

Luke 12:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Analysis

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? (εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος, Κύριε, πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην λέγεις ἢ καὶ πρὸς πάντας; eipen de ho Petros, Kyrie, pros hēmas tēn parabolēn tautēn legeis ē kai pros pantas;)—Peter's question seeks clarification about the parables' intended audience. The pronoun *hēmas* (ἡμᾶς, us) likely refers to the apostles or inner circle of disciples, distinguished from *pantas* (πάντας, all)—the broader crowd of followers or humanity generally.

The question reveals Peter's awareness that different levels of responsibility accompany different levels of proximity to Christ. Does the stringent watchfulness apply only to apostolic leadership, or to all believers? Jesus' response (verses 42-48) establishes both universal application and graduated responsibility: all must be ready, but those entrusted with more (leaders, teachers, those with greater knowledge) face stricter accountability. The question sets up Jesus' teaching on faithful versus unfaithful stewardship and proportional judgment based on knowledge.

Historical Context

Peter frequently serves as spokesman for the Twelve (Matthew 16:16, John 6:68), asking questions that clarify teaching for all the disciples. This question reflects first-century Jewish understanding of different levels of religious obligation—rabbis and religious leaders were held to higher standards than common people.

Jesus' answer would establish that while all Christians are accountable servants awaiting their Master's return, those in leadership positions (pastors, elders, teachers) bear greater responsibility and face stricter judgment (James 3:1).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does Peter's question reveal about the relationship between privilege, responsibility, and accountability in God's kingdom?
2. How should Christian leaders understand their heightened responsibility compared to general believers?
3. In what ways does everyone, not just leaders, bear responsibility for watchfulness and faithful stewardship?

Interlinear Text

Εἶπεν	δὲ	αὐτῷ	ό	Πέτρος	Κύριε	πρὸς	ἡμᾶς	τὴν
said	Then	unto him		Peter	Lord	to	us	
G2036	G1161	G846		G4074	G2962	G4314	G2248	G3588

παραβολὴν	ταύτην	λέγεις	ἢ	καὶ	πρὸς	πάντας
parable		speakest thou	or	even	to	all
G3850	G3778	G3004	G2228	G2532	G4314	G3956

Additional Cross-References

Mark 13:37 (Parallel theme): And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

