

97-05-11a

Let's pretend like we haven't done this before. For our scripture reading this morning, if you'll turn with me to Acts chapter 20, beginning at verse 17. As I mentioned earlier, this is the occasion where Paul says goodbye to people in the church of Ephesus with whom he has worked and labored for many years and has done a lot of teaching there.

And it says in verse 18 that after he called them and they came to him at Miletus, he said to them, you know from the first day that I came to Asia in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials, which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews, how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews and also to Greeks, change of mind toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And see, now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city saying that change and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone, night and day, with tears.

So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. And this is a summary and an emphatic reminder of the thrust of Paul's ministry for those years. He says here that he spent three years in Ephesus.

Now as he's on his way to Jerusalem and he knows that his path is not going to take him back this way, he will not be face to face with these believers again, he reminds them of the goal, the most important thing, the purpose for which he has labored among them. And he leaves with them God and the word of his grace, which is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. And it's a warning and it's an exhortation to alertness.

And that's what we see this morning in Paul's letter to the Roman believers, where we pick up this morning in chapter 13. We have seen Paul move from the teaching phase of his letter to the

exhortation phase. He has laid the foundation.

He has mapped out the framework of what our life is in Christ after salvation, that God is looking for something in particular. God has called us to something in particular. We sang again this morning, Jesus calls us o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea.

He asks us to follow him. And Jesus issued that call during his earthly ministry. What does it mean to follow Christ? What is he calling us to? Well, Paul has outlined the theological basis for that call and the contrast of our calling in this age compared to believers in the previous age.

And he is now spelling out what that entails. He has talked about the importance of love. He's talked about the importance of humility.

He has talked about the way that those things come into our souls through transformation, through our decision to pursue that goal. And as he continues here in chapter 13, we saw last time the obligation that we have to one another for love. It's the one obligation that we never discharge, that we never complete.

He says we render everyone what they are due, taxes, customs, fear, and honor. But there's one debt that always remains, and that's the debt of love, of putting the interests of others ahead of ourselves. And he says that he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

And this ties up a thread that has run through his discourse here in Romans, that the law is good, that Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it, that it is not the law but the misuse of the law that he has been arguing against in this letter. We are not under the law in the sense of being under the ordinances, but we still are called to fulfill the goal of the law, which is love for God and love for one another. And when we arrive at that point of capacity for love and exercise of love toward God and toward one another, we have begun to attain that goal, and in so doing we have fulfilled the law.

Without fulfilling the law, we fulfill it, because we have arrived at its goal. And that was the goal that God had in giving Israel the law in the Old Testament, not to make them legalists, not to have them try to establish their righteousness by works, but to teach them about Christ and to teach them about the mercies and compassions of God and how the requirements of God's holiness and God's righteousness and justice can be met by what God provides. In the Old Testament, it was pictured in the rituals.

In this age, it is fulfilled in what Christ has done. And so he describes our obligation for love, our calling to love, and he said in verse 10, Love does no harm to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Repeating what he said in verse 8. So he is careful to distinguish the fact that even though he has argued against righteousness by works in this letter, he's not arguing against the law, he is arguing for what the law taught.

He says earlier, the law and the prophets bore witness to righteousness by faith. And it is that righteousness that is attained through faith and that is expressed in love. It's motivated by hope.

And that's where he's going to go now in the remainder of this chapter. He says in verse 11, And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. For now our salvation, our deliverance, is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. It's interesting here that we find once again Paul emphasizing the familiar triad of Christian virtues, faith, hope, and love. Faith has been the theme throughout the preceding chapters.

Righteousness by faith, justification by faith, operating by faith. Transformation and renewal by faith. He has been talking in this last chapter and a half about love.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Be kindly affectionate to one another. Owe no one anything except to love one another.

For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. So we've seen the emphasis on faith. We've seen its expression in love.

And now he's going to remind us of what it is that motivates us in that direction to begin with. He says, do this knowing the time. We recognized and we reminded ourselves last week that love doesn't come just by making a decision to love.

It has to come from somewhere. For us as believers, our love, our divine echo of divine love in our souls comes from God's power. It comes from the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit, who sheds that love abroad.

It is the first and foremost fruit of the Spirit. And we know that the Holy Spirit is active in our soul to the extent that He has something to work with. He doesn't speak out of His own imagination.

