

How To Be Ready For The Return Of The King

Matthew 25:14–30 · Pastor Arnold Camacho · Message #72

The big idea: Nothing we have is ours, the Master who entrusted it to us is good, and faithfulness with what He gave us is how we get ready for His return.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Plain text = your group's guide. Same questions your group has in their hands.	Grey boxes and Leader Extras = for you only. Tips, extra questions and background your group doesn't see.
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THIS WEEK IN 30 SECONDS

The passage Back in Matthew after last week's Romans 12 timeout: the Parable of the Talents ("bags of gold" in newer NIVs). This is the week for "managers, not owners," the language Chris saved for Arnold. Your group reads Luke 12:27–34 first, then the parable. Next week Larry finishes chapter 25.	Watch for • The one-talent person: "I don't have much to offer." • The one who heard "work harder": grace comes first, then work • The "hard man" picture of God: Share It 2 can land on someone's father.	A win this week Everyone leaves knowing: • what they have isn't theirs • the Master who gave it is good • one concrete place to put something He's given them to work this week
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LEADER NOTES & LINKS

- **Social & Impact:** No date yet? This is a good week to pick one. [Social ideas](#) · [Impact Projects](#)
- **Leader podcast:** about 10 minutes on the questions, the tricky moments and what to say. northcoastleaders.transistor.fm
- **Monthly leader email:** behind-the-scenes news, stories and a recipe or two. [Subscribe](#)
- **Tell us:** a question, a win, or something great about someone in your group? [Send it here](#)
- **Post attendance:** northcoastchurch.com/attendance
- **Baptisms in November:** If anyone in your group has been thinking about it, this is the month to point them to. Dates by campus: northcoastchurch.com/baptisms

SERMON NOTES: OUTLINE

How To Be Ready For The Return Of The King

Follow the one who is **good** and **faithful**, Jesus · We must **surrender** to the fact that we are **managers**, not **owners** · How you **picture** God will **determine** the pattern of your **life** · Grace comes **first**; faithful **work** flows from it · What does God's work look like? Share the **Gospel**, **serve** others, **love** people, pray **faithfully** · The **Master** longs to share His **joy** with you.

Passages: Matthew 25:14–30 · Matthew 16:24 · Psalm 24:1 · Romans 12:2 · Ephesians 2:8–10 · Philippians 2:12–13 · 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 · Matthew 24:14; 28:18–20 · 1 Peter 4:10 · Galatians 5:13–14 · Matthew 24:12 · Colossians 4:2 · 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

THE GROUP GUIDE *Exactly what your group has, with your leader notes*

These questions are designed to help groups discuss the weekend teaching while building relationships with each other and applying God's Word to our lives.

WARM UP

1. What is one little thing that can instantly make a day better for you?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Keep it small and quick: the first cup of coffee, a text from a friend, a parking spot up front. A quick lap around the room is plenty.

2. What is something you have enjoyed lately that you would recommend to a friend?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: A show, a trail, a restaurant, a book. Notice that enjoying something good makes us want to share it. That's Share It 1 in miniature.

3. Arnold taught on the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, a story that might be familiar to many of us. Whether you heard it for the first time, or you've heard it many times, what stood out to you or gave you a fresh perspective?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Listen for those who heard this parable as *pressure* ("I'd better produce") and who heard it as *invitation* ("the Master wants to share His joy"). That tells you where to spend your time in Know It and Share It.

If the room is quiet: Ask what the third servant was feeling when he buried the money. Everyone has an answer to that.

Optional extra: Try this week's Kinship Question (see Leader Extras).

KNOW IT

In Arnold's message, we heard how our view of God shapes the way we live and steward what He has entrusted to us. Jesus gives us a picture of the Father's heart in Luke 12. Let's listen to His words by slowly reading Luke 12:27–34 aloud. Take a moment to sit with the passage before discussing it.

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Take "slowly" and "sit with it" literally. One good reader, a few seconds of quiet, then someone else reads it again. Eight verses twice takes under three minutes and changes the conversation.

Why Luke and not Matthew: The third servant acted on a wrong picture of his master ("a hard man," Matthew 25:24). Luke 12 is Jesus' own picture of the Father. Your group is reading the correction.

1. What do Jesus' words reveal about the Father's heart toward us? What stands out to you about the kind of Father He describes?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Three things Jesus says about the Father: He clothes wildflowers that are gone tomorrow (vv27–28), He *knows* what you need (v30), and He is *pleased* to give you the kingdom (v32). Not grudging. Pleased.

Aha: Set Luke 12:32 next to Matthew 25:24, "I knew that you are a hard man." Same God, two pictures. Which one do you actually live by on a Tuesday?

Ask: Jesus says "do not be afraid" to the "little flock." What's the connection between fear and how we handle what God gives us?

Careful: Some people have good reason to find "Father" a hard word. "The Father Jesus describes" is a safe way to phrase it.

2. In Luke 12:34, Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What do you think the actions of the three servants in Matthew 25 might reveal about their hearts or what they valued most? (Read Matthew 25:14-30.)

LEADER NOTE

Reading: Seventeen verses, your second reading of the night. Split it: the setup (vv14–18), the first two servants (vv19–23), the third (vv24–30).

Tip: The first two went "at once" (v16). They valued their master's trust. The third valued safety, maybe his own skin ("so I was afraid," v25). What you do with what you've been given shows what you're really holding onto.

Aha: Burying it was the respectable, cautious choice in Jesus' day. The warning isn't about recklessness. It's about fear that does nothing.

Read: Matthew 25:21, 23 (the identical "Well done" for five and for two: faithfulness, not output) · 1 Chronicles 29:14 ("we have given you only what comes from your hand").

