

## Small Group Guide RETURN OF THE KING (PART 2)

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

June 17, 2012

Matthew 24:36—25:46

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

### **Relate . . .**

*Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:*

***Welcome**—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.*

***Review**—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.*

***Prayer**—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.*

### **Reflect . . .**

*Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)*

### **Message Outline**

#### RETURN OF THE KING (PART 2)

Matthew 24:36-25:46

#### The Sobering Setup That We Need To Feel...

- His delay will be long.
- His return will be sudden.
- His judgment will be irreversible.
- Our hearts will be exposed.
- Our sentence may be surprising.
- Our lives will stand alone.
- We must be prepared.

#### The Penetrating Questions That You And I Must Ask...

- Are you keeping watch for Christ?
- Are you faithfully following Christ?
- Are you trusting Christ?

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- The kingdom of heaven is not for those who...
  - Respond to an invitation, make a confession, or express some affection.
- The kingdom of heaven is for those who...
  - Endure in salvation.
- Are you serving Christ with what He has given you?
  - Jesus is our Master, and we are His stewards.
  - Will you be commended in your love for Christ?
  - Will you be condemned in your laziness before Christ?
- Are you serving Christians that God has put around you?
  - Not because you want to get to heaven.
  - But because Jesus has changed your heart.
    - Sacrificial service is not a means of earning salvation.
    - Sacrificial service is necessary evidence of salvation.

#### Two Eternal Destinations That Await Us All...

- Either heaven...
  - Unhindered enjoyment of the Father's love
  - A kingdom filled with delight
  - Limitless joy
  - Everlasting satisfaction
- Or hell...
  - Total separation from the Father's love
  - A place prepared for demons
  - Unquenchable agony
  - Never-ending suffering

*“This is somewhat of the word which he now speaks unto you: Why will ye die? Why will ye perish? Why will ye not have compassion on your own souls? Can your hearts endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day of wrath that is approaching? . . . Look unto me, and be saved; come unto me, and I will ease you of all sins, sorrows, fears, burdens, and give rest to your souls. Come, I entreat you; lay aside all procrastinations, all delays; put me off no more; eternity lies at the door.”*

John Owen

#### Message Summary

*Just days before He was crucified, Jesus told five stories to emphasize to His followers that though He would leave this earth, they needed to be prepared for His return. Each story presents a penetrating question that all believers must ask themselves to ensure that they are living in a way that makes them ready for Christ's return. Two eternal destinations await all people—past, present, and future—which should fuel the way we choose to live our lives as we wait for the return of our Savior.*

#### Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- How does the reality of Christ's return affect the way you think and feel right now? How would you live differently today if you knew Jesus would return tonight?
- When you consider “The Sobering Setup” at the beginning of the message, do you feel prepared for Christ's return? Why or why not?

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- If you knew a burglar was coming to your house, what would you do to keep watch? What does it look like for a believer to keep watch for Christ coming as a thief in the night? How can keeping watch be taken to improper excesses?
- Pastor David referred to Jonathan Edwards' resolutions—questions he would ask himself daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly to see if he was faithfully following Christ. What do you do to you check yourself to be sure you are following Christ? How do believers benefit from biblical community in checking themselves?
- Consider the parable of the ten virgins with the oil in their lamps, from which Pastor David asked the question, "Are you trusting Christ?" What does it mean to be prepared to persevere? How do you prepare to persevere?
- Have you ever been part of a worship gathering during which you felt affection for Christ and were glad to be a part of a confession of faith—yet you found yourself falling away only days later? Why does this falling away happen? Are you trusting Christ *today*?
- What is involved in being watchful of your heart?
- What talents—or resources—has God given you? What are you doing with them? What is your heart toward God like if you bury your talents?
- Do you feel the weight of responsibility for having talents from God? What does feeling that weight do for your eagerness to serve Christ with joy?
- While the first servants in the parable of the talents reported their gains with joy, the lazy servant blamed his master for his laziness and lacked love for his master. What does this servant's reaction say about the importance of seeing God's character rightly? How can you make sure you are seeing God rightly?
- Consider the story about the sheep and the goats. What were the hearts of the righteous like in their service to their brothers and sisters? How did Jesus identify Himself with His followers in this story?
- In the parable of the sheep and the goats, who can you most identify with, and why? What would sacrificial love and service to brothers and sisters in your city look like? What about others around the world? Do you know where your brothers and sisters in need live in your city? How might you or your group minister to them?
- Why is it important to feel the weight of the two eternal destinations that one of which awaits all people? With whom might the Lord be leading you to pray for and share the gospel this week?

### **Respond . . .**

*Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:*

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

### **Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)**

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- *Church: Pray that God would cause our church to be about completing the mission the Lord Jesus has given us. Pray for those that our church has sent out from us to advance the gospel around the world. Pray that God would raise up many from among us to be sent out to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.*
- *Local: This week we are praying for Sardis Baptist, Kurt S. Clark, Sr., Pastor. We are also praying for Grace House Ministries, a Christian group home in Fairfield for girls ages 6 to 18 from crisis backgrounds that provides them with spiritual, emotional, psychological, and intellectual resources.*
- *Global: This week we are praying for our team serving in Ecuador. We are also praying for Brook Hills Long-Term Missionary family, the Mayottes, serving in South Africa.*