhere. Every member of the body has gifts that the master has given to them, not to squander on themselves, but to edify, to give healing and help, to the rest of the body. Every christian has this stewardship for every other christian. That's how Christ's body the church lives and thrives.

I'm no Peter. No John MacArthur. But I'm painfully aware that I will answer for whether or not I cared for the tiny little flock of sheep that God has entrusted to my care.

Trust me, I have no delusions of speaking at conferences to thousands. I'm in enough trouble with a dozen of you. 2 dozen might overwhelm me. 4 dozen, forget about it. I'm a steward to dispense the gift of care and the gift of teaching to those that the Lord has seen fit to assemble together in worship here. That's more responsibility than I ever wanted or asked for.

That's what is so diabolical about interfering with the gathering of the saints together. God designed the church to thrive when we all interact, each with one another, using the gifts God has given us, to edify and build up each other.

Ordering churches not to meet together is a direct affront to Christ's design for His church. We need each other in order to be spiritually thriving and healthy.

43 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 44 "Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

When Jesus returns, the slaves who are using their various spiritual gifts to care for the other slaves and to glorify the Master will receive rewards. Careful in a few little insignificant things. Here, now you're in charge of all of my possessions.

There is reward for every christian who is using the gifts and abilities that God has given them, whatever they are, in the service of advancing God's kingdom in this world. That's our job. That is every christian's job. The Holy Spirit working through you for the glory of Christ and the advance of the kingdom of God. That's every single christians job.

I was listening to something last week and the preacher was talking about spiritual gifts, and there are lists in the Bible, but the teacher was saying that each christian is given a combination of spiritual gifts that is like DNA. Christian DNA. No two christians have identical gifts. God combines several of the gifts listed with the personality of the christian, and each of us is different.

But every christian then is uniquely gifted to give therapeia, healing care, in some fashion by the combination of spiritual gifts and personality to every other christian. We thrive when we're caring for each other. Physically. Together. It's important to meet.

There were some studies, of course, when the president gave the order to go to phase one or whatever it is, letting the businesses re-open. The bars were packed. People flooded to the local bar's.

You realize of course, that on a secular level, the closest counterfeit that Satan has to church fellowship, is the local bar. People need people. We are built by God to need to be in groups. Close proximity with other people. For the Godless, that might be the fellowship at the local bar.

For christians, we thrive when we are in proximity with one another, caring spiritually, for one another. God supplies the healing, and he uses all of us, caring for each other with the giftedness he has given each of us.

And for the few who take that seriously and who are busy about the Master's business when He comes like a thief and finds them; reward. Reward. But this coin has a flip side. And the flip side has as many shades of dis-use as there are levels of responsibility and use.

45 "But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in

pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

This is the worse case scenario first. Religious people who are fleecing the flock for what they can get. Care less about Jesus. Not sure if He's coming or not. But what I do care about is getting what I can get from these people.

This sounds like the lament against the shepherds in Ezekiel 34. Very similar. *1 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? 3 "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. 4 "Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. 5 "They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. 6 "My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.'"*””

It's a fearful thing to mistreat those who God loves, and to give no care to the flock that belongs to Him. What happens to those shepherds? When Jesus comes, He will cut them in pieces and abandon them with the unbelievers.

There are now and have always been, and always will be, the phenomenon of people who claim they know God and claim to be men of God, lording it over the flock of God, who are wolves in sheeps clothing. False shepherds. In it for what they can get. Filthy rich shepherds who are no shepherds at all.

Read the little book of Jude. Also 2 Peter. Their language describing the false shepherds who fleece the flock of God is terrifying. Just a snippet from Jude; *10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and*

for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

When you first read in Luke where Jesus says He's going to come like a thief and when He finds these so-called stewards of His flock who are doing this, He's going to cut them in pieces and throw them in hell, you think, does He really do that to unfaithful christians??

Folks, these false teachers are NOT christians. People who are out there fleecing God's flock and getting rich off of them, are NOT christians. Make that distinction, please. People in it for the money, people abusing young people, getting sex and money and whatever else they can get, corporate jets, these are not christians.

That's the worse case. Non christians who are wolves in sheep clothing fleecing God's flock. Hell awaits those.

But next there are some who upon Jesus return, who are not ready and who are not obediently living for Jesus, edifying the flock and working for God's kingdom and there will be punishment for those slaves. There will be different degrees of punishment, there will be loss, but I don't see these being cast into hell like the first group.

47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few.

The degree of loss and punishment for the household of God is directly in accord with the degree of the knowledge about His will that they possessed.

Accountability increases with knowledge. Solomon, when he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes said it this way; 18 *Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.* Eccl. 1:18

There is a weight of responsibility that comes attached to the knowledge of this book. More stripes for those with more knowledge who dis-obeyed anyways. Less stripes for those who were sort of clueless.

I'm in my seventh year of teaching this book, line upon line, precept upon precept, as Isaiah said. The reason I wanted a web site is rather selfish. I wanted a repository of every word uttered from this pulpit. And that's what we have, so far. A record of 6+ years of verse by verse exposition. Matthew, Luke, Revelation, 1+2 Peter, and parts of the entire book, drawn in to teach the books we have concentrated on.

