

“Parable of the Ten Virgins”

Introduction – Matthew 25:1-13

This parable is directly relatable to our call to be ready for when Jesus returns to this world. To not be all caught up in the things of this world but to have our priorities in order.

I. WISE OR FOOLISH? VERSES 1-5

Matthew 25:1-5 (NIV)

1 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2** Five of them were foolish and five were wise. **3** The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. **4** The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. **5** The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

Jesus had just finished His teaching on the signs to look for in His second coming to intervene in human history!

Let’s take a look at the context:

Matthew 24:42-51 (NIV)

42 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. **43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. **45** “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? **46** It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. **47** I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **48** But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ **49** and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. **50** The master of that

servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **51** He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So the parable is set with 10 virgins going out to meet the bridegroom.

There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day.

1. The first was the **ENGAGEMENT** – a formal agreement made by the fathers.
2. The second was **BETROTHAL** – the ceremony where mutual promises were made.
3. The third was **MARRIAGE** – approximately one year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time for his bride.

Commentator Matthew Poole says “when the bridegroom came, the bridesmaids, who were attending the bride, went forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps lighted, to conduct him and his companions into the house, and to here who was to be the bride.”

Some ask why Jesus described ten virgins and not another number. Reportedly, Talmudic authorities said there were usually ten lamps in a bridal procession. It was the common size of a wedding party.

In this parable, the first two stages have already taken place. Now the wedding party (ten virgins) waits for the coming of the bridegroom for the bride.

Commentator R.R. Frances says “to see the bridegroom as Jesus Himself seems warranted in light of Matthew 9:15.

Matthew 9:15 (NIV)

15 Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

This would be a bold figure for Him to use, as the Old Testament frequently describes God (not the Messiah) as the bridegroom, and Israel as the bride (ref Isaiah 34:4-5, 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea chapters 1-3).

So for us as followers of Jesus we need to take this to heart! As we looked at last week, our relationship with Jesus as individuals and as the church – the body of called out believers.

JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM AND WE ARE THE BRIDE!

OIL IS A REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE (ref Zechariah 4:1-7)

R.T. France shares “it is apparently a torchlight procession, the lamps probably being torches (of oil-soaked rags strapped on a stick) rather than standing lamps”.

F.F. Bruce says “their torches consisting of a wooden staff held in the hand, with a dish at the top, in which was a piece of cloth or rope dipped in oil or pitch”.

THE WISE VIRGINS HAD AN EXTRA SUPPLY OF OIL!

The foolish ones were unprepared because they lacked oil for their lamps. Without oil the wedding party was not ready for the bridegroom!

For us without the Holy Spirit active in our hearts and lives we will not be ready for the return of Jesus!

Remember the warning that the bridegroom was a long time in coming? This we need to take to heart! We are called to not grow weary in well doing:

Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Paul admonished the Corinthians:

I Corinthians 15:58 (NIV)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The writer of Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:3 (NIV)

3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The apostle Peter clearly points out these truths:

II Peter 3:3-12 (NIV)

3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **4** They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” **5** But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. **6** By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. **7** By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. **8** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. **9** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. **11** Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives **12** as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring

about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

There is so much to consider here! Let the Word of God speak to our hearts!

II. THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM VERSES 6-10

Matthew 25:6-10 (NIV)

6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ **7** “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. **8** The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ **9** “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ **10** “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

Note that all 10 were expecting the bridegroom to come! They didn’t know exactly when! They all became weary and drowsy! The warnings are there for our own good! We must not get lulled into lukewarmness:

Revelation 3:14-15 (NIV)

14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. **15** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!

We are told by Jesus:

Matthew 24:36-39 (NIV)

36 “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **37** As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. **38** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; **39** and they knew

nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:42-44 (NIV)

42 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. **43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

So we must be vigilant! We must be active in our faith! Living it out on a daily basis! We must have our priorities in order!

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

And as we do:

**III. THE CALL TO BE ABOUT OUR FATHER’S BUSINESS
VERSES 11-13**

Matthew 25:11-13 (NIV)

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ **12** “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ **13** “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

We rest in the Lord! We don’t worry and fear the things coming on the world! We live out our faith and do what Jesus has called us to do:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have

commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

As Jesus stated to the disciples in His ministry:

John 4:34-38 (NIV)

34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. **35** Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. **36** Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. **37** Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. **38** I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

Conclusion

So we as the church, the bride of Christ! We must take this all to heart! We are here for such a time as this! We must take the truth of scripture to heart! To know that Jesus has told us.

John 14:23-29 (NIV)

23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. **25** “All this I have spoken while still with you. **26** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. **28** “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **29** I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.