

# How Do We Persevere in God's Word and Teachings Until the End?

I'd like to share with you some biblical stories about persevering with God in our lives. The Bible states that the end of a thing is more important than its beginning (**Ecclesiastes 7:8**). Similarly, the Bible discusses the foundation of a person's life and how they begin their journey, which is extremely important. Faith, however, is equally important. We can look at some passages found in the Gospel of Matthew.

<sup>42</sup> Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

<sup>45</sup> "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup> Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (**Matthew 24:42-51**)

The entire chapter of **Matthew 24** is mostly about the end times. It is a prophetic chapter. It is about eschatology. Eschatology is the study of the Bible regarding the end times. Some might think, "What good is eschatology to me? The most important thing is that I behave well and strive to do what is right each day." This is true, but we must know that all Scripture is inspired and given to us for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). This means that aside from prophecies about the end times, future events, and the return of Christ, this chapter is about our lives. Not to mention that future events and the return of Christ are also very important. The parable quoted above has to do with perseverance. We already see another verse in the same chapter talking about perseverance.

**"But he who endures to the end will be saved."** (**Matthew 24:13**)

Before this verse, the difficulties and trials believers will face are described. Then Jesus speaks to the disciples about perseverance. But what is the key to this?

In the parable of **Matthew 24:45-51**, we see a servant entrusted with the task of watching over his master's household and caring for the other servants. In telling the parable, Jesus offers two alternatives for how the story the parable narrates could end. The first is that the servant will be blessed if his master returns and finds him busy doing what he was assigned. There, we see a servant who kept watch and did everything he was supposed to do, even in his master's absence. It shows that he did it not only out of obligation but because he loved his master and understood the meaning of what he was supposed to do. The other alternative for how the story could end is the wicked servant who says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming." So, he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. He did not persevere in the path he had undertaken, and when his master returned at an unexpected hour, he assigned him the fate of the hypocrites. He didn't finish his race well. We're not talking about occasional mistakes here, but about a lifestyle. He actually chose that lifestyle. This isn't just about

getting literally drunk, but about getting drunk on his own ego and living a life separated from the Lord.

The fact that the servant knew his master was delaying meant that he knew the Scripture. He knew what Jesus had said. The fact was that he had misunderstood Jesus' words. From the very beginning of the church, there were people who misunderstood the prophecies regarding Christ's second coming. Throughout history, some have indicated the date or time when Jesus would return. There was also a case where the Apostle Paul warned and exhorted the church of the Thessalonians to be ready for the Lord's arrival. They thought He would arrive immediately, and they abandoned some of their duties and responsibilities to devote themselves entirely to His return. Always being ready is not wrong, but we must do so with the right attitude. Therefore, Paul assures them in his second epistle that certain other signs must be accomplished first. This shows us that even back then, people misinterpreted the scriptures regarding His return.

There are people who, when they see certain signs fulfilled, believe He should arrive immediately. The problem is that He sees and considers time differently, and when they see that He hasn't returned yet, they become discouraged and even lose faith. This isn't how He teaches us. We must always be ready and watch. People were supposed to do it 2,000 years ago, and we must do it today. This is the right attitude.

**“But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of,”** (Matthew 24:48-50, emphasis added)

We know neither the hour nor the day. The servant didn't know, but instead of watching, he assumed his master had forgotten or was late. This was his assumption because perhaps he saw that his master hadn't come when he expected. What matters isn't when we expect Him, but what He tells us—to watch.

There have always been people who have spoken about His coming, pointing to specific moments, saying that He was about to arrive at that very moment in history. It is right and biblical to exhort us to wait for Him, but we must not jump to our own conclusions. This is especially true when it comes to future events and prophecies. The fact that we see certain things being fulfilled means that God is faithfully fulfilling His word, step by step. The only thing is that we don't know the exact way He accomplishes His will. Often, it's a mystery, and we must take it by faith. That's why faith is necessary. God made things this way. Faith is needed. It's because faith connects us with Him.

We can be certain of some promises and things that have already been fulfilled in our lives and what we have experienced, such as salvation and other works of God, and we must testify of them. However, regarding certain things, such as prophecies about the future and the end, and the exact way God accomplishes His will, even in the case of a person's life, we must proceed with caution, fear, and the right attitude. We must still exhort one another and warn people of the outcome of their obedience or disobedience to the gospel, but without going into the exact details of how it will happen. This is God's work. It is He who works. We do not know how.

