



YES
NO
MAYBE

READ Matthew 25:1-13 [NLT]

"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, 4 but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. 5 When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

7 "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

10 "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. 11 Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

12 "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

13 "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return."

¶ In your experience, church has taught, "Now, the moral of the story is, kids..." How has this parable typically been explained to you? What made five of the bridesmaids wise, and what made five of them foolish?

Î THE MIDDLE EASTERN WEDDING PLANNER...

° (v. 1) **Ten Bridesmaids** - [δέκα παρθένοις - *déca parthénois*] Why 10? There is no known reason, but some suspect that God typically uses the number 10 to express a sense of "completeness." Bridesmaids: The girls all looked the same, but they were not. What is different about them?

° (v. 1) **Why Lamps?** - [λαμπάδας - *lampádas*] Two possible interpretations: lamps or torches. Weddings included a nighttime parade of lights from the bride's home to the groom's home. The bridesmaids were the "light show."

° (v. 2-4) **Half Wise/Half Foolish** - The defining difference between the two groups is what? [ἔλαιον- *elaion*] - **Oil**: Why was having extra oil a big deal? And why couldn't it be shared? What do you think the oil represents?

° (v. 5) **They All Became Drowsy and Fell Asleep** - [ἐνύσταξαν πᾶσαι καὶ ἐκάθευδον - *enystaxan pasai kai ekatheudon*] In the bridegroom's delay, ALL of them slept. The wise got drowsy and slept too. So what do you think Jesus was saying here about "keeping watch?"

1 If we experienced a major natural disaster and the stores had empty shelves, I would need to get supplies from my Bible Lab friends.

2 I'm the type of person that has backup plans for my backup plans.

3 Jesus is coming later than we think.

4 I have enough faith for myself and my loved-ones.

5 God does not know everybody.



° (v. 9) **We Don't Have Enough For All Of Us** - This could sound like selfish behavior on the part of the "wise" ones. Why is it not? Why is it impossible for them to share?

° (v. 12) **I Don't Know You** - [οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς - *ouk oída hymas*] When the foolish bridesmaids return from purchasing oil, they find the door locked. The Bridegroom himself responds from the other side of the door, "I don't know you."

~| Does this fit God's character? What do you think He was really saying?

° (v. 13) **Therefore...** - Jesus ends this parable by saying, "Therefore, keep watch..." In light of everything we've seen in this story, what do you think he wants us to know about him?

1 How prepared am I for Christ's unpredictable timing?

2 What am I doing to stock up on spiritual "oil?"

3 What do I understand more clearly about God's character, now that I've looked at this Kingdom Tale?

MY
PRAYER

NOTES