

# Five Wise, Five Foolish

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**Bible Text:** Matthew 25:1-13  
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Dear congregation, who here has not looked forward to a wedding, perhaps your own wedding even long ago, or one of your children's, or a sister or a brother, maybe children you played a role in the wedding of an aunt or an uncle or a brother or sister, or even just if you're invited to go to a wedding, You expect that. You long for that. You count the days for this wedding. Well, congregation, there is a wedding coming. A glorious, glorious wedding. Like no other wedding this world has ever seen. But are you looking for it? Are you expecting? Are you awake to it which is the great question the text puts before us, which we hope to hear with the Lord's help this evening, as you find it in the parable that was read in your hearing. We will look at this whole parable, Matthew 25, verse 1 through 13, and allow me to read at this time verses 1 and 2.

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Thus far our text.

Our theme, looking to the Lord, is "Five Wise, Five Foolish." We'll see, first of all, that Christ's coming surprises everyone; secondly, Christ's coming reveals a dreadful lack; and Christ's coming, thirdly, seals some in and others out. Five wise, five foolish: Christ's coming surprises everyone, reveals a dreadful lack, and seals some in and others out.

Well, congregation, in Matthew 25, we are so very close to the eve of Christ's suffering. These are some of the last words that he was to speak to his followers as part of his teaching. In the next chapter already, he will enter his trial, the greatness of his suffering, and then his crucifixion, and his resurrection, but here on the very eve of his suffering, as his blood is about to be shed, he speaks to his church, to his people, about the end. No, not the end of his physical life and his human nature here below, but the end of the world, about his second coming. Now that his first coming is coming to an end, he has in his mind and in his heart, he has his second coming, when he will come without sin for final salvation for his people, his coming which will mark the end of human history. his coming, which will not be as a Savior so much, but as a judge. his coming, which will be as a bridegroom for his church, for his people, whom he will purchase with his own blood. And he is making that church ready not only in his priestly work, but already now

in his prophetic work. speaking to his church of what it is her holy duty and privilege to do, and that is to make herself ready for the coming of the bridegroom.

And congregation, no one here, and no one anywhere, knows the hour of his return but one thing the Lord Jesus makes clear in this chapter is that there will be waiting and there will be people growing tired of waiting, and this the Bible tells us very clearly in passages like 2 Peter 3:4, that there will be scoffers that say, "Where is the promise of his coming? The earth is continuing as it always has been." And even true Christians, they can doubt this or forget this and that's why it's important to be reminded every week as we confess in our Apostles' Creed, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. The Lord is coming. He is coming back. The Lord knows the hearts of his people. He knows how sluggish, how lax, how at ease we often can be, people of God, and that's why in these chapters, towards the end of Matthew, Matthew 24, 25, and 26, he's urging his disciples to watch. He says it repeatedly, six times, in these chapters alone, he says, "Watch, watch, watch," and so on. And in verse 13 of our text passage, he says it, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

What does it mean to watch? Well, in biblical terms, to watch means to be vigilant, to be on the lookout, to give attention to something, whether it's great, whether it's small. To watch means that you are expecting it and inspecting everything for it. The opposite of watching is to grow weary and to fall asleep, to let down your guard, to not keep your eyes open, alert, looking around you and worst of all, of course, falling asleep, as we see in this parable. And when God the Holy Spirit works in the heart of a sinner, he makes that sinner in principle, to be a watchful, expectant believer. A person in whom God is working by faith, sees the promises of God as real, as trustworthy, as something to be leaned on, and all God's word as being unshakable and solid and true, and God has worked in his or her heart, this sensitivity, in principle, to keep watch, to gird up the loins of our minds, Peter says, and to watch, and to hope to the end, to keep in mind that Christ would have us engage in a watch, a careful watch, of our own soul, of our lives, and also of him and is coming with the clouds. The Bible tells us to watch for many things. To watch against the beginnings of sin in our hearts. To watch or to guard our hearts. To watch our tongue, what leaves our mouths, what leaves our mouth. And to pray to the Lord, "Guard thou my lips, I thee implore." And to be watching unto prayer. "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." We are to watch against false doctrine from the pulpit, and what we hear, and what we read, and whatever emerges in our own heart, to watch, to not take for granted that things will always be the way they need to be, to be watchful.