Is that a positive or a negative? Because Jesus sort of indicates that maybe ignorance is bliss. Fewer stripes for those who were clueless. So maybe I'm not doing you any favors, teaching, teaching, teaching, if you're getting it all up in your cranium but there's no change in your lives.

That's a net liability. If you know more than you did and there's no resulting change, that's a liability, not an asset.

And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

Here's what I believe the bottom line is that Jesus is teaching here. If we look down through church history, the dark ages, the long lean years, the common people, the believers who loved Jesus and His appearing, but they did not have the Word of God available to them in their language.

Those are the folks who will receive fewer stripes. They got some stuff wrong, but they didn't have this book available to them. Access to the written word of God was limited. Impossible to many.

Compared to now. The book is so ubiquitous that the used bookstores don't want any more Bibles. Nobody wants the ones they have. I'm pretty sure you could walk into Whitneys and if you had a good story and told them you needed a Bible but couldn't pay for it, what, 3 or 4 bucks, a gallon of gas worth of money for the Word of the living God, I'll bet they would give you one for free.

It's telling that in 2006, 95% of hotel rooms everywhere had a gideon placed bible in the rooms. In 2020 it's down to 48%. God's word was ubiquitous and free, and now that door is closing.

Nobody wants God or His book. In fact just the presence of that book is so offensive to people now, the Bible's are dis-appearing. Down by half in 15 years, and I'm sure if you looked at a graph, the curve in the last few years of removing Bibles probably begins to skyrocket straight up. Listen to a quote from the Los Angeles Times about gideon bibles. Most are KJV. Some are New KJV. Good translations all.

The LA Times in an article said; "*The Freedom From Religion Foundation, a nonprofit group that promotes separation of church and state, wrote to 15 major hotel companies last year, asking them to keep Bibles out of hotel rooms.*

The group succeeded in the last year in getting hotels operated by Arizona State University and Northern Illinois University to remove all Bibles from their rooms.

*The foundation also created a sticker that reads: "**Warning: Literal belief in this book may endanger your health and life.**" The group has encouraged its supporters to affix the stickers on any hotel room Bible they find."* end quote.

What Jesus is saying to the modern church is, you're accountable to what was available. *And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*

My mom was a good mom in many ways. Pretty unsympathetic. She figured we would need some toughness. Good for her. My grandmother was where I went if I wanted sympathy, not my mom.

Mom used to tell us kids; Ignorance is no excuse for the law. That policeman doesn't care if you know the laws or not, he's going to take you to jail if you break the laws and he doesn't care if you knew better, or not.

She also used to tell us, he has a gun and he *will* kill you if you don't do what he says. That's what the gun is for. He has lethal authority over you. Obey the policeman or he'll kill you. Also good advice. Sadly more important for some than others. There is a justice gap. But my mom's advice was obey the man now, sort it out later while you're still alive. Ignorance is no excuse for the law.

The evangelical church is mindnumbingly ignorant. Tyndale died translating this book into our language. Spectacular heroic efforts that cost him and many others their lives, in order to provide this book in the language of the common field hand.

England and Scotland, and indeed the entire western civilization in Europe were altered, for the good, by having this book available. Tyndale changed everything by giving us this book.

But; And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

Ignorance is no excuse for the book and what it says. Our culture is the most grievous to God of any culture ever, because the book is ubiquitous and available for free, and we have chosen to ignore it.

No society ever, EVER! has been as guilty of the neglect of the truth that is available for free as ours is. Judgement is directly proportional to opportunity! *And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*

That's frightening for the world that rejects and ignores the truth, but it's actually even more frightening for the evangelical church who gathers at their coffee bars and barcaloungers in the mega-thousands and couldn't tell you who Adam was or how many of each animal went into Moses' ark.

The wrath that God is storing up must be astonishing. His truth is available to save, and no one wants it. Not even the so-called christians.

I would remind us all that in Revelation 3, the picture is that God vomits the lukewarm church out of His mouth. Vomit. Spews.

Last week I ended with the question; On the Sunday morning after the rapture, will the churches be full. Business as usual. All the evangelicals, or should we just say most of them, will still be here to attend. That's my fear.

The weight of the liability of having God's book freely available, and not knowing what it says, not studying it every day of your lives, is huge. We are the generation to whom MUCH has been given, freely, and we will have to answer to our Lord about what we did with His book.

And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

We're coming up quickly on the parable of the talents. Remember that parable? The Master entrusts His wealth to the slaves while He is away. And the first slave buries the wealth in the ground.

Beloved, is that not a picture of evangelicalism, who has the book, freely available, and buries it in the ground, and goes about it's business for it's profit while the Master's wealth goes un-used. Un-invested.

The many stripes are for those who had the wealth available to them, and ignored it. Buried it in the ground.

Beloved, this book is more valuable than all of the wealth in the world, and it has been entrusted to us. We are responsible for what we do with that investment given freely to us. *And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*