New Year's Eve
"Blessed servants of the coming Master - Jesus"
(Luke 12:37-40)
December 31, 2025
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this New Year's Eve service is from our Gospel reading, Luke 12:37-40.

"37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 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. 40 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

So far the text:

We hear the word "watching" or "watch" used in these two distinct illustrations that our Lord Jesus gives. The first illustration is a beautiful promise for those servants who the master finds watching when he comes. The second illustration is a warning for to not give up watching and be caught unaware like a house being broken into by a thief.

What do these two "watching" illustrations have in common? Both focus on the unknowable time of the Lord's second coming. Will 2026 be the year that THE Master Jesus returns to create a new heavens and new earth? No one knows.

What we do know is that He will come again. And Jesus gives us this promise to encourage us, but also a warning not to be caught unprepared.

What does this watching mean and involve?
Well, a lot of people are going to watch the ball drop tonight. Some people like to watch the bowl games at the New Year. Maybe watching fireworks tonight is something you like to do.

It's certainly enjoyable this kind of watching, especially if your team wins, but the watching of which Jesus speaks of is much more significant and profound.

He speaks of the blessed watching of the redeemed, the humble believing state of the Christian whose entire life is focused on staying alert, watchful and ready by continual repentance and receiving of the Gospel. That's the only way to stay ready by continually keeping one's attention on Jesus, the Master. Jesus, the Servant King… Jesus…the who is born to us, the Son who is given to us…

"And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

The Master has established His kingdom of grace and is coming to establish a new heavens and a new earth and His kingdom is forever!

Now that's a promise to keep us watchful. The Lord promises to perform this! Indeed Jesus has served us by giving us peace through His death and resurrection. And our text tells us that He will serve us again when He comes in glory!

"he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them."

When Jesus returns He will gather all His watching servants and serve them with His heavenly banquet!

No wonder Jesus speaks of unfathomable treasures to us in verses 33-34!

"a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Everlasting life that cannot be destroyed! Everlasting life that is in your possession right now. I think that beats a ball drop or firework display any day of the week!

The question before each of us as we enter 2026 and always is…: Where is your treasure?

Heart and treasure go together. Jesus is saying: "Show me a man's treasure and I will show you where his heart, his inner-most being, is." These words are for our self-examination.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

Mark 14:34
And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch."

It's the same word that Jesus tells us in our text.
"37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?

Mark 14:38
Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We too have times of weakness that our flesh is weak even though our spirit is willing. Have there been times in 2025 where you have been weak in faith?

Paul asks us the question in our epistle reading when times of testing are tough:
"35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:
"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Yes, as we serve our Lord, the servants life isn't promised to be easy. In fact, Peter reminds us:

1 Pet 5:8
Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Be watchful…ever receiving strength and spiritual comfort from His Word and Sacraments. And know this …that there is no power that can take away your blessed state as a child of God, sealed to you in your baptism.

So, we hear again the beautiful words that Mildred also trusted to her blessed end today:

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

And again, Paul closes his first epistle to the Corinthians with these uplifting words.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14
13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done with love.

We’ve been going through the Men’s Network Bible study on Noah, “The man, the ark, the flood and the aftermath”. We’ve read the Bible passage from Matthew 24 a few times that compares the final coming to the great flood.

“36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

We see God’s wrath on full display against all those who rejected Him and followed their own wicked desires. All perished except for 8. A question in the Bible study was that the world sometimes asks “How could God be so cruel?” Well that word cruel is not a good word to describe God. For cruelty implies that there is delight in inflicting harm. Whereas the Bible says just the opposite.

Ezekiel 18:32
“32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”

And againin 2 Peter 3:8-9
“8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:8-9)

Listen to how the Lord describes Himself in Jeremiah 9:

Jeremiah 9:24
But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

Simply stated, God is just and must punish unrighteousness. But because God is love, He chose to punish His Son Jesus for all our sins of 2025 and our entire lives. He poured out His wrath on His beloved Son, the suffering Servant. And Jesus watched and prayed in the Garden and said "Thy will, not My will be done”.

Yes, the Master served us and the entire world with His gift of forgiveness. That is how we enter 2026 with His righteousness through faith, as blessed servants of the Master, awaiting His final coming! Will it be in 2026? The answer is simply – watch!
The Master is coming to serve us His heavenly banquet. Watch with joy, peace, courage and loving service - brothers and sisters in Christ!
Amen
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)