Sometimes you see in some of the stores that are often robbed, you'll see a security guard, young people, children, standing there. What would you say if you came into a store and there was a uniformed security guard and they were slumped over and they were asleep? That would be very bad, wouldn't it? They're there to watch, to guard. So too the Christian. So too every one of us. And to impress this upon each and every one of our hearts, the Lord tells this parable, this vivid parable about a wedding, and preparing for that wedding. Now, young people and children, weddings in these days had similarities to our own weddings. They were festive occasions, they were wonderful occasions, but

there were also differences between the weddings then and the weddings today. For one thing, you have to keep this in mind when you read this parable, weddings were much longer than they are today. In our culture, they're a few hours, maybe a half a day, maybe a whole day if people go long, but then a wedding could be a whole week, even up to two weeks. And when exactly the wedding would start was not necessarily known. It was usually unpredictable because things needed to be made ready, and especially in this culture, you couldn't count on everything to the extent that we may still do in our society. But one thing was true, and that was that the father of the bridegroom, he was in charge of the timetable and so he would send out invitations, he would let people know in advance of a wedding that was planned for then and then, but then a second invitation usually would be sent around that time with more specifications, and everyone who was invited was to be ready, because you couldn't know, you didn't know exactly when the exact wedding would take place, but you would want to be ready. And here in our text, we have these virgins, bridal attendants, young women, who are specifically charged with waiting outside of the bride's home for the moment when the bridegroom would come and fetch his bride and take this bride into the mansions of his father where the celebration of the wedding would begin.

And such attendants, they would have oil lamps, because you didn't know if it was night or day. It was usually in the evening or in the darkness of the night if there was a delay. And so you needed to have lights. You needed to have oil lamps in this day and age and you needed them in order not just to see where you were going, but to shine the light upon the bridegroom and his bride. And here, congregation, there are, in the Lord's parable, 10 virgins, 10 bridal attendants, and notice that they have many things in common. We'll look at their differences in a moment, but they have certain things in common. They're all invited to this wedding. They are all presumably well-dressed, at least, there's nothing to the contrary stated in the text. They are all, in a measure, ready and prepared for the festivities. They know about the wedding. They've prepared to a certain extent for the wedding. They all have lamps. It's not true that five of them have lamps and five of them don't have lamps. They all have lamps and they all have oil for their lamps. Notice that. They have a profession, one has said, and they have a measure of oil, all of them. Of course, as we will see, the foolish virgins don't have true grace in their hearts, but they have something and they have oil, general grace, whatever you want to call it, they have something.

Thomas Shepard, a Puritan in New England, early days of the history of our nation, he has a book with many sermons on this parable and he describes how far people can go in profession, and in having this oil lamp, and even having some oil in their lamp, and he goes so far in describing these foolish virgins that one has said, "Oh, to be one of Shepard's foolish virgins," meaning, so many in the house of God live so far beneath that. The Lord would examine, would have us examine ourselves on this. You see congregation on the outside all these virgins look the same. Children, there's not a sign over the head of five of them that says, "These are the fools. These are the foolish ones." It's not so that the wise could discern that the foolish were truly foolish. They were intermixed. They were there together. But five of them were wise and five of them were foolish.

But notice before we go on to our second point, that the text tells us in verse 5, that "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Remarkable, isn't it? Both the wise and the foolish, they slept, and this tells us that true Christians may and can sleep. Yes, they can fall asleep. Imagine that. Read in the Song of Solomon 5, how the bride there falls asleep. She lies upon her bed, and the bridegroom comes knocking, and there she is at ease, lazy. The bridegroom leaves until she gets out of her bed. Notice that providentially meditation in your bulletin is much in the same line, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door." A sleeping church. Oh, congregation, how does this apply to us people of God? Doesn't this fill you with shame-facedness? Don't you know it in your own soul's experience? You can drift off to sleep. You become lazy. Your eyes begin to shut. And there you go off to sleep. You backslide. Watchfulness. No, it doesn't mark you. It doesn't mark your life. Like Peter, James, and John in the garden. "Watch and pray," the Lord says. They nodded off and went to sleep.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, in a sermon on this text, he says, "I have no doubt but that before Christ comes, all the Christian churches will fall into a deep slumber." What a fearful thing, what a fearful thing to fall asleep, fall asleep under and a preaching of Christ, of the covenant, of God's grace, to come to be at ease, to live so easily, to nod off, to not have eternal realities firmly in your gaze, to not see things as they truly are, to have things hazy, live in myths and daydreams, not in the reality of Christ's word and truth. How we ought to heed God's word when he says, "Awake you who sleep and arise from the dead, Christ shall give you light." How we need that. Even after received grace, we'd wake up, that the church would have a fresh awakening, a true awakening. We would not be able to sit under sermons, to come to church and leave church and live our lives all in a daze. Maybe it was at worst, shake one another. Be shaken. And say, "Eternity is real. Heaven is real. Hell is real. How can you sleep? How can you nod off? How can you drink and eat the world's sleeping medication, drift off to sleep like Christian did who lost his assurance?"

