

watching. That means be wide awake, be on the job. Be watching. Be vigilant, for you know not when your Lord will come. Oh, but is he just talking to people 4000 years after that who will be in a certain situation and then they will be watching and working because He might come then? Well, in Luke 12 there is a chapter in which there is no mention or suggestion of anything that relates to things way off in the future. That chapter deals with various qualities and attitudes that we should have today. In that chapter there is a very full statement of the importance of being like servants whose master is away and they don't know whether he will come in the early evening, whether he will come at midnight, whether he will come in the morning hours or when he will come.

But he says, Blessed is that servant whom his Lord will find watching when he comes. He doesn't mean looking, Oh is he coming now? Is he coming now? What are the signs? He doesn't mean that at all! We don't know whether in advance we will be able to recognize any signs. We will doubtless be able to look back afterwards and say, Why didn't I see these things? We don't know that we will be able to recognize any signs. But what Paul said is that there is a crown of righteousness for all who love His appearing.

In his first epistle he said, therefore encourage each other with these words. It all too easy to neglect this all important aspect of the Scripture. I have looked at a number of commentaries in connection with this recently. A few speak very specifically about the importance of being ready when the Lord will come. Others simply pass it over with hardly a word, but all agree that that is what Paul was speaking about. There is a crown of righteousness for ~~me~~ he said, and for all for all who love His appearing. What a spur it is to be faithful to the Lord. What a spur it is to utilize every bit of effort we have to make our lives count for Him that when He comes, if He should come right now, He will find us faithful, faithfully toiling for our Lord, faithfully serving Him, standing true to His Word and giving out the food to His people that knowledge of the Scripture.

Let us pray: O God our Father we thank you for the blessed hope that meant so much to the Apostle Paul from the beginning of his ministry to the very end. How he loved the appearing of Christ. How he longed for His coming. How he looked forward to it and how he urges us to do the same. Help us our Father not to read into the Scripture what is not there but help us to take what is there and to stand upon it and to proclaim it and to live by it. O our Lord we look forward, we do not know when our Lord will come. If He should come soon may he find us all faithfully serving him or faithfully preparing to serve Him. And if he does not come for a long time, may He when He comes find that those of us who are then still alive have been serving Him faithfully and kept our eyes on Him and loved His appearing. We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.