**1. Motivate**

When have you seen a “never quit” attitude on display?

* a sports team that comes from behind with minutes to go in the game
* a person who overcomes a serious injury
* a politician who keeps running for his/her office

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_dqouzh00> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ap4xx>

* a faithful pet who is aging
* someone still working at 90 years old
* an old car, still running after 300,000 miles
* a dedicated fisherman or hunter
* someone who runs a marathon, even though injured
* a handicapped person who still gets around

**2. Transition**

Jesus challenges us in today’s scripture to have that “never quit” attitude.

* We are to serve Christ faithfully as we wait for His return.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Stay Alert

Listen for why to be ready.

Matthew 24:42-44 (NIV) "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

What life principle does Jesus give concerning His return?

* keep watch
* be continuously prepared
* you don’t know when Jesus will return

How does He illustrate that principle?

* it’s like anticipating a burglar breaking into your house at night
* if you know he *is* coming, you can prepare
* watching for a burglar is a negative experience
* watching for Christ is a very positive experience
* in either case you are ready for what will happen

How would you prepare if you *knew* a thief would try to burglarize your home today?

* lock the windows and doors
* maybe sit up with a gun
* have 911 on speed dial on your phone
* be ready to surprise the intruder
* set a trap for him

So, what does it look like to prepare for Jesus’ return? How can you tell when you are being watchful?

* seek to be faithful in what you say, what you do
* live like Jesus is looking over your shoulder
* tell others your anticipation
* be involved in ongoing ministry
* be communicating with God daily – reading and thinking about what He has to say, talking to Him in prayer, worship, giving thanks

Even if we claim to believe in Christ, what are some ways we live as though we were atheists?

* a lifestyle that seems to ignore the possibility that Jesus could come today
* lack of daily communication with God
* no involvement in sending the Good News of the Gospel to others … locally, around the world
* we sometimes dabble in worldly affairs, pushing the boundaries away from how we ought to be living

We use the term “imminent” to describe Jesus return. What are synonyms for “imminent”? (Use your phones to look this up)

* looming
* forthcoming
* pending
* impending
* about to happen
* on the horizon
* at hand
* just around the corner
* an antonym is “distant”

Contrast believing in the imminent return of Christ with an attitude of “whenever … who knows?”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Whenever … who knows? | Imminent Return |
| * won’t affect me in my lifetime * my actions won’t have any effect on making it sooner * not much I can do to make it different * I’ve got plenty of time to get right with God | * affects how I live * I will be careful to make right choices, be in right relationship to God * involvement in faithfully serving God * live like it could be today, work like it could be far off * view current events with anticipation of Christ’s soon return |

3.2 Remain Faithful

Listen for benefits of remaining faithful.

Matthew 24:45-47 (NIV) "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

What appears to be the intent of the parable Jesus told in these verses?

* you want to be found faithfully serving the Lord when He returns
* you should be involved in regular corporate worship, praise
* you would want to be exercising your spiritual gifts
* preparing for the Master’s return – building up the Church, the Body of Believers

What are some traits of a faithful and wise servant that we can glean from verse 45?

* providing for the needs of the rest of the workers
* faithfully carrying out responsibilities and tasks
* ministering to those who are your responsibility
* doing so in a timely manner, not procrastinating

What seemed to be the attitude of the owner of the household when he returned?

* pleased
* gracious, generous to the faithful servant
* honored that the servant was faithful to Him

How did the owner respond to the faithful servant?

* gave him a higher position
* gave him more responsibility
* honored him with a promotion

Why is it important to faithfully work until Jesus returns?

* Jesus has given us the responsibility to advance the Kingdom of God
* God could have used angels to evangelize, but He chose to give us that task
* we are a part of God’s team to accomplish His purposes
* we have the privilege of serving the King of the Universe
* God uses our limited efforts to accomplish big things for Him

What are some ways we can be faithful and wise servants of the Lord in your home, community, church, or other settings, so that you will not be ashamed when the Lord returns?

* using our spiritual gifts to minister within the Body of Christ
* involved in spiritual ministries
* pointing others to Christ
* acting in love to a hurting world

3.3 Live to Serve Others

Listen for bad choices.

Matthew 24:48-51 (NIV) But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 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. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Why is the servant in this portion of Jesus’ story characterized as wicked or evil?

* mistreating fellow servants
* indulge in substance abuse of alcohol
* associating with likeminded yahoos

What was his attitude toward the owner’s absence?

* it’s going to be a long time till he returns
* I can do as I wish for now
* I’ll take advantage of my position and do whatever I want
* the master’s business will take care of itself
* I’m going to live hearty and party

How did the owner respond?

* “cut him to pieces”
* assign him to a place with hypocrites … people of his own wicked lifestyle
* he would get treated badly just like he had been doing to others
* he would end up “weeping and gnashing”

How does this part of the story support the message Jesus wanted to convey about expecting the Lord’s return?

* don’t ignore the certainty of Christ’s return
* live like it could be today
* work faithfully like it could be decades away

What are some obstacles that make it harder to stay focused on remaining faithful?

* it’s been 2000 years – often hard to have the mindset that Jesus could actually happen today
* we are busy with daily responsibilities of life
* often feel stretched to try to find time for spiritual ministry involvement
* there are many distractions from that reality of Jesus’ imminent return

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

How can we help others prepare for Christ’s return?

* discipling believers
* make sure these kinds of Bible studies are included
* live the lifestyle of a someone joyfully anticipating Christ’s return
* involvement in the communication of the Gospel … locally, regionally, around the world

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Reflect:

* Take a moment and reflect on your life.
* Are you faithfully serving God with your life?
* Have you fully committed to His call on your life?
* Spend some time in prayer asking God how you can better serve Him.

Memorize:

* Memorize Matthew 24:46: “Blessed is that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes.”
* Let this verse motivate you to remain faithful while you wait for His return.

Exercise:

* If this session has convicted you to serve more faithfully, speak with your pastor and see if there are ministry opportunities that are going unanswered.
* If you are serving faithfully, enlist someone you can mentor.

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At our consulate in Babourg, one of the Marine guards received the above message thrown out the window of a car speeding by. Our decoding department is busy taking final exams and watching NBA playoffs, so we need your help. Use the partial key above to determine the letters that go in the given spaces. Forward the results to the head of the nursery department to read to her staff. Technical help is available at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ap4xx> along with other activities of intrigue.