Well, why does the Lord delay? It says here that while the bridegroom tarried. This means that the bridegroom does delay. He waits before he comes back. Many have stumbled over this but be convinced of this, the Lord does not delay because he's powerless. He does not delay because he's indifferent to the situation of his bride. No, much the contrary. In the Bible, when you put the whole teaching of the word of God together, you realize that he delays, first of all, because he is a long-suffering God. 2 Peter 3:9, he's long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn and be saved. It is true that the day is appointed when Christ shall return and when judgment shall break forth upon our world but the Lord is long-suffering. He's warning. He's calling. He's beckoning. He's sending many harbingers of judgment to come that are coming over our world even now, many signs of the times. Many footsteps. The Lord waits to be gracious. Have you thought of that, my unconverted friend? The day of your death has not yet come and the end of history has not yet broken in. Why? The Lord is long-suffering. Long-suffering. He's patient. But his patience will run out. His long-suffering will reach an end.

Secondly, the Lord is tarrying because the whole church must be saved. A seed shall serve him, the Lord says. Throughout all generations, as the Lord has decreed, there will be a church in every generation, as long as the sun and moon endures. More and more of God's people are coming into the world and being born and being reborn, but not until the last elect one, those appointed to salvation is saved, then shall the end be. And congregation doesn't the tarrying of the Lord also serve to test us and refine us as with refiner's fire to sanctify us? You know, when a bride and a bridegroom have to put off marriage, maybe through certain delays and circumstances, cross-border issues, as some here in this congregation have experienced, things outside of their control, doesn't absence make the heart grow fonder? Doesn't this delay test and try the heart, but make the couple to long all the more for the coming of their bridegroom or their bride? For this reason, too, the Lord tarryes in order that he might awaken more fervently in his bride an expectational longing. As the scriptures end in Revelation 22, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Is that your longing? Is the delaying and the tarrying of the Lord such that sometimes you can hardly stand it? "How long, O Lord, wilt thou delay? How long shall the chariot wheels of thy coming be delayed? When wilt thou come with the clouds?" Martin Luther said that each and every day he wished, at least, to look out of the window and wonder, "Is today the day that I'll see my Savior, his very face? I'll look him in the face and see him, not just through a veil darkly, but face to face."

Well, congregation, Christ's second coming will surprise everyone. M'Cheyne, we've already mentioned he once was tutoring seminary students, and six students were with him in a group, and he looked at them all, and he asked them, he said, "Do you think that Christ could come today?" They all thought for a moment, and they looked at each other, and one for one, all six of them said, "No, I don't think today. I don't think today. I don't think today." And M'Cheyne looked at each of them and he said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Five wise, five foolish, but congregation, we come now to our second point, and that is that the coming of Christ not only surprises everyone, but it reveals a dreadful lack. Imagine, children, the scene. Here are these well-dressed bridesmaids. Their eyes are shut. The darkness all around them. The lamps, they were burning brightly and now they're flickering and they've gone out. And suddenly, there into the darkness, a cry is heard. That's what it says, a cry at midnight. A cry pierces the darkness, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him!" They all wake up in a start. "This is it, the moment we were waiting for. The delay is over. The bridegroom is here! Quick, now is the time!" All 10 of the bridesmaids jump up. All 10 trim their lamps. But now, now, at midnight, five of them have a problem. As we've said, they had an invitation. They had clothes. They had lamps. They had some oil. But now, they're missing, they're missing something vital. They're missing oil in their lamps. They ran out of oil and you can't be without oil. You can't do without oil, because you'll have no light.

What a horrible discovery these five make. Panically, they reach here or there. They go to those who have oil, and panically, they cry to them, "Give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out!" But the others, of course, cannot give them oil. "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you, but go rather to them that sell and buy for yourself."

Disappointing words these would have been to these virgins who were out of oil. What a dismay would have covered their faces. What a panic would have gone into their spirits and into their minds. "The one thing I needed in this moment, the one thing I lack, and no one can help me." Congregation, what an application for you and for me here and that is that on that great day, children, your father can't give you oil. Your spouse can't give you oil. Your children can't give you oil.

