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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 44 – Be On The Alert!

THURSDAY

OPEN

If you knew the day and the hour when “Jesus Christ was coming,” would it change the way that you live? Beloved, it shouldn’t. You should be living as if He were going to appear at any time. You are charged to “be on the alert” because you don’t know the hour that your Lord is coming, and He could catch you by surprise. We’ll talk about it today as we look at God’s precepts for life.

PART ONE

As we come to the end of Matthew chapter 24 where Jesus is telling the disciples what the “sign of His coming” will be. He wants to make sure that they are on the alert. Yes, [there is a time of tribulation coming such as has never been and will never be again.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 24:15) Yes, it is going to be inaugurated by “...**The Abomination of Desolation... standing in the holy place....**” (Matthew 24:15) And He wants them to

understand that they are to live in an attitude of readiness, and, Beloved, since He hasn't come yet, and since He could come at any time, you and I also need to be in that attitude of readiness. He goes on to say in Matthew chapter 24, **"Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."** (Matthew 24:42) Now the "therefore;" when you see a "therefore," it's a term of conclusion, and you have to find out: What is the "therefore" there for? Well the "therefore" relates back to the fact that [when the "Son of Man comes" it will be like the days of Noah, because they didn't know that the flood was coming until the day that it started. They were eating and drinking and they were giving in marriage and they were getting married. It was life as usual, and then suddenly, the flood was there.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 24:37-39) So His word to us is that, **"Therefore [we need to] be on the alert...."** (Matthew 24:42) Now what He's going to do at the end of Matthew 24 and all the way into Matthew chapter 25, He's going to take several stories from common day life, and He's going to use those stories to illustrate the fact that we need to "be on the alert," that we need to be a "faithful" servant. We need to be a prudent person, because He's entrusted us with talents and gifts and that we are to be using them in the expectation of the fact that "He's coming." Let's look at it, it's in Matthew chapter 24. He says in verse 42, **"Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming [your Lord is coming]. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of...night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would [have not] allowed his house to be broken into."** (Matthew 24:42-43) Now, once again, you see the term, "be on the alert," and what I did is, I colored in deep green every reference that tells me to "Be on the alert." Verse 44, **"For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."** (Matthew 4:44) Now He has given them the sign of His coming, and yet we know from studying the Word of God, we know that there's going to be a three and a half year

period. We do not know exactly when He's coming during that last tribulation, but His message is to each one of us, because He's going to come for the Church. He's going to come for the Church. [A trumpet is going to sound, Jesus Christ is going to leave heaven, He's going to raise the saints. We're going to meet Him in the air.] (PARAPHRASE 1

Thessalonians 4:16-17) **"...And so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17, KJV)** So we don't know when the Rapture is going to happen, any more than they knew the day nor the hour when Jesus Christ would leave the air and actually come down to the earth, come down to the Jerusalem and reign as King of Kings and split that Mount of Olives in three parts. (See Zechariah 14:4-9) They did not know when, we do not know when the Bridegroom is coming for His Bride. (See Matthew 24:10-15) And so his message is that you and I are to **"...Be on the alert...."** (Matthew 24:42) **"...For the Son of Man is coming...."** (Matthew 24:44) And, once again, you want to mark that with that blue cloud that we've been marking every reference to the coming of the "Son of Man." He says, "[He is] **coming at an hour when you do not think He will.**" **Who then is [that] faithful and sensible slave...?"** (Matthew 24:44-45) Now I would underline "faithful" and "sensible," because He's pointing out a good slave, a slave that is faithful to his master. A slave that is sensible that his head screwed on right. He says, **"...Whom his master [will] put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time."** He says, **"Blessed is that slave..."** that faithful and sensible slave, **"...whom his master finds so doing when he comes."** (Matthew 24:45-46) What is he doing? He's taking the master's food and he's giving it to the master's household, and he's "faithful" about it and he's "sensible" about it, and so when the master returns, then he's pleased with what he's done. Now listen to what He says: **"Truly I say to you..."**, there's that other "truly." Another, **"Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions."** (Matthew 24:47) In other words if you are "faithful" and you are "sensible," when the

