



FIRST BAPTIST
— CHURCH —
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 21: The Wise and Foolish Virgins

Matthew 25:1–4, 13 *The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps... Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus tells a story to show us what expectancy looks like in practical terms, and what its absence costs. In a familiar picture for a Galilean group, ten young women are waiting for the bridegroom to arrive for the wedding. All ten have lamps. All ten want to be there. On the surface, they all look identical. The difference, at least the only difference Jesus mentions, is that five brought extra oil for the wait, and five did not. When the bridegroom was delayed and then arrived at midnight, that one difference determined everything.

The oil, in this picture, represents the inner spiritual reality that can't be borrowed or faked at the last minute. The oil represents the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a true believer and a genuine, prepared, ongoing relationship with the Lord. Notice that when the crisis came, the foolish could not borrow oil from the wise. There are some things you simply cannot acquire in the final moment; nor can they be borrowed from another (for no one can arrive in heaven on the borrowed faith of another). The Holy Spirit, builds a life of readiness within us; the continuous filling of the heart with God's presence, the ongoing walk of faith that spring from a real relationship, are what keep the flame burning through a long night.

From an application standpoint for believers who have the "oil" of the Holy Spirit, here is what's so compelling about this parable. The failure of the foolish five was not dramatic wickedness. They weren't rebels or scoffers. They simply were not prepared for the delay. They assumed the bridegroom would come on their timetable, and they did not plan for the long wait, nor did they realize their need for a

flowing supply of oil (the Holy Spirit). And that is precisely the danger Jesus is warning us about. The threat to our expectancy is rarely that we will deny Christ's return outright; it's that we'll grow weary of waiting. "My master is delayed," the heart begins to whisper, and the lamp of expectancy slowly runs dry. If the "oil" runs out, that means it was our own supply and not that of Christ. Scripture is clear that the Master will be delayed; our eager expectation taps into the well of oil that never runs dry.

This is why holiness and expectancy travel together. The person who lives ready doesn't just believe Christ will come; he keeps his lamp filled now, tending his walk with God in the ordinary, unglamorous stretch of waiting. Jesus ends the story with the same command that echoes through this whole segment: "Watch therefore." Do not let the delay make you drowsy. Keep oil in your lamp. The Bridegroom is coming, and the wait, however long it feels, will end at midnight when you least expect it.

TAKE AWAY

The danger isn't denying Christ's return — it's growing weary of the wait and letting your lamp run dry. Tap into the never-ending supply of oil now; you can't borrow it at midnight.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to help you keep your lamp filled through the long wait, tending your walk with Him today rather than assuming there's time later.