He doesn't speak from His own thinking. He takes the things of Christ and transmits them to us, communicates them to us, reminds us of them, convicts us with them. And the Holy Spirit is going to be silent in the soul of a believer who has no truth, who doesn't spend time in the Word of God so that the Holy Spirit has a voice.

Because those are the things that the Holy Spirit works with. It's been called the balance of residency. It's been compared to epoxy where you have the two parts that have to be there in equal measure and either one without the other isn't much good.

I really like the epoxy comparison because if you've ever opened one of those tubes, especially the old style epoxy, it is not only useless for gluing anything together, but it smells just awful. That resin stuff is very bad. But when you mix those together, it makes the strongest adhesive that we've ever invented.

And that is the key. And we know that through thick and through thin, we always stick with and pursue an understanding of the Word of God. We look for places where it's being communicated, whatever they may be, books or radio or Bible classes or the lips of our fellow believers who speak the truth in love.

Wherever we find it. And we have to sieve and filter it out a lot of times because nobody can speak the truth of God in an unadulterated fashion. Paul said we have this treasure in earthen vessels and sometimes the vessels crack and break and are imperfect.

But it's the truth of God that sustains us. It is the food for our souls and it is the voice of the Holy Spirit. It's what he uses like a sharp sword to pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow.

Scripture says that the Word of God does that, but it does that in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The Word in and of itself is an inanimate object, but it is in the same way that a sword leaning up against the wall isn't doing any cutting and slashing. A sword is an implement that is in someone's hand.

And the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. So we need that balance. We need to not only pursue an understanding of the Word of God, but also be actively seeking the ministry of God the Holy Spirit and be sensitive to his use of it, his bringing it to our minds and his enabling power by which we make application accurately and develop an instinct and have our senses exercise to perceive good and evil.

So when we get to this point and Paul says, do this knowing the time, how do we know the time? This is another application of the Word of God. This is another place where God the Holy Spirit is going to give us the ability to make sense out of our circumstances, our place in history, our calling, our opportunity in Christ and in this age. It comes to us through the Word of God.

We know the time because we know the Word. And God the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to apply that. So we don't just do this in our own strength.

We don't say, well, I'm supposed to love. Let me go find a way to love. We do this through divine power.

We saw that Friday night in the letters of Peter. It's God's power that makes this change. It's God's power that infuses us with this love.

Our part is to choose it. Our part is to pursue it by faith and to not be slowed down either by our own failures or by someone else's. So we do this knowing the time.

We have a motivation for this. Why go to the trouble? Why not just get by as best we can in this life and just let the chips fall where they may? What is it that encourages us and gives us a sense of urgency about pursuing love, about pursuing transformation and so forth? Why bother? What's the point? Well, we know that there's a reason for this. We are accountable to God.

We have a great opportunity. We also have a great responsibility. And there's a balance there.

I can't help but think of the situation that we find ourselves in in any form of service. You can think of military service where you've got the uniform code of military justice, you've got the rocks and shoals there, that if you fail to fulfill your mission, if you fail to follow orders, there can be very severe penalties. In combat, you can be shot for not obeying orders and putting the lives of others in danger.

But that's not the reason that most people selflessly throw themselves into the accomplishment of the mission in combat. It's not that, well, I'd better do this or my CO is going to shoot me. It is just the opposite.

It is recognition of the importance of the task at hand, of what's on the line, and what victory can mean in terms of securing freedom and achieving the goals for which we fight. The well-being of fellow soldiers or fellow Marines or fellow sailors is often cited as being the foremost reason why people will do heroic things. It isn't always even mom and apple pie or recognition of military responsibility.

A lot of times, it is the immediate looking around and saying, if I don't do something, we're all going to be cut to pieces, and it would be better for me to sacrifice myself in the interests of those in my immediate vicinity. And Jesus pointed this out, and he said, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends. And it means something.

It counts for something when we have that attitude, and it's an expression of understanding the potential. It's an expression of realizing what our opportunity is at that moment. That's what Paul is talking about here.

He's bringing all of these things together. The opportunity for faith, the opportunity to exercise love, is undergirded with and motivated by recognizing the time, and that's a way of saying it's our hope. It's knowing who we are, why we're here, and where we're going, what it is that's coming up.

Do this knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation, our deliverance, is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. That's our time.

