

# *Be Prepared!*

## **Matthew 25:1-13**

East Berlin Community Church

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### Introduction

- My experiences as a boy scout
- The need of being prepared for the two phases of Christ's Second Coming.
  - Matthew 24:29-31--*"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*
- We are to be watching, alert to signs that Christ's coming is near.
  - Matthew 24:42-- *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."*
- We are also to be waiting, ready and prepared for His return.
  - Matthew 24:44-- *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

### ***Be Prepared!* Parable of the Ten Virgins**

- Matthew 25:1-13-- *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'" Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."*

### **A. The Setting**

1. **Typical Jewish Wedding Ceremony**
  - a. Betrothal Period-- legally binding contract
  - b. Groom and groomsmen come for the bride
  - c. Parade through the streets to the Wedding Feast-- 7 day feast
  - d. After seven days, consummation of the marriage and revelation of the couple to the world
2. **The actions of the Ten Virgins**
  - a. All were waiting for the arrival of the groom and groomsmen
  - b. The nature of the torches or lamps
  - c. Five of the virgins were wise in that they had purchased oil ahead of time and were prepared for the arrival of the groom.
  - d. Five of the virgins were foolish in that they did not prepare ahead of time for the arrival of the groom.
  - e. While the foolish virgins were hunting for oil, the bridegroom came and those prepared entered the wedding. No entrance allowed after the door was shut.

## B. The Interpretation

### 1. The identification of the "Ten Virgins"

- a. **Many believe that the Ten Virgins represent Israel**, and that the parable is about the judgment of living Jews at Jesus' second coming. The Jews living during the tribulation will be some of the invited guest privileged to share in the Marriage supper.
  - 1) No where in Scripture is Israel or Jews pictured as "virgins"
  - 2) The surviving Jews will be judged at Jesus' second coming and those who pass the test will enter into the kingdom.
    - Ezekiel 20:33-38-- *"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD. "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD."*
    - Zechariah 13:8-9-- *"And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.' "*
- b. Better to identify the Ten Virgins as **professing disciples of Jesus Christ** alive at the time of Christ's second coming.
  - 1) **The five wise virgins, who were prepared with oil, are not only professing but also possessing believers with true, saving faith**
    - a) The "oil" is similar to the wedding garment in the **parable of the wedding feast**
      - Matthew 22:1-10-- *"Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests."*
    - b) The invitation to come to the feast was open to the "whosoever will"
      - Matthew 22:11-13-- *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"*
  - 2) **The five foolish virgins are unprepared spiritually** for they do not possess the "oil" of salvation.

## 2. The Indictment of the “Five Foolish Virgins” at the Second Coming of Christ

### a. They hold a torch without light!

- Matthew 7:22-23-- *“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*

### b. They are now desperate to obtain oil.

#### 1) They ask the wise virgins to share their oil with them

- Matthew 25:9-- *“No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.”*
- a) It is not that they are selfish or callous to the foolish virgins’ need, it is just that they only had enough for themselves. It was necessary that each buy their own oil.’
- b) Application: Spiritual life cannot be shared. It is a direct, individual gift from God and it is nontransferable.

#### 2) So, the foolish virgins go looking to buy oil at the late hour.

##### a) **Salvation can only be secured from its source-- from God Himself**

##### b) **Salvation is bought “without money”**

- Isaiah 55:1-3-- *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.”*

##### c) **Salvation costs us everything.**

###### (1) **Parables of the Treasure in a Field and the Pearl of Great Price**

- Matthew 13:44-46-- *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*

###### (2) **Jesus’ call to discipleship**

- Matthew 16:24-27-- *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”*

###### (3) Many “professing” Christians want to add Jesus to their life. But Jesus does not want to be an “add-on”. He wants to be our life! Possessing Christians.

###### (4) **Paul understood the cost in being a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.**

- Philippians 3:5-6-- *“He was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”*
- Philippians 3:7-11-- *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness,*

*which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

- c. The five wise virgins had oil. They possessed salvation. They had the light of God in them.
- d. The five foolish virgins had no oil. And while they were out looking for oil, the bridegroom came. Those who were prepared entered the feast, and the door was shut! **No more opportunity for them to enter. The day of salvation had come to a close.**
  - 1) **The parable of the Narrow Gate**
    - Luke 13:23-28-- *"Lord, are there few who are saved?" "And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open for us," and He will answer and say to you, "I do not know you, where you are from," then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets." But He will say, "I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity." There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."*
  - 2) **The desperate cry of the excluded five foolish virgins**
    - Matthew 25:11c-12-- *'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."*
  - 3) **The warning by Jesus of being prepared for His coming**
    - Matthew 25:13-- *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."*

## **Application for us today?**

1. **Our need to examine ourselves to be sure that we are in the faith.**
  - 2 Corinthians 13:5-- *"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."*
2. **The assurance that we can "know" beyond a shadow of a doubt that we have eternal life**
  - 1 John 5:13-- *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you might know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."*
3. **Our need to make sure today that we are more than professing believers, but actually possessing eternal life.**