

Waiting. There is the type when I was working at the factory after a long day waiting for the hour hand to hit 4 and the minutes hand to hit 30. There is an altogether different type of waiting like when the mother has been alerted by her offspring that she will soon be promoted to grandmother and the eager expectation consumes her even as she goes about her daily work and additional tasks of preparing for grandchild's arrival. There is an urgent always available waiting as a man waits for the call that will help him in his sickness and failing health. Is there a transplant available? Is it a match? Though he goes about his day to day activities with purpose and patience, he waits always ready for that call. Our Savior commands us to live and wait for Him.

Christians are Dressed and Ready for Jesus.

1) In Joyful Eager Anticipation.

2) Always Available for His Arrival.

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 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. 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. 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. 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. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

It can seem like drudgery to wait at times. Jesus' opening parable teaches us to be **dressed and ready for Jesus**. Those servants were waiting for their master to come back. They were to be so ready that the minute he knocked they could open the door for him. Was this waiting drudgery for them? Would they rather be doing other things - working for their own progress, success, or imaginations? Would they be annoyed that they had to stay up instead of sleep? Was their master a tyrant, and their only motivation was fear of punishment? This is not the picture Jesus paints. He is something more, unheard of in their time and ours.

“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.” Who is this master? The servants have every reason to serve such a master. He will actually do the unheard of – he will serve them. He will become their slave to make sure they are taken care of, provided for, get to rest and recline and eat and drink. Who would not want to wait with **joyful eager expectation** for such a master? Yet Jesus tells this parable for his disciples, and for all who are privileged to have him as their master. Is it hard for us to wait? Is waiting for him drudgery? Do we need to hear this?

This is actually a recurring reminder that Jesus gives. It is needed. Why? Our sinful nature is a glutton for the empty promises of the world and loves to complain and see waiting as drudgery. Like Eve and Adam in the garden we too quickly give up the good things guaranteed in God for what looks good to the eye and pleasing to the stomach. We run after this or that – success in work, sports, social circles, or health. While these things can be great blessings and aren't bad in themselves, we make them bad when we think they can give us what will fulfill, what will level us up, what will satisfy. Idols were never just pieces of wood or metal on the shelf at home or in pagan temples, they've always started in our hearts with snake-oil lies that something or someone can provide me with what we can only find in God alone. **My worth** – can I find it in what I can accomplish (my accolades, money, or work ethic) or by how much people like me? **My purpose** – can I find it in scratching this itch or that, or in how much time I have for myself for fun or pleasure or to work on myself? Too often our desires or daydreams show this. **My identity** – is it found in what I can do or what others are willing to do for me? How fleeting and unstable, yet we've tried. Do we need this reminder? God help

us and forgive us. I need the rebuke that my life, hard to admit, is not to be about me though I often make it about me shown by my complaints and pride.

And yet how unheard of, The Master made his work and his life all about you, and all about me. He himself said, *"The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28). And he did. Hear it again, *"Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them."* This sounds ludicrous! This is the master. Why would he do this for his slaves?

But he already has. What he promises to do, he has proven he will do by what he has done. He said with emphasis, *"Truly I tell you."* Jesus lived this emphasis. He was born into our sin-sick, selfish, perverse world, threatened by tyrant kings, rejected by many of his own creation, yet he lived to serve. He fed 5000. He fed 4000. He put up with three years of having 12 disciples basically living with him, being so far above them in every way, but never treating them that way. He washed their feet. He gives them and you his body and blood. He paid his enemies' debts on a cross so that they might go free. His blood paid your ransom. Your selfish purposes have been forgiven. Great **worth** has been given to you by the price Jesus paid for your ransom. A new **identity** worth living for is yours as a baptized child of God. He served us then. He serves us now more than we can imagine. He will serve us then as he promises. Is this master worth waiting for? Live to the fullest with an eye on the sky waiting for his return and an eye on our work serving God and our neighbor. **What purpose!** This is not drudgery. **We are dressed and ready for Jesus – In joyful eager anticipation, Always Available for His Arrival.**

How do you stay awake when driving? My dad had sleep apnea before it was cool. He often struggled to stay awake especially when driving. He would come prepared though. He would have his thermos with coffee or soda. He would have snacks – nuts or pretzels. He had aerobics he would do – slapping his knee, the back of his neck, gripping the wheel, and finally pulling over and stretching if need be. It was a work out just watching. Yet this is our effort spiritually, for Jesus says, *"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."*

Keep growing. Prioritize Him in all we do – in our schedules – protecting time with God and his Word and Sacraments and his people. In our work – living as a Christian in the words we use, the motivation we have to serve and help, the care we have for others. In our studies – showing respect, trusting the process of learning, being a witness to God's love no matter the subject. In our relationships – building others up, speaking the truth and sometimes hard truth but in love, forgiving one another, praying for each other, protecting reputations. And the list goes on.

Jesus hints at the alternative if someone would not be waiting or would become careless, and simply stop watching for his return. *"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. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."* As a child of God, dearly loved, forgiven, with purpose, worth, and identity, we have much to lose. Don't be distracted by counterfeits. We know the temptations. But we also know the Master we follow. He will help us to stay awake and prepared in this world that would have us begrudge and sleep. Hold on to what he's given you. Stay awake for it. With more eagerness than being a Grandma, and more availability than for a life-saving organ, **Christians are Dressed and Ready for Jesus. 1) In Joyful Eager Anticipation. 2) Always Available for His Arrival.**