

Monday

Read and consider the following:

We've said a lot during this series! We are hurtling toward the last sermon this coming Sunday, so let's take time to review and reflect. Here is what we have said:

1. The future is the full, eternal reign of Jesus Christ on this earth
2. The renewal of the earth is earth and heaven smashing together as one
3. God's grace through Jesus Christ opens up our future
4. Your future is to be resurrected as a transformed human being just like Jesus (not a disembodied spirit) on the new earth
5. What you do now will carry into God's future
6. Jesus speaks of the last judgment as separating those who feed, shelter, and visit those in need from those who do not.
7. The best way to approach the future is with diligent discipleship, not speculation.

Which of these points has been the most life-giving as we've gone through this series? Why?

Which of these points has been the most difficult to grasp or get your spirit around? What is the tension?

How have you become more hopeful about the future?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 24:45-51

Here in this first judgement parable, the faithful and wise servant is the one who is feeding the master's household when the master returns. So, immediately we see that the gaze of the disciple is not focused on the horizon or in the sky waiting for the master's return, but is focused on the master's table. All of the master's (all of Jesus') servants are given some table, some vocation, some household to serve.

What people or areas of care has the Lord given to you so that you may serve? What is your table?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 24:45-51 (we are going to know it well!)

Why is the servant faithful for focusing on the master's table? Because, as we see in Matthew 25 and as Jesus tells us throughout the Gospels, Jesus' disciples are at their best when they are doing what Jesus has instructed them to do. To be faithful (*pistos* in the Greek) is to be loyal, trustworthy, and true to what one has been given. The servant is being faithful by doing what the master commanded *and* not going beyond it. I vividly remember a play during 8th grade football practice. I was playing tight end and we were practicing a running play that was coming off tackle to my side. I had a great block on the defensive lineman coming at me – so much so that having blocked him I left him in the dirt and plowed ahead to act as a lead blocker. This infuriated my coach. Unbeknownst to me, in leaving my assignment and rushing into the hole to be a lead blocker, I delayed the running back. I was supposed to be faithful to my assignment and not go off doing what I thought might be even better. The best I could do would be to do what I was given to do and do it well. That would be enough. The servant is faithful for keeping the focus on the master's table because that is what the master wants. Trusting that the Lord knows where we should be focusing and putting our focus there is faithful.

How have you been faithful to what the Lord has given you to care for recently? Bonus question: how can you be faithful to the table that master has given you to focus on and still be caring for the world?

Thursday

Read Matthew 24:45-51

The food the servant offers is given at the proper time or in season. The right food needs to be given at the right time and in the right way. Giving someone 500 pounds of rice isn't all that great if they have no way to prepare the rice to eat. Slapping a whole T-bone in front of an infant won't prove to be a good meal for them. These are nutritious but not accessible. Giving a person desperate for food a gourmet meal with only three bites of food is accessible but not entirely nutritious.

Be faithful to the mission Jesus has given you to feed the people good, nutritious food – from the farm and from His Word – and wait to hear, "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes." The master will return when he returns.

Friday – please read and reflect upon all of Matthew chapters 24 and 25 for Sunday