

Trim Your Lamp; Matthew 25:1-13

I. Bridegroom

- A. Matthew 25:1; “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.
- B. This parable centers around the tradition of the marriage festival
 - 1. The bridegroom goes at night to the residence of the bride and brings her ceremoniously to his own home.
 - 2. There is a festive procession from the bride’s home to the Bridegroom’s
 - 3. At some point on the way another group of virgins are waiting to join the procession and so share in the joyous festivities.
 - 4. This waiting involves the watching and the preparation with their burning lamps, which constitute the point of the parable.
- C. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Christian age, the age of the Church
- D. The ten virgins are Christians
- E. The Bridegroom is the Christ
 - 1. Matthew 9:14–15; 14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.
 - 2. John 3:28–29; 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

II. Wise and Foolish

- A. Matthew 25:2–4; 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.
- B. If we keep to the idea of the parable, a wedding procession, we see 5 were solely focused on getting to the street of the procession, while the other 5 were focused on being prepared for the procession
- C. These two groups of women are exactly alike except in their preparations
- D. The foolish took no thought of what they would need to be ready for the procession to pass by
 - 1. We are often guilty of not thinking things through
 - 2. We see the end result and don’t bother to take into account all that it takes to get there
 - 3. Our Christianity can be like that
 - a) We see the end result (eternity with the Creator)
 - b) But we don’t take into account all it takes to get there (persecutions, various trials and tribulations)
 - c) We are giddy, happy, and excited about the prospect of living with the Father
 - d) We do not expect the tragedies that we suffer through and become the rocky or thorny ground (from the parable of the soils)
 - e) These 5 women came to ruin, not because of any thing they had done but because of what they had not done.
 - f) It was their **not** being ready; their **not** having oil; their **not** being fit to join the procession and enter the festive halls.
- E. The wise thought the wedding festival through and prepared for the long wait

1. The 5 virgins obviously had thought about the fact that the Bridegroom might take a little while and decided to prepare for that
2. They went and bought extra oil so their lamps would not go out
3. This is how we need to live our Christian lives
4. We need to look ahead, determine what might happen, and prepare for it
5. Riding a motorcycle is much the same, I had to be aware of what every other driver on the road was doing and could do, and prepare a plan for it

III. Preparations

- A. Matthew 25:5; As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.
- B. We are right in the middle of the long wait!
- C. So what do we do to prepare?
 1. Remember the ten virgins represent Christians
 2. And I don't think that we should all go out and purchase extra oil for our hurricane lamps
 3. Matthew 6:19–21; 19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
 4. Earthly versus heavenly treasures
 - a) Luke 12:31–34; 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 - b) The rich young ruler who decided he loved his wealth more than the Messiah
 5. It would seem to me that heavenly treasures are spending our time, our effort, and our resources on the spiritual and physical needs of those who do not know the savior
- D. We must develop a mindset of compassion and care
- E. When we see people in need we must ask ourselves, what can I do to help them in their hour of need, both physically and spiritually
- F. This is the oil for our lamps!

IV. Watch

- A. Matthew 25:6–13; 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
- B. Jesus ends this parable with a warning
- C. “Watch therefore,”
 1. This is the whole idea of the parable, be ready, remain watchful, have what you need
 - a) The day and hour is unknown, so we must remain prepared at all times
 - b) We cannot prepare for others, they must prepare for themselves
 - c) We are all personally responsible to the Father for our own Christianity

2. Immediately after this parable and the parable of the talents, Jesus launches into a picture of the final judgement
 3. The sheep and goats are separated
 4. The sheep prepared during the long wait, they used their talents, they “purchased oil”
 - a) Fed the hungry
 - b) Gave drink to the thirsty
 - c) Welcomed strangers (hospitality)
 - d) Clothed the naked
 - e) Cared for the sick
 - f) Cared for the incarcerated
- D. We prepared ourselves by becoming more like Jesus
1. His compassion for the lost
 2. His love for His Father
 3. His love for His creation
- V. Trim Your Lamp
- A. Like the bridegroom, God may delay his coming longer than we expect.
 - B. Like the wise bridesmaids, his followers (us) must be prepared for such a delay—discipleship may be harder than we suspect.
 - C. Like the foolish bridesmaids, those who do not prepare adequately (us) may discover a point beyond which there is no return—when the end comes it will be too late to undo the damage of neglect. - Craig Blomberg, New American Commentary