Now, Paul was saying this 2,000 years ago, but we still have that same sense of urgency. I mentioned kind of before we got started that I'd been looking at some chronology issues in the Word of God, in the Old Testament especially, and one of the comments I ran across by someone who was writing about a hundred years ago is that we have trouble sometimes understanding why the Bible isn't more specific on chronological things. Why is it that it's so easy for us to date things with a year number, and in the ancient world, in antiquity, in the ancient Near East, they don't seem to have an absolute date system, and they don't seem to always be careful about chronology.

And one of the points that he made, and he illustrated this a couple of ways, was that in the mind of a Semite, in the ancient Near East, and actually even down into the present, in that part of the world, people are much more concerned with the sequence of events. They're event-driven rather than time-driven. And he gave the illustration of a man, and again, this is in the late 1800s, a man was visiting with a missionary friend who was over working with the Bedouin and the Arabic cultures, and this man was out with his missionary and was visiting, staying out here in the tents, in the desert, and the whole bit, and he had a pressing need to get back to civilization, something came up, and he had to get back.

And they stayed overnight with these Arabic folks, and then in the morning, the man said to this missionary friend that he was visiting, I really need to get back, I've got a pressing need to get back to civilization. And the missionary said, well, I understand, but you realize that protocol is very important here, and respecting hospitality and custom is extremely important, and you will give offense if you just dash off. So we need to stay and eat breakfast with these folks.

And he said, I understand, I'm sensitive to the culture and so forth, so we'll do that. So they together went to the host and said, well, when will we be eating breakfast? And their host, this Arabic gentleman, said, oh, breakfast is right away, breakfast is coming quickly. And they said, okay, great, this will be fine, we'll be able to eat breakfast and move on.

Well, it was an hour and a half, in his words, before the match was lit to start the fire to cook the breakfast. And it was another hour before they went out to milk the goat, to get the milk to cook the rice that was going to be a part of breakfast. And the man was pointing out that in our culture, when we say something is coming quickly, when something is next, we think in time terms, we think, well, it'll be a few minutes.

But in the host's mind, when he said breakfast is coming quickly, he meant that's the next thing on the agenda. We have no other business we're going to conduct except to prepare breakfast. And everything that happened in the next two and a half hours was oriented toward breakfast.

Now, breakfast did not happen quickly to an Occidental mind, to a European mind, but in a Middle Eastern mind, it happened quickly because it was the very next thing. It was the next thing in the plan. It was everything now is aimed in that direction that's going to take place.

And the actual breakfast was still two and a half hours in the future, but in the host's mind, well, the servants are gathering wood, they're getting out the pots and pans, they're going and preparing the fire, and they're milking the goat. And so to him, breakfast is happening, where in our mind we would think quite differently. And I think that has a bearing when we come to the Scriptures, which were written in that type of culture and communicated to people in that culture.

Jesus says, behold, I come quickly. It's been 2,000 years, and we say, like the people Peter talks about, where is the promise of his coming? All things continue as they have from the beginning. He says, I come quickly, and it doesn't seem very quick to us.

But in the plan of God for Israel, to whom Jesus was speaking when he said those things, that's the next item on the agenda. There is no other business to conduct with Israel except the day of the Lord. And so regardless of the intervening time, that's the next item of business.

That's what's going on now is the return of the Lord. So when Paul says here, knowing the time, now it is high time to awake out of sleep, now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, we get a sense of imminency, that in Paul's mind this is a near and coming thing and is a reason for urgency, a reason for concentration and prioritizing the things that he's been talking about, because the coming of the Lord is near. Sometimes we wrestle with the idea that if Paul had known that it was going to be 2,000 years in the future, would he have even said this? Yes, he would have, because in reality for us, the coming of the Lord is as close as the end of our own life, and we don't know how soon that may be.

But every day, it's one day closer. Each day that passes, we are closer. And for us, all we have, we don't have, Paul didn't have 2,000 years to get around to prioritizing the plan of God.

Paul had, in this case, relatively few years left in his life. The people to whom he wrote all perished within a generation of this writing. And for them, they had their life and then they had the return of the Lord.

And so it is urgent, it is imminent in that sense. Regardless of how much historical time passes, it is high time for us to awake out of sleep. Notice he's talking to believers when he says it's high time for us to awake out of sleep.

All of us, in some sense, are asleep. All of us have to develop a sense of urgency. We're not born with it.

We're not born again with it. It's something that comes to us through knowledge, through transformation, through growing and beginning to come to a realization that God has a plan that is rapidly coming to its consummation. And as we awake, as we become aware of these things, that incites in us a sense of urgency and a sense of the opportunity that is before us.

