

STAY READY!

Stay ready at all times for the coming of our Lord.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Matthew 25:1-13 gives us Jesus' parable of ten virgins waiting for the arrival of their bridegroom to begin a highly anticipated wedding ceremony. Five of the virgins are described as "wise" and five as "foolish".
- ❖ Collectively, the virgins represent the "bride," or "the Lamb's wife" (see Revelation 21:9, 19:6-9). This was not a case of a bride and bridesmaids preparing for a wedding; all of them were "the bride".
- ❖ But individually, each represents a member of one body – the "body of Christ" (see 1 Corinthians 12:27).
- ❖ The other main character in this story-the bridegroom-represents our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ All were virgins – pure, sanctified, consecrated, set apart, already betrothed to the bridegroom. All were eligible to participate in the wedding.
- ❖ There was really only *one* difference between them – five had oil in their lamps PLUS a reservoir of extra oil and five had oil in their lamps, but nothing extra.
- ❖ As "the bride" waited for the bridegroom, time passed, they all got drowsy and they all fell asleep.
- ❖ The parable makes no negative comment on the fact that they fell asleep. But it is clear that some were prepared for the long haul, however long the wait for the bridegroom turned out to be.
- ❖ Various views say that the oil represents:
 - i) the Holy Spirit;
 - ii) maintaining faith in God (Hebrews 11:6) and continually growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18); or
 - iii) good works by which our lives give glory to God (Matt. 5:16).
- ❖ The parable speaks of the foolish virgins going out to purchase oil from a merchant at night, but we know that "oil" (when referring to the Holy Spirit) is not a commodity available for retail purchase. It is a gift we receive from God by faith.
- ❖ If the oil represents faith, grace or good works, we may speculate that prayer is the currency used to purchase such items as we progress through our Christian life (e.g. Acts 4:23-31).
- ❖ Developing such a lifestyle is not a quick enterprise – it is a consistent effort that takes time to achieve.
- ❖ The main point of the parable is that we must remain close to God and be ready for His coming at all times; "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).
- ❖ The bridegroom came. The foolish virgins were not ready and they could not gain entrance later on. In fact, the bridegroom said he didn't even know them!
- ❖ We see the same terminology used in Matthew 7 regarding those who appear before Christ in judgment claiming entrance because of the great works they have done in His name.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:1-13

- ❖ Looking back, we see Noah warning of a flood for over 100 years. No one responded. No one prepared for it. But they came to the door of the ark after God had shut it (see Gen. 6-7).
- ❖ In Luke 17:34-36, Jesus said there will be two in a bed, two grinding at the mill, two working in the field – one will be taken, the other left.
- ❖ We must stay ready and keep an active watch for the Lord's coming.
- ❖ 2 Peter 3:18 instructs us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of...Jesus Christ."
- ❖ Paul said: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified. ⁶ But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified" (2 Cor. 13:5-6). For that reason, he also said, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).
- ❖ Again, Jesus warned, "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).
- ❖ It is imperative that we prioritize the good health of our relationship with our Lord Jesus in the same way we prioritize relationships with friends, siblings, parents and spouse.
- ❖ We must be able to give positive answers to the following questions:
 - Am I truly ready to meet the bridegroom?
 - Is the fruit of the Spirit consistently being borne in my life (see Gal 5:22-23)?
- ❖ Fruit-bearing will indicate I have extra oil in my vessel; I am continually replenishing my light.
- ❖ This is the time; this is the moment to replenish our reservoir of oil through faith, prayer, self-denial, holiness and good works, so we will be ready for the **coming of the Lord!**

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. What does it mean to "let our light shine" as per Matthew 5:16? What results will be evident?
2. What steps must we personally take to make sure our lamps are burning consistently?
3. The parable says all the virgins "slumbered and slept." How might that play out in our lives today? How can we tell if we are falling asleep?
4. Reread the interpretations of what the oil represents. How is each one significant to the Christian life?
5. Why might Jesus, the Bridegroom, deny knowing someone? (Take time to reflect: Does He know me?)

Prayer Time

Lord, let me be watchful and prepared for the great day of Your return. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

- ✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)
- 🗣️ (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔️ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline

Start-up: Based on your experiences and/or knowledge, what are your favourite/least favourite aspects of weddings?