***Luke 12:42-43 And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.***

We are with Jesus this morning. Peter has asked a question, based on an earlier parable. Like so often, Peter is caught talking about the world, the immediate surroundings, and Jesus is referring to something far larger than Peter has in mind. Jesus eyes are cast toward the Kingdom, the Eternal, the very Gates of Heaven, across the expanse of time, when He will return and find Faithful servants eagerly watching and waiting, scanning the skies, and manning the door.

Are we scanning the skies and manning the door this morning? Are we waiting for the Kingdom? Are we expecting the Grand? Are we standing by the door of this impossibly small room called the world, listening for the snick of the latch on the door that will open outward onto the Eternity and welcome us into the Presence of Our God? I hope so.

Earlier in this chapter, verses 35-38 are all about being prepared for the Master. Be prepared in attitude – Gird up your loins. Be ready in mind – your lamps burning. Be ready to throw that door open immediately. We’re not excited enough about where we’re headed. The Kingdom of God is a place to be anticipated, thought about, and longed for, but most give it little to no thought day to day. Picture the Light and the music and the angels and the Love, but few think beyond what to have for dinner tonight. Jesus says BLESSED are the servants that He will find watching when He comes. Blessed are those He will find prepared in body, mind, and soul.

And so, we are with Peter as He asks, *“Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?”* And Jesus gives this answer in verse 42 - *And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?*What does it mean to be faithful?Faithful means to be steadfast, strong in loyalty and allegiance, firm in commitment to keep promises or complete duties. A faithful servant is focused on the Master. Nothing is allowed to interfere or distract.

Who is the faithful and wise steward? It’s who the Master finds faithful. I may think myself quite Faithful… a quite lovely person and really quite wonderful… all of my friends say so. But Galatians 5:22-24 includes faithfulness as part of the fruit borne as the Spirit changes us from carnal to spiritual beings – as the Spirit prepares us for the Kingdom we are destined for – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Last week, James brought us a message on maturing Christians from 1 Corinthians 3 – as the Spirit changes us, the change is evident and dramatic! As the Spirit takes over, the works of the flesh found in Galatians 5:19-21 diminish. Our souls begin to grasp that there is a Kingdom one heartbeat away and the Spirit prepares us.

In verse 43, Jesus says - *Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.* Doing what? Being faithful and wise, being diligent in duty, being true to the commitment made when we gave our heart to Jesus. Blessed is the servant who keeps Mark 12:29-31 *Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.  And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”* Blessed in the servant who understands 1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.* Blessed is the servant that Jesus finds praying and serving. Blessed is the servant that Jesus finds keeping His commandments regardless of the hour or the day. Blessed is the servant Jesus finds humbly walking before God.

This week, let’s take some time to measure where we are. The Kingdom of God - let’s not treat it like some uncertain vacation, but our ultimate destination…. It is real and each of us will one day stand in front of the Master and give account. Matthew 12:36 says *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.* Romans 14:12-13 *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.* Where will the Master find us should He return this week? By the door, excited, prepared, joyous… waiting to run into His arms when the knock comes? Let’s resolve to gird our loins, trim our lamps, and listen at all hours for the Master’s return. Who then is the wise and faithful servant? The servant Jesus finds working as though the Kingdom of God is near at hand.