So Paul says, knowing the time, it is high time to awake out of sleep. Now our deliverance is

nearer than when we first believed. Another classic passage that reminds us that the word salvation or soterios and its derivatives is used for a wide variety of things.

I think deliverance is a much better translation because we don't tend to tie deliverance to a single type of deliverance as we do the word salvation. And this is deliverance in every sense. From the point of salvation from the lake of fire and entrance into the family of God and the plan of God, we draw ever closer to deliverance in time, deliverance out of this present evil age, deliverance from our sinful nature.

We also draw ever closer to that ultimate consummation of God's plan and the return of Christ and the entrance into a new age. And I think all of those things are comprehended in this phrase that our deliverance is nearer than when we first believed. But he goes on to say, the night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. This is what motivates us, realizing where we are chronologically, historically in the plan of God, that there is a bigger agenda of which we are a part. And the more conscious we are of that, the more motivated we're going to be to pursue these things.

We won't be complacent, we won't be lackadaisical, we won't be thinking, well, I'm saved and I know that I am and all that really matters now is to just kind of hang on and be reasonably moral until the Lord returns. There is an urgent call, there's an urgent mission to which we are summoned. And it is to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

And this interplay of light and darkness, of night and day, is something that Paul mentions in several different places. But it brings us to the principle of watchfulness, the principle of alertness. We have a reminder in many, many places in the New Testament to be watchful.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 24, beginning in verse 36. We remind ourselves anytime we go to the Gospels that Jesus is speaking to believers of a different age, a different dispensation. But the principle is what we're looking for, just like we do when we go to the Old Testament.

And we want to remember that the primary audience here is not church-age believers, but the principle that Jesus expresses to them applies equally to us. Matthew 24, verse 36. Jesus has been talking about the end times, the close, the final seven years of the age of Israel to these people.

And he says, Of that day and of that hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only. This is the time of the second coming, when Jesus will plant his feet on the Mount of Olives, and it will part and provide a way of escape, and so forth. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in

marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. And they did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

When I was a little boy and we'd come to these passages, the two shall be doing something, one shall be taken and the other left, it was always taught to me that this is the rapture, and the one that's taken has gone up in the rapture, and the one that's left behind is the unfortunate one, the unwatchful one. And in reality it's just the reverse, because at the second coming the ones who are taken away are the unbelievers. Jesus will purge the earth at the time of his coming, and it's the unbelievers who will be removed, and there will be a rapture, so to speak, at the end of the 70th week of Daniel, that's very similar to the rapture at the end of this age, in that Christ will come and those who sleep will be raised, and those who are alive and remain will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye.

And they are the ones who will remain. The ones who disappear are the unbelievers, whose earthly life comes to an end at that point, and they will live not until the thousand years are complete, and they're resurrected at the great white throne judgment. And so it isn't that we're supposed to be doing anything abnormal.

These ones who are qualified to remain are still grinding at the mill, or plowing in the field, they're not out trying to win the world for Christ or anything, they're doing their normal thing, but one is taken and the other left, not because of what they're doing, but because of what they believe. It's their standing in the family of God, in the plan of God, that determines whether they're taken or whether they're left, not what they're doing. It doesn't say one is laying in the bed watching TV, and the other is out plowing in the field, and the one in bed is taken and the plowing one is left.

They're doing the same things. They look similar to an outside eye, but one is taken and the other is left because the difference is faith. The difference is that they were aware of the issues and made decisions and exercised faith, in this case saving faith, in terms of being ready when the Master returns.

And he says, Watch therefore for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. And the return of the Lord should be something that motivates us. It should be something that we're aware of and that we think about on a daily basis.

Jesus continues in verse 43 of Matthew 24, Know this, If the Master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. And in reality, the coming of Christ, think about the people who heard this teaching of Christ.

When is the coming of Christ for them? It's at the point that their life ended. That basically is the coming of Christ for them. They don't have any opportunities beyond their earthly life.

So if they live their life watchful and sensitive to the return of the Lord, that is the true doctrine of imminency, if you will. That's the proper way to think about the imminency of the return of Christ. Is that it ought to make us different people.

It ought to shift our priorities. In the same way that if a householder knew that a thief was coming, he would have a different set of priorities. It wouldn't be sleep and it wouldn't be rest.