Lord comes, He, who is the possessor of the heavens and the earth and all the nations, and everything in it, is going to put you in charge of His possessions. Why? Because [you were faithful in a little thing, and He can know that you'll be faithful in a greater thing.] (PARAPHRASE, Luke 16:10) But now He's giving us a contrast. **"But if that evil slave says in his heart, [unnnhhhhh] "...My master is not coming for a long time..., ' " He says, "...and [he] begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with the drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** (Matthew 24:48-51) [There's going to be weeping and there's going to be gnashing of teeth, why? Because the slave did not serve his master well, because he thought, He's not coming back for a long time. And he can beat his fellow slaves and he can drink with the drunkards, and he can get away with it, and God's saying, "No, you can't," because He's going to come at an hour, at a time that you do not know.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 24:48-51) Now what is the point that He wants you to get? He wants you to get the point that you need to "be on the alert." Why? Because He's coming at an hour, at a time, at a day which you do not know. You are to be faithful and you are to be sensible, otherwise, what's going to happen? It says in verse 51, when He comes, **"[He] will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** (Matthew 24:51) Now what's a hypocrite? Remember, we've looked at it several times in the gospel of Matthew. A hypocrite is one who wears a mask, one who pretends to be something that they are not, and so He's contrasting a good slave and an evil slave. And He wants you to understand that we are known by our deeds. It's our deeds that testify to who we are and to what we are, and so if this evil slave who says that he belongs to the kingdom and that he is serving his master, does not serve his master, the very fact that he does not

serve his master proves that he is an evil slave. Then [he's going to be put in the place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 24:51) Now He wants to tell the story from another angle. He wants them to get the point. In chapter 25, verse one—it says, **“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins....” (Matthew 25:1)** Now remember the whole theme of the gospel of Matthew is the “King and His kingdom.” It begins with, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 3:2)** Do you hear in the background? The ambulance that was going forward? Something happened to someone that they did not expect to happen, and because they did not expect it to happen, in all probability, they were not prepared. God wants you and me to be prepared. So He's saying, “I want you to understand more about the kingdom of heaven.” **“...The kingdom of heaven [is like] ten virgins...,”** and He's going to divide them into five and five just as he has a good slave and a faithful slave and a sensible slave and an evil slave, a hypocritical slave. **(Matthew 25:1)** And this is what it says, **“Five of them were foolish...five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them....” (Matthew 25:2-3)** They pick up their lamps, they're going to the wedding, they're going to join the processional, they're taking their lamps with them, but no oil. What good is a lamp without oil? Because the purpose of a lamp is to give light, you have a wick in it, but the wick cannot continue to burn unless there's oil in it, and so He says, **“But the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.” (Matthew 25:4)** They were carrying a flask on their side as they carried their little lamp, and they were able to take that flask and fill their lamps. **“Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and [they] began to sleep.” (Matthew 25:5)** Because the Bridegroom had delayed, He hadn't shown up when they thought. **“But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet [the bridegroom]!’” (Matthew 25:6)** Here they are, asleep! All of a sudden they're hearing that

the bridegroom is coming. **“Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.” (Matthew 25:7)** They cut off the wick the burned part, so that it will burn well. And it says, **“[But] the foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ” (Matthew 25:8)** We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

As we look at Matthew chapter 25, God wants you and me to know, Beloved, how important it is for us to be prudent about the time in which we are living. To be prepared for the coming of the Lord, for the hour is coming, and we don’t know when it’s coming, and we’re to be on the alert. Well let’s go back to Matthew chapter 25, and in verse 8 it says, now, [the bridegroom has come, they’ve awakened, and the foolish do not have any flasks of oil for their lamps. They’ve trimmed their lamps, but their lamps are going out.] (PARAPHRASED, Matthew 25:6-8) **“[And] the foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the prudent answered, ‘No, three will not be enough for us and you too; go and instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase...,”** because they weren’t ready, because they weren’t prudent, **“...the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you...,’ ”** “I don’t know you. (Matthew 25:8-12) I don’t know you because you’re not a prudent person. You’re not a person who is prepared, who is ready for My coming. You are living life your way instead of My way, and you are looking for Me, you’re talking about Me, but you are not living as if I’m going to come.” He goes on to say, **“But He answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ ”** Verse 13, **“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day [or] the hour.” (Matthew 25:12-13)**