This brings before us, congregation, three lessons from this dreadful lack these foolish virgins have. The first is this: nothing and no one can make up for you not getting oil yourself. This oil, congregation, I believe, is a picture of the grace of the Holy Spirit so frequently pictured in the scriptures as oil. And the Spirit brings Christ. And the Spirit gives life, life in Christ. The Spirit gives everything. The Spirit gives faith whereby we embrace Christ. How we need the Holy Spirit of God. We cannot do without him. And each of us needs the Holy Spirit for ourselves. We don't just share collectively somehow in the Holy Spirit by being members of a church, by visiting a church, by being under the word. It isn't so that you partake of the Holy Spirit simply like that. No, it must be personal. And so I ask you, have you the Holy Spirit? Do you know the ministry and the person of the Holy Spirit which we all so desperately need? Do you pray and sought for the Holy Spirit and not rested until you have the Holy Spirit? The Lord is so willing and eager to give the Holy Spirit. "You, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children. How much more shall not your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" But do you ask him? Do not rest until you know that you have the Holy Spirit and his grace, which each and every one of us need.

Congregation, the way we were born in this world, we do not have the Holy Spirit. We have our own spirit. We have the spirit of the world. We need the Holy Spirit of God. So willing, so available, so free, so full. So ready to live in the hearts, the defiled sinful hearts of sinners. To take up residence in the hearts of sinners. To bestow his grace. To take it out of Christ and to give it unto you, sinner, whoever you are. That's the love, that's the work of the precious Holy Spirit of God. Nothing can make up for not having that oil yourself.

But secondly, congregation, as we drill down just a little further, we look at the difference between these five wise and these five foolish virgins. Isn't it this that the five foolish virgins at some point thought they were all set? At some point they thought they had been serious enough, they had planned enough, they had enough. These five foolish virgins, they knew they needed something, and so they obtained something, but they were easily and quickly satisfied with just something. They didn't plan for the delay of the bridegroom. They didn't plan for the long haul. They didn't plan for the fact that we, by nature, cannot do with just a little, that we need something beyond ourselves. You see, there's problems with the thinking of these foolish virgins. That's why they're foolish. They thought they were all set. They figured it would all work out in the end. They figured they had what they needed, but they didn't. And that's why they were foolish.

When the Lord works in our hearts, he makes us to realize that we are not settled, that we need the Lord, that we need him every day, and that we are heartily dependent upon the

Lord and his work forever. We need his grace every day. We can't do this with a little grace. We need a lot of grace. We need fresh grace. We need new grace every day, fresh supplies. We need the God in whom all grace is found and God's people know and believe and cry out of that need, "Lord, give me grace! Oh, to grace, how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be." If I had grace one day and no grace the next, I'd be lost forever. I need grace. I need abundant grace. I need endless grace.

Has the Lord shown you that? Are you among those who don't rest content to just have a little, to little oil, and for the rest, you feel okay about yourself that it will somehow all work out? Well, my friend, that is folly and connected with this, congregation, the great difference, thirdly, between the wise and the foolish is that these wise women, they prepared for the long haul. They realized that it was eternity with which they had to deal, and congregation, the Lord needs to impress upon us eternity, eternity, eternity. There's so much cultural Christianity that's just Christianity for the day, just to make a difference in this world and sure, God's people are called to be salt and light in this world, and they will make, by God's grace, a difference in this world, but I ask you, is your eye set on eternity? On the great, unending eternity? If in this life only we had hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable, but it's eternity when all the centuries of this world are past and done, it's but small compared to that endless eternity which awaits the people of God.

Do you long for that? Are you focused on that? Is it that which you have your eyes set upon? Imagine you came to this church, and all that you did was just hover on those steps, or maybe ventured into the narthex, and there you were, and then you left. Oh, friend, you'd be missing what it's all about. Puritans compared time to a little narthex, after which there is the great, endless auditorium of eternity. That's what it's all about. That's why you're here on the earth, for trial, for preparation, for the never-ending eternity, that when millions of years, humanly speaking, are done, there's still endless years yet coming in one of two places, either eternal well or eternal woe. Jonathan Edwards prayed to God, "God stamp eternity on my eyeballs," meaning, "Help me to see nothing but through the mold and through the lens of eternity." When I go to my work, when I do my job, when I speak to my neighbors and to my friends, whatever it is that I do, I can't do so without seeing eternity and when sin comes my way and the pleasures of sin for a season are tempting me, I would look at them through the lens of eternity and I would close my ears and my eyes to the calls of this world, and I'd say, "Eternity, eternity. Let the world regard me as a fool. Let me not have what this world is after, amassing all its labors and energies, but eternity. It's all for eternity."