It would be security. And we have a similar shift of priorities being sensitive to the coming of Christ. Look at verse 45.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Master made ruler over his household to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Master, when he comes, will find so doing. And surely I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. And this is a promise to the Old Testament saints that watchfulness and a life characterized by faith, characterized by faithfulness to the Master, prioritizing the tasks that the Master has assigned, the goals that the Master has for the servant, living in that way, living a life of faith and obedience, will result in the reward of rulership.

Rulership in the kingdom. He will make him ruler over his goods. But if that evil servant, if there is an evil servant who says in his heart, my Master is delaying his coming.

And notice, this is not an unbeliever. This is a servant who has the same relationship to the Master as the faithful servant. There's no difference in the relationship.

There's no difference in the responsibility. There is a difference in responsibility between believers and unbelievers. Believers are responsible for obedience.

Unbelievers are not responsible for obedience. They're responsible for faith. But this servant has the same responsibility to the Master as the faithful servant.

So Jesus says, if that evil servant says in his heart, my Master delays his coming, and he begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the Master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him into and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. This is the opposite of inheritance. This is the opposite of reward.

This is the opposite of being granted opportunity for greater service. He has his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is a potential fate for Old Testament servants. Unbelievers are never called servants of God. God is never called the Master of unbelievers, unless you try to take this passage and force that

meaning into it.

This was a potential for believers in the Old Testament age, that by pursuing their own interests instead of the interests of the Master, they would find themselves in line for discipline, and in line for loss. It is faithfulness and awareness that the Master has a plan and a purpose, and that he is going to return and hold servants accountable. That's a part of our motivation, and it's a healthy motivation.

So, Jesus points that out, and he illustrates that if you continue in Matthew chapter 25, he gives the parable of the ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. This is a wonderful illustration, because it reminds us and pictures for us the roles that we play in the plan of God. These virgins are not the bride, are they? They don't have a marriage relationship with the groom.

They are going out to meet the bridegroom. They are going to celebrate the marriage. They are going to be a part of the celebration.

They have a role to fulfill, and it's an important role. And not to be looked down on. But five of them were wise and five were foolish.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

Remember what Paul says to all believers, it's time for us to wake up from sleep. We all start out unaware of some of these larger issues. It was the same in the Old Testament economy.

People had to learn and become aware of the facets of God's plan that provide us with motivation and fuel our hope. All of the virgins slumbered and slept. But at midnight a cry was heard, Behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him.

So all the virgins arose and turned their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. They didn't plan ahead.

They didn't think in light of the coming of the bridegroom, and they weren't prepared. They didn't have oil. Of course, oil is a reminder, and often a symbol for the Holy Spirit and his ministry in both the Old Testament and in the New.

The wise answered saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you. Go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves. While they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was shut.

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Assuredly I say to you, I do not know you. Now that's interesting.

What is the difference between the five foolish virgins and the five wise virgins? They're all virgins. They're all assigned a place in the wedding festivities. The difference is five of them had lamps and were ready when the bridegroom came.

Five had lamps but were not ready when the bridegroom came. They had no oil. And so the bridegroom looks out and says, I don't know you.

He disclaims knowledge of them, even though they have the same relationship to the groom and to the festivities and to the bride and everything as the wise ones. But they are disqualified from entering and participating because they weren't ready. They didn't prepare themselves.

They weren't thinking in terms of their place and their opportunity and their assigned role. And so they miss out. And the bridegroom says, I do not know you.

And Jesus concludes by saying, Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. Live in the light of the coming. That ought to be motivating us.

It ought to be spurring us toward fulfillment of these things. He goes on in chapter 25, verse 14, to say the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And he goes on to communicate the parable of the talents.

And we're familiar with the details of that story. And he concludes in verse 29, that story, by saying to everyone who has, more will be given and he will have abundance. But from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away and cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a servant. He has the same relationship to the master as the others.

But he didn't think about the time. He didn't consider that it is high time to awake out of sleep. It's high time to be pursuing the priorities of the master.

And because of that, he loses privilege. He loses opportunity to dwell in the presence of the master. And it's a harsh judgment.

People are going to weep. And people are going to gnash their teeth when they see what they've lost. When they see what they've traded away.

Remember Esau who saw his birthright with tears? He wept over what he had lost. But he gave it away. He had no one to blame but himself.

We're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, we're going to pursue some other passages in the New Testament that remind us about this principle of watchfulness and what it means to know the time and realize that it is time to wake up and pursue the priorities

of the master. But let's pause here and take our break.