Do you see the common thread? Do you see what's happening from verse 42 of Matthew 24, all the way through verse 13? His message is: **"...Be on the alert...."** (Matthew 24:42) Now some will take the parable of the ten virgins and they'll say, "Okay, the oil represents the Holy Spirit. Some have the Holy Spirit, some do not have the Holy Spirit." But He's not telling us that. I mean, we can put all sorts of other connotations on various parts of these stories, but I think His main point is this, and we don't want you to miss the main point, so He keeps the main point simple so you don't miss it, and that is: You don't know the hour when He is coming. The slaves did not know the hour when their master was coming. The virgins did not know the hour when the bridegroom was coming. The evil slave was not prepared. The foolish virgins were not prepared, and you see the word "prudent," "prudent," "prudent," for the wise virgins. I think He's saying to us, "Be faithful, be sensible, and live as if your Master could come at any time. Be prudent. Be wise. Be prepared, because the bridegroom could come at any time." Now what you see in common in both of these is that [the evil slave that was not prepared was cast into the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 25:30) What you see about the five foolish virgins is the door was shut and they never got into the wedding supper. [PARAPHRASE, Matthew 25:7-11) And Jesus the Bridegroom, or the bridegroom said to them, **"...I do not know you....,"** (Matthew 25:12) And He says, **"Be on the alert then....,"** term of conclusion, (Matthew 25:13) **"...For you do not know the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:13) "For it is just like a man...." (Matthew 25:14)** Now He's going to tell us a third story. **"...It is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. " (Matthew 25:14)** Now remember, with the other slave, he's entrusting his household to them. Now He says, "Here's a man who's going on a journey who entrusts his slaves, his possessions to his slaves." **"To one he gave five talents, to another two...to another one....,"** now watch, I

think this is so important, “...each according to his own ability....”
(Matthew 25:15) He does not expect more from someone than they are able to give. So He gives each “...according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. **(Matthew 25:15)** [And] immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them....” **(Matthew 25:15-16)** Now a talent was a great amount of money, and it says, “...And [he] gained five more talents. **(Matthew 25:16)** “In the same manner the one who had [gained] the two talents gained two more. But [the one] who [had] received the one talent went away...dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents...‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents...,’ ” he doubled it! **(Matthew 25:17-20)** “[And] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and...,’ watch the word “faithful” now, “...faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ [And] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ” **(Matthew 25:21-23)** Now as He’s says this, what He is saying, at this point is, He is not comparing one slave with the other, but the fact that both of them were “faithful.” “And the one...who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you [were] a hard man, reaping where you did not sow...gathering where you scattered no seed...I was afraid, and [I] went away and [I] hid your talent in the ground. See here, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and [I] gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my

money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has five talents.” (Matthew 25:24-28) Now watch! What is the bottom line of this? **“For to everyone who has, [shall more] be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.” (Matthew 25:29)** Now listen to what He says: **“Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30)** Now, what is He saying? In all of these you have a contrast between faithful and sensible and unfaithful and not prudent, but foolish. He tells three stories to make His point. Three different stories, He comes at it from three different angles, but the bottom line is this: that you don’t know when your Master is coming, but when He comes and you’re not on the alert, and you’re acting as if He’s not going to come, then you are showing that He is really not your Master. You are an evil slave. You are a foolish virgin. You are a person who did not use what God gave you, and consequently, you are going to miss the kingdom of heaven. All the way now, through the gospel of Matthew, He has shown us that, **“Not everyone who says to [Him], ‘Lord, Lord...,’ as He says in Matthew chapter 7, “...[is going to] enter the kingdom of heaven, but [it’s the one] who does the will of His Father who is in heaven....” (Matthew 7:21)** You need to be ready. You need to be alert. You need to be a faithful, prudent, wise person, and then you will enter the kingdom of heaven, and you’ll have your reward.