Well congregation, the midnight cry will sound. I have no doubt about it. It will come. It will sound. It will pierce the ear. In the darkness of night, there will the cry be. You'll hear it. Your ears will hear it, that Christ would hear it already now in the scriptures in order that we would seek for this grace, in order that we would lose that self-contentment, that self-complacency, the little religion, with externals, with just a little, going a little ways in the things of God but that we would need boundless grace, infinite grace. Christ and him crucified, an overflowing fountain, that's what I need. An endless ocean of grace and love for a sinner like me.

Well congregation, that, ought to be our focus, as we hope to hear in our third and final point, but let us sing at this time 362. "From out the depths I cry, O Lord, to Thee." 362, all stanzas.

"From out the depths I cry, O Lord, to Thee;  
Lord, hear my call;  
I love Thee, Lord, for Thou dost heed my plea,  
Forgiving all;  
If Thou shouldst mark our sins, who then could stand?  
But grace and mercy dwell at Thy right hand.

I wait for God, the Lord, and on His word  
My hope relies;  
My soul still waits and looks unto the Lord  
Till light arise;  
I look for Him to drive away my night,  
Yea, more than watchmen look for morning light.

Hope in the Lord, ye waiting saints, and He  
Will well provide,  
For mercy and redemption full and free  
With Him abide;  
From sin and evil, mighty though they seem,  
His arm almighty will His saints redeem."

Our third and final point, Christ's coming shuts some in and others out. Congregation, this parable focuses in the end, especially on the foolish virgins but we're told one thing about the wise, and we should not overlook it. Verse 10, the middle part, "and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." You see, dear believers, your bridegroom is coming. He will most certainly come, and he will come as your longed-for bridegroom. He will take you on the basis of his own blood and righteousness, he'll take you into this eternal banqueting hall, and his banner over you will be eternal love. And that shut door, which will mean something horrible to the foolish, but to the believer, saved by grace, a shut door means I can never, never leave him. I can never be lost. There will, after a thousand years of eternity, speaking as a man, there will not be a time in which the door will open and I'll fall into hell. No. Forever. That's what it says. Forever with the Lord. With him. With him. That's that. Pearly gates, streets of gold. Wonderful things. But the Lamb. The Lamb is all the glory. With him. forever shut in, shut in with him. All sin walled out. All tears and sighing and shame walled out. All happiness, all joy walled in. Everlasting joy shall be upon your head, dear believer. All the shadows will flee away. And then to be with him, to gaze not upon my own robe, but upon the Lamb, who with his blood has purchased me. Who can understand? It has not entered into the heart of man to conceive why and what God has done. Why? It makes no sense. All my sin, all my wanderings, all my lostness, but congregation, he'll be in the center because he's the answer. He's the one to which every



face will be drawn. He's the one to every hand will point. He's the one before whom every crown will be cast and the thunderings and the songs of heaven will all be towards him. Worthy is this Lamb that was slain.

To forever be shut in, people of God, that's your heart's desire. Sometimes you can scarcely believe it, that it would be your portion but the word of God says it loud and clear, "They shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels." But congregation, I hear something. I hear knocking, knocking at the door. "Open to us! Open to us!" In time, the Lord knocked on the doors of their heart. They never opened. Never any need. Not for Christ. Outside, Christ outside in time and now they outside in eternity. If there is something in this text that is haunting to the extreme, it is the knocks, not of the world, congregation. Don't be mistaken about this, these knocks are not from the world. They're from people sitting in church like you. They're from professors, from those who have heard the gospel who thought all was well, who thought in the end it would all work out. Those five on the other side, they're church members with baptized foreheads knocking outside forever, "Open unto us! Open unto us!"

Congregation, this is told to you now, that you would hear Christ's voice today, not in the judgment when it's too late, but in the preaching, in the gospel, while he proffers peace and pardon, that you would hear his voice today. And he comes in the garments of salvation. As the bridegroom of sinners, he comes and he says, "Have I been so long with you and you don't know me?" In other words, "You can know me. You must know me. I must be known. Don't live out your days not knowing me. Whatever you seek to know in this world, you're a fool if you miss the one thing that you should know, and that's me. This is eternal life, that they may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent."