Watch for: "So God punishes people who don't produce." Slow down. The master's problem was the servant's picture of him (v24), not his numbers. Go back to Luke 12:32.

SHARE IT

1. Arnold talked about the Master's invitation to share in His joy. Have you ever experienced genuine joy from sharing something God has blessed you with? What made that experience meaningful?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: You go first and make it specific: a meal you cooked for someone, a skill you taught, money that cost you something, a spare room, a Saturday (Essentials: I go / You go / We go).

Insight: "Come and share your master's happiness" (v21) is the reward in the parable. Joy isn't the payment for faithfulness; it's what faithfulness lets you in on.

Ask: What's the difference between giving that feels like loss and giving that feels like joy? What changed?

2. Arnold shared a personal story about his view of God as a Father. What do you think has influenced the way you picture God? Have you ever realized that your picture of God wasn't quite accurate?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Retell the gist of Arnold's story in a sentence for anyone who missed the weekend. Then ask where *their* picture came from: parents, a childhood church, a hard season, a teacher. Most pictures of God are inherited, not chosen.

Read: Luke 12:32 (pleased to give) · Romans 12:2 (last week's verse; a renewed mind is where a truer picture starts) · Luke 15:20 (the father who runs).

Careful: This can land on someone's actual father. Let them say it without the group fixing it. "Thank you for trusting us with that" is enough in the moment. Follow up privately this week, and loop in your campus Life Groups pastor if it's more than a group can carry.

If someone says their picture is fine: Ask what they'd expect God's face to look like if they failed Him this week.

LIVE IT

1. Think about the people you encounter throughout a typical week. Who do you think Jesus would be intentional about noticing, loving, or serving? How could you follow His lead?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Push from *category* to *name*. "The people at work" is a category. "Dave, two desks over, whose wife is sick" is a name. Don't leave the question until each person has one.

Ask: Who in your week is easy to overlook? The person Jesus would notice is often the one nobody else does.

Close: Pray by name for the people your group named. Ask about them next week.

2. God has entrusted each of us with different things—our time, resources, gifts, relationships, and opportunities. Take a moment to consider where you are investing those things. What does faithful stewardship or management look like in your life right now?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: This is the "managers, not owners" question (Psalm 24:1; 1 Peter 4:10). A manager asks a different question than an owner: not "what do I want to do with this?" but "what does the One who gave it to me want done with it?"

Aha: "Each according to his ability" (v15). Faithfulness isn't measured against the person next to you, only against what you were handed. The two-talent servant got the same "Well done" as the five.

Make it concrete: Each person names *one* thing on that list and one specific move with it this week. Write it down with their OK. Open next week by asking.

Careful: Not a money-only conversation and not guilt. Grace comes first. The question is where to invest, not whether you've been good enough.

You don't have to have every answer. Create safety, guide reflection, point people to Jesus. Thank you for leading.

LEADER EXTRAS *Not in your group's guide*

OPTIONAL EXTRA: KINSHIP QUESTION

What's a compliment someone gave you years ago that you still remember? Why did it stick?

How: Ask it after the Warm Up. Go around the circle, 60–90 seconds each and say out loud that passing is fine. Don't rush the quiet person; the answers come out a little shy. It isn't about the sermon, and it doesn't need to be. It just sits near a story whose best line is "Well done."

Tried it? Tell us how it went

OPTIONAL EXTRA: MEMORIZE IT

Matthew 25:21 "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

How: Say it together to close the night and once more to open next week.

BE READY: WHAT TO SAY

"I only got one talent." / "I don't have much to offer." One talent was about twenty years' wages. Nobody in the story got a little. "What's one thing you know God has handed you?"	"So, this is about working harder for God." Order matters. The servants were trusted before they did anything. "What would it look like to work from being trusted, instead of to earn it?"
"My picture of God is the hard man." Don't argue them out of it in the room. Listen, then follow up this week. "Thank you for being honest. Can I ask where that picture came from?"	"I buried it. I've wasted years." Matthew 18:23: the same master who settles accounts forgave an unpayable debt. He isn't back yet. "What could you put to work this week?"

SET THE ROOM

Have a notecard and pen ready. In Live It 2, people name one thing and one move. Write them down (with their permission). Next week, start by asking about them.

GO DEEPER: FOR YOUR PREP

A talent was not small About 6,000 denarii, close to twenty years of a laborer's pay. The "one-talent" servant held more than most people earn in a lifetime. Nobody here was given a little.	Where "talent" comes from In Jesus' day it was only money. It came to mean a natural ability <i>because of this parable</i>. Just don't lose the original point: it's everything He hands us, not only what we're good at.	"Each according to his ability" The master knew his servants (v15). Unequal amounts, unequal returns, identical "Well done." Luke 12:48: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded."
Burying it was the safe option Commentators note that burying entrusted money was the responsible way to protect it then. The third servant did the defensible thing. His failure was fear that did nothing.	"I knew that you are a hard man" The only servant who tells us how he sees the master (v24) and it explains everything he did. Picture produces pattern. Arnold's third point in one verse.	Pleased to give Luke 12:32: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." Same God as "hard man"; two pictures. One buries; one opens its hands.
Grace first, then work Ephesians 2:8–10: saved by <i>grace</i>, <i>for</i> works, never <i>by</i> them. Philippians 2:12–13 holds both halves in one breath. If the parable starts to sound like earning, go here.	"Settled accounts" (v19) Same phrase as Matthew 18:23, where the king forgives a servant ten thousand talents. The master of chapter 25 is the king of chapter 18. Grace came first there, too.	The verse right before Verse 13: "keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." The master was gone "a long time" (v19). Being ready isn't watching the sky; it's being found faithful with what He left in your hands.