Tell It Slant: Parables as Spiritual Direction

Session 5

**Spirituality of Watchfulness—****The Parables of the (unscheduled) Returning Master Lk 12:35-48**

**Introduction to Senses**

* Five + 1 (intuition) senses are means for us to access the world around us and to God.
* Spirituality is sensory. The Word became flesh.
* Isa 35:5, 6: during the messianic age, there will be a recovery of impaired senses—thus healing.
* The heresy of “Nasticism”—the denigration of senses
* Abuses of senses.
* Instead of using our senses for acquisition to gratify ourselves, we need to use them in an adoration-al way by opening up more to God.
* Example of modern worship experience.

**The Parables of the Returning Master Lk 12:35-48**

* Chap. 12:22-34: do not be anxious (do not fuss), therefore we have freedom, space, . . , moving us toward adoration.
* Just as we are losing our anxiety, Jesus makes an abrupt change.
* Chap. 12:35: “*Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning*”—the spirituality of watchfulness.

**Four Observations**

1. A Cluster of Parabolic Allusions in 3 parable fragments:
   1. 35-38: good servants are always ready for the return of their master in the middle of the night. (+ve)

* The master serves the servants who stay up for him: if the servants are attentive to the needs of the master, the master will be attentive to the needs of the servants.
  1. 39-40: as the owner of the house does not know the hour the thief is coming, the disciples, if not alert, may miss the coming of the Son of Man. (-ve)
  2. 42-28: “*Who is the faithful and wise manager*?” (both +ve and -ve)

The repetition: watch for the unscheduled arrival of the Master.

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| Watchful = watching for an unscheduled arrival of the Messiah  = living at the edge of the present—watching for what God is about to do. |

1. Peter’s clarification question.

* Located at the centre of this section: after fragments 1 and 2 but before fragment 3
* *“. . . are you telling this parable to us or to everyone*”? Or can watchfulness be spread around to others?
* Watchfulness is my being “mindfulness” of what God is doing.
* Watchfulness cannot be delegated to others.
* Questions may be evasive: delaying action, reducing faith, etc.
* Jesus answers by referring to Peter’s ability to respond.

1. Parables: requirement of watchfulness in the context of our daily work—what God is doing in our work.

* Being watchful never drains away our energy for our works

1. Contrast between Anxiety of 12:22-34 and Watchfulness of 12:35-48

*Anxiety*

🡪 concern about things

🡪 thinking of oneself instead if God

🡪 petty concerns and responsibility taking on moral urgency

🡪 scrupulosity (stress) which is a reductionist term: there is no kingdom, just our job

Intensive concern for my moral and spiritual condition (self-centred)

* With the same energy of attentiveness and care:

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| **Being Anxious** | **Being Watchful** |
| * Restricting our horizon * Compiling a long list of negativities (inadequacies) * Trying to take care of what God has taken care of * Finding oneself to be inadequate (not to please God) but to be God | * Relaxation without being slothful * Widening our perspective (high tower) * Adoration of God * Watching for what God is doing |