

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

As a common adage reminds us, things are not always as they seem. It would be comforting to think that all of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ—all who outwardly worship Him, perform acts of service in His Name, and tell others about Him—will one day share in His victory. Sadly, however, this is not the case. The parable of the ten virgins, one of the most tragic and sobering of Jesus' parables, reminds us that not all who profess faith in Jesus truly know Him. We must take heed of this warning and find shelter in Christ, so that we will be prepared to meet Him when He returns or calls us to His side.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 25:1-13

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To present and exegete the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.
2. To describe the importance of being prepared for the return of Christ.
3. To echo the biblical warning that not all professing Christians are truly ready to meet the Lord.
4. To encourage genuine, prayerful introspection about the state of one's soul before God.

QUOTATIONS

Our great duty is to watch, to attend to the business of our souls with the utmost diligence and circumspection. Be awake, and be wakeful. It is a good reason for our watching, that the time of our Lord's coming is very uncertain; we know neither the day nor the hour. Therefore every day and every hour we must be ready, and not off our watch any day in the year, or any hour in the day. Be thou in the fear of the Lord every day and all the day long. –Matthew Henry

You must be justified in Christ's righteousness and you must put on His wedding dress, or else you will not be ready. You must be reconciled to God. You must be made like God or you will not be ready. Or, to come to the parable before us, you must have a lamp—and that lamp must be fed with heavenly oil—and it must continue to burn brightly, or else you will not be ready. No child of darkness can go into that place of God's Light! You must be brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvelous Light, or else you will never be ready to go in with Christ to the marriage and to be forever with Him. –Charles Spurgeon

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Some of the bridesmaids were not prepared to wait the full measure of time before the bridegroom's arrival. Similarly, Christ has not returned to earth as quickly as many early Christians supposed that He would. What are some of the advantages of this present waiting period for the church? What challenges or dangers does this waiting period present for Christians?
- 2) Why is it significant that half of the bridesmaids were not able to join in the wedding feast? What does this fact indicate about the people who belong to the visible church? Why does Christ say that He has not known certain people who profess faith in Him and perform acts of service in His name?
- 3) What does the oil in this parable represent? How does having a full supply of this oil help Christians to await and persevere until the arrival of Jesus Christ? In what ways can a person's lack of oil cause their lamp to falter and flicker out before Jesus comes?
- 4) How do you respond to Jesus' statement that many who cry out, "Lord, Lord!" are not actually known by Him? What are some biblical ways that you can know whether you have saving faith?