Well, congregation, this parable is a knock of the Savior on the door of your heart today. Don't be mistaken about it. In the day of days, you cannot plead ignorance. You cannot plead that the Lord never invited you. The Lord comes, even now, proffers peace and pardon and everything you need. Whatever your argument is now, he has an answer, and it's all in himself. Oh, eternal life, eternal life. Believers sealed in forevermore. Unbelievers outside are dogs. Outside are evil workers. Outside are the abominable. Outside are the fearful, the unbelieving. And whoso maketh and loveth a lie outside.

Friends, as we close, four concluding thoughts. The first is this: forever is forever. Forever is forever. The suffering of this present time is not worthy to compare with the glory that shall be for believers in eternity. The suffering of this present time, dear unbeliever, is nothing compared to the eternal suffering forever and forever and forever. And the worm that dieth not, which is the conscience, the tormenting conscience, saying it could have been different. You had the grace of God set forth before you. You had redemption set forth in the most winning terms. It came so close. But what your soul said was this, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth, and thy want as an armed man." My friend, eternal poverty, in that day to have nothing to cool your tongue, no righteousness whatsoever, nothing but fire, nothing but the consuming flame, nothing but the gnawing conscience

forever and forever, outside. If hell were for a thousand years, it would be one thing, but forever is forever.

Secondly, congregation, there's no in-between the wise and the foolish. It says here five were wise and five were foolish. It doesn't say three were wise and three were foolish and four were kind of wise and kind of foolish. No. There's a stark line of division. Now, people of God, you often find yourself very foolish. You often complain because inside you're so foolish. "So foolish was I and ignorant. I was as a great beast before thee." But in the Lord's eyes, those who have but a speck of grace, those who have the Lord Jesus Christ, they have all wisdom, all knowledge. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If you have Christ, you're wise. What a teacher Christ is. What a reconciler unto God Christ is. What a refuge for your soul Christ is. He is everything. Everything your ignorant, your foolish soul could ever need. But be mindful, you're either wise tonight, or you're foolish.

There's no in-between and, my dear unconverted friend, no one will coast into heaven. No one will simply live their lives, living for this world, living for self, having some religion, and then all of a sudden coast into heaven and wake up in eternity in heaven. No. It's not like that. Strive ye to enter in at the straight gate. You need a change of heart, and you need it now. You don't know when the cry of midnight will come. You need a covering for your naked soul. You need Christ, my friend, and you need him now. You need him today. Five wise and five foolish.

Thirdly, be wise, ye rulers. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." Maybe you ask, how can I be wise today? Well, the Bible tells you. Be wise. Kiss the Son. That's the greatest wisdom you could ever have, to come under Jesus Christ with all your sin, with all your shame, with all your misdeeds, with all your religion, with all your self-righteousness, with all your unrighteousness, to come and to kiss the Son, to submit to him in his way of saving sinners, to see in him everything, to acknowledge your guilt at his feet, to plead for his blood, to hang your helpless soul on Christ, to give to all those idols that you cling to, that are there every day that you may check out at the door of church, but as soon as you leave those doors, there they are again, your idols, to give them a bill of divorce and to say, "Idol, I divorce you. There's only one that is worthy of my love, my affection, my adoration. It's the bridegroom of sinners." Be wise. Sit at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Learn of him. He will give you all that you need. Each and every day, no matter what comes your way, no matter what perplexities, confusions, doubts, fears, temptations, would come your way, he has wisdom for every need, every circumstance. It's all in him.

And fourthly and lastly, congregation, don't wait for the last day to get oil when today is the market day of the soul, and the market of free and sovereign grace is open yet today. Today many businesses are closed or at least should be closed. Shops should be closed on the Lord's Day. But the Lord's Day is especially for the oil of your soul. Come without money and without price, buy wine, buy milk, buy oil, without money and without price. There stands the Lord Jesus Christ and he says, "Come, every man that thirsteth, come to the waters. You don't have anything good. You're not supposed to have anything. Come. It is free with me because I've paid the price. I've purchased it with my own life's blood."

But will you go? Will you go tonight? Will you go in this moment with all your lack, with all the emptiness of your life, with all the empty vessels that you might find all around you that have been dedicated to this world and to your own self-service, to go with them and say, "Lord, not just a little, but pour out thy Holy Spirit without measure upon me. Give me grace. O grace, I need it."

Dear friends, the market of free and sovereign grace is open. There's room. You don't need to wait in line. This is the condemnation, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their iniquