

Mar 24, 2018

Luke 12:35-48

The Certain Gospel: Get Your Go Bag Ready!

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Christians believe that one day **Jesus** is going to **come back**. We believe his return is going to be unexpected, surprising, and everyone will see it. Today's passage explains how to **prepare** for that day. That got me thinking about other times in life where we prepare for **someone's arrival**, but we don't know when they are coming. And of course that reminded me of our upcoming baby's arrival.

Our care provider has given us a **due date** of Saturday, June 9th, but for those who have had children or know someone who has, you know that's just a date. The baby could come at any time! He could come 3 weeks early or a week late. He may come during the middle of the day, or decide, "Hey, it's 2am! Let's go!" So **how** do you prepare for someone's arrival when you don't know when they're coming? You get the nursery ready. Check! You take a birthing class. Check. You pack a go bag full of every item you might need for your stay at the hospital... I'll be right back. I need to do that.

What should you pack in a go bag? I assume the **essentials** are going to be things like my Xbox, my iPad, Netflix, and a lava lamp. Okay, so maybe we should take things like toiletries, and our own pillows, a change of clothes, pajamas, a couple baby outfits, etc. But what's the **most important part** after packing all of these helpful items in your go bag? It's actually **remembering** to take it with you. I bet none of you **forgot** your go bag on your big day...

How should we prepare for Christ's return? If we imagine a **spiritual go bag**, what sorts of things should we pack? In Luke 12:35-48, Jesus tells us two things he wants us to pack, two things that will get us ready for his return. **What should we pack** in our go bags? **First** we should pack..

Readiness (Luke 12:35-40)

Jesus tells us to be ready for his return, but I want to add that the **principles** we should live by apply to us even if Jesus **doesn't return** in our lifetime. He may come back at anytime, but we may also **go to him** at anytime. None of us know when our **time is up**, so Jesus' words still apply. He tells us to be ready with a parable, an **illustration** or **allegory** of servants getting ready for a master that may return at any time.

35“ Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. 37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. 38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. (NIV®)

The NIV has done a great job of bridging the gap between the **ancient** and the **present** because the Greek actually says “Let your **loins** be girded.” This is an **idiom** that describes how ancient people would tuck up their robes into their belt to travel (Exodus 12:11). Likewise, ancient people usually didn't keep their lamps burning all night without a special reason. A good servant is a servant who is ready and waiting for his master's arrival, no matter the time of day or night. The “**middle of the night**” and “**daybreak**” were the last

watches of the night. Jesus is saying that even if he comes when we're **most tired** and **least expecting** him, he want us to be ready.¹ Jesus uses a **second illustration** to explain it will be a surprise.

39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (NIV®)

If you knew when I thief was thinking about breaking into your home, you'd install a **security camera** and steal your neighbor's **little blue sign** to put in your front yard, “**Secured by ADT.**” But just like thieves don't tell us when they're going to rob us, Jesus doesn't tell us when he's coming back. So we need to be ready all the time, but Jesus doesn't define readiness in our passage, so we actually have to take a **broader look** at Luke.

Readiness is...

1. **Repenting of your sin and believing in Jesus.** (Luke 7:1-10)

The story of the Centurion teaches us none of us is righteous, not even the best of us. The Centurion recognizes he **doesn't deserve** Jesus to come into his home, no matter how much good he has done. Likewise, being ready involves a daily recognition of sin, repenting of that sin, and turning to Jesus. Even on my best day, the only reason Jesus will have mercy on me when he returns is because he paid the penalty for my sin on the cross. The **gospel** is the good news that Jesus saves me despite myself.

2. **Sitting at the feet of Jesus.** (Luke 10:38-42)

Do you remember the story of **Martha** and **Mary**, and how Martha was **doing** for Jesus and Mary just wanted to **be with** Jesus? Before we start to be overcome with anxiety over busyness, Jesus invites us to come and sit at his feet, to sit at the feet of our Rabbi. We do this by spending time in **prayer** and by studying his **Word**, the Bible. This is why we do **personal devotions** and come to **church** and participate in **small groups**. We want to know Jesus' words so we can know God. I asked **Jennie** what she thought being ready for Jesus' return meant and she said, “If he came back, would I know him? Would I recognize him? Spending time in his word helps us get to know him.”

3. **Caring for the least of these.** (Luke 4:18-19)

Back in **Luke 4** at the **start** of his ministry, Jesus explains he has come to proclaim “**good news**” to the **poor**, the **imprisoned**, the **blind**, and **oppressed**. He did this throughout his ministry and one of the ways we get ready is by doing the same thing. How are we caring for the least of these? Are we giving money to the poor? Are we ministering to the oppressed and the sick? I'm really encouraged by how you all help each other when you're sick or in need. That's really wonderful and it's one of the ways we live ready for Jesus' return.

4. **Eating, drinking, and talking with sinners.** (Luke 5:27-32; 10:1-24)

Jesus ate and drank with sinners and tax collectors. These weren't the good religious people, but the **outcasts** and the rejects. Maybe some of you remember our previous **foundation verse**? Can you **say it** with me?

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (NIV®)

¹ Wilkins, Michael J.. Matthew, Mark, *Luke: Volume One* (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Book 1) (Kindle Locations 13726-13728). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Jesus calls us to spend time with people that could make us **look bad by association**. I think Jesus will be **pleased** if he returns and finding you sitting at the **bar** with a friend from your **frontline** talking about him.

5. **Picking up our crosses daily and following him.** (Luke 9:18-27)

We finished our second **foundation verse** today. Let's see if we have this one memorized too.

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. (NIV®)

Being a **disciple** of Jesus means **learning** his teachings and seeking to put them **into practice** each day of our lives. Sometimes this will mean difficult days where the cross is heavy; and other days it will be easier. But it's trying to go through each day submitting to whatever Jesus has for us that day.

Let's **look back** over what it means to pack readiness and ask what type of bag we're packing. Are you packing a **go bag** or a **bug-out bag**? A bug-out bag is what **preppers** pack in case of **armageddon**. If the world ends, they want matches, a compass, food rations, rope, a knife, and some type of weapon. They want to grab their bag and run! Am I a **go bag Christian** or a **bug out Christian**? A bug-out Christians believes that in the end this world is going to be burned up so nothing really matters. "It's me and Jesus so who cares what happens to my neighbor." As Christians, being ready for Jesus **is not** packing a bug-out bag.

A go bag on the other hand is about preparing for a **relationship**. You pack it with **baby outfits** and a change of **clothes** and items for relationship. You carry your go bag with you through **daily living**, in the car on the way to the store, to gym class, wherever you are so that you're ready. Go bag Christianity starts with a **personal saving relationship** with Jesus Christ, but it extends **outward** to caring for those around us and sharing Christ. It means reading your **Bible** and **praying** and **repenting** and **believing**, but it also means caring for the **poor**, spending time with your **non-Christian friends**, and just trying to be **faithful** wherever Jesus calls you. But this call isn't just for **me**, it's for **us**.

We all need to be ready. (v35)

In our passage, Jesus isn't just saying "you" (singular) be ready but "you" (plural) be ready (you all). Yes we need to take **individual responsibility**, but this is a call for us as **a people**, the **church**, to get ready for Christ's return. This is why I've found it so encouraging to be a part of an **evangelism small group**; because we can pray for each other, encourage each other when it's hard, and celebrate when God does something.

Maybe some of you are wondering what is going to happen **this summer** when we have the baby, who is going to fill this **pulpit**. I'll be out for three weeks, so Andy and Terry are preaching, and one more. But we don't know exactly when that is. I've told Andy and Terry to get ready; but **my son** is going to let them know when they're on. We **together** get ready for Christ's arrival. We help each other with the ways God has **gifted** us, filling in for each other's weaknesses and giving our strengths so that we're ready together.

Jesus will reward our readiness. (v37)

Verse 37 tells us that when the master returns, if he finds his servants ready, he will **dress himself** to serve them. The text uses that same word for "gird" again. We gird ourselves for service because one day Jesus is going to gird himself to serve us. That idea was absolutely **radical** in their culture. Masters didn't serve servants. Can you imagine it? Either Christ has returned or you die and go to heaven; you're finally meeting your King face to face for the first time; and you just want to fall on your knees and worship him; and he says, "Thank you for your service. Take a seat and let me serve you." Jesus will reward readiness.

So first we pack readiness in our eternal go bags. But **second** we should pack...

Faithfulness (Luke 12:41-48)

41 Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?” 42 The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (NIV®)

Peter is confused, so he asks Jesus if he is talking to the **disciples** or to the **crowds**, and of course Jesus doesn't give a straight answer because **both** can apply what he is teaching. He says in v42 the second way we get ready is for “faithful and wise manager(s)” to give his servants “their food allowance at the proper time.” This word for “**manager**” means someone who is in charge of **running a household**.

So if God has entrusted you with leading or co-leading a household, if you are a **mom** or a **dad**, a **spouse**, or a **leader** of the **church household**, God **expects faithfulness** from you. He expects you to **feed** those under your charge. Well does that mean? The Bible calls the word of God food (Matt 4:4; Heb 5:12; 1 Cor 3:2). So being a faithful manager means **teaching God's Word** to those he has **entrusted us** over.

- **Parents**, are you teaching your kids about God? Are you teaching your kids the stories in the Bible? Maybe you don't know them super well so you're **learning as you go**. That's okay! Are you **modeling** the truth of God's Word in your own life? Are you **confessing** your sin to them when you wrong them? Are you **sharing** how God is **speaking to you** and changing you? That's how we **pass on** the faith.
- **Spouses**, are you loving your husband or your wife? Are you praying for each other and encouraging each other with God's word? **Ephesians 5:26** has a **special call** to husbands to **wash** their **wives** with the **word**. Husbands, are you sharing the Scriptures with your spouse and praying with her? Wives, are you sharing what you're learning with your husbands and praying for him?
- **Elders**, are we feeding our people God's word? Some people on our church service time survey wrote down that they want to learn God's word more. We agree! We want to **disciple you**; we want to **teach you** God's word. We're just trying to figure out what that **looks like**. Does it look like **small groups**, **Bible studies**, a **discipleship hour**, or something else? This is a challenge to us as your leaders to figure out a way to make sure we're all being feed.

But what if you're not in charge of anyone? Are you **feeding yourself**? We're called to faithfully feed each other. But in Luke Jesus takes a **pause** and reminds us he is **very serious** about this.

There are consequences for unfaithfulness. (v45-48)

45 But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. (NIV®)

This passage is meant to **shock us**. It's meant to **jar us**. If we take the gift of knowing God and use it to Lord over others or don't pass it along to those under our care, there will be a **stiff penalty** (1 Peter 5:3). In fact, if you are someone who uses God's word to **control** and **manipulate** others, you might **not be a Christian**, and when Christ returns he will assign you a place with unbelievers in **hell**. But he will be fair.

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

The consequences of unfaithfulness will be perfectly **fair** and **just**. God will judge those who didn’t know or understand less strictly, but those who should know better will have to answer for it. So what’s my big idea?

Get your go bag ready!

Although our passage appears to end on a more **negative note**, I think it’s important to point out that Jesus is saying in v48, “**much** has been **given** to you” and “you’ve been **entrusted** with a lot.” Jesus doesn’t give us this responsibility so we can **fail**, but so that we can **rise to the challenge**. You are safe in Christ, so don’t be afraid. Everyday is an opportunity to pack our eternal go bags with **readiness** and **faithfulness**, so that when Jesus returns or calls us home, we hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (Matt 25:23) *Get your go bag ready!*

Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote and preached this message for the people of Cornerstone Congregational Church. [Click here to listen to more sermons](#) or [click here to read our story](#).