*“As you do not know what is the way of the wind,  
Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,  
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.” (Ecclesiastes 11:5)*

We conclude, then, that one of the reasons the person given as an example in the parable of the servant in **Matthew 24** didn't persevere, was that he did not understand Jesus' words regarding His return. He thought his master was "delaying" in coming. He either did not realize that he needed to stay awake or thought the master was arriving at a certain time, and when this did not happen, he became discouraged and stopped walking properly. Scripture teaches us that it is of fundamental importance to "understand" the word (**Matthew 13:23**). This is illustrated by the parable of the sower, in which Jesus

declared to His disciples that if they did not understand that parable, they would not understand the others either (**Mark 4:13**).

It's so important because the parable addressed the importance of understanding God's word. It's not about understanding logically, but with the heart. The parable describes four kinds of ground, representing four hearts that receive the seed of God's word. Only one fully "understands" what it has received and bears fruit. The others were either completely stubborn or showed some interest, but only for a short time. We can also see it in terms of perseverance. Only the heart that understood the word was steadfast until the end. No one is born with a ground (heart) that is completely good and ready to receive the word. God must work in our hearts for us to have this kind of heart.

We can look at the passages that follow the parable of the servant in **Matthew 24**. Chapter 25 begins with the parable of the ten virgins. Here, Jesus continues His discourse on waiting for the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. <sup>3</sup> Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

<sup>6</sup> “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup> But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

<sup>13</sup> “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour <sup>[b]</sup> in which the Son of Man is coming. (Matthew 25:1-13)

Here we are talking about ten virgins who were to present themselves at the wedding of a bridegroom. We know that the groom is Christ and the virgins represent us. Five of them were called wise, and the other five foolish. We see that the foolish ones did not take oil with them and therefore could not keep watch and were late to meet the groom. We see that, again, this is about perseverance and endurance to the end. They could not wait until the end, when the arrival of the bridegroom was, and they did not finish their race well. They began like the others, but did not persevere. Let us note again that both in this parable and in the previous one of the servant, we are talking about people who knew the Scriptures and who were waiting for the Lord. So, we are not talking about completely ignorant people. Indeed, they could be like religious people today who apparently follow what is right.

In the first case of the servant, we saw that the reason for their failure to end well was a misinterpretation of the Scriptures. In the second case, we see another reason—not having oil in our lamps. In Scripture, oil represents the Holy Spirit. We cannot persevere if we do not have the Holy Spirit within us. Thus, we lack His guidance and the strength to persevere. At a certain beginning, many people might have had some touch of the Spirit in their lives, just as those virgins had some oil. This, in my opinion, can be compared to the Holy Spirit's call to our lives at the beginning, to the way He warns us and draws us at the beginning. This is one of the things to which it can be compared. Over time, however, that oil ran out. We see that in a certain sense, they didn't bother to prepare themselves, to have more of Him in their lives. Possibly, they conformed or began to live the Christian life, trusting in their own strength.

As we've said, we're talking about people involved in the affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven and spiritual matters. We're not talking about common sinners or people who don't want to know anything. As in the parable of the sower, we're

not talking about people who received the seed on hard ground and rejected it. We're talking about people who received it joyfully but then didn't persevere. We're talking about virgins. Virgins represent those who keep themselves uncontaminated from certain things and are seemingly pure. A seemingly religious person may appear pure. In the spiritual realm, they are people who haven't contaminated themselves with the world. One can be uncontaminated by the world only on the outside, but God wants us to be so in our hearts as well. There are people who can be religious, but only on the outside. True religion is lived in the heart, not just on the outside.

In the parables at the end of Matthew chapter 24 and the beginning of chapter 25, we examined two fundamental reasons why one does not persevere in the Christian journey: misinterpretation of the Scriptures and the lack of the Holy Spirit. These two fundamental factors are associated with being born again in a person's life. In this way, a person can truly become a believer. Then, one must persevere in the doctrine and teachings of the Holy Spirit. A correct understanding of the Scriptures is crucial, not only with the mind but also with the heart, where the Word is received. The mind comes afterwards, and it is also important. Scripture teaches us that for this, we must treat our hearts like good soil, which receives the seed of God's Word, in order to bear fruit. No one is born with this soil or possesses it by themselves. It is a soil that is cultivated and formed in this way by God. He can touch our hearts and transform them. Then, too, in our Christian life, we will have moments—and yet quite a few—when our hearts are grounds filled with thorns or stones. We will have desires that will try to choke the word in us, but then we should go to God, who will work for our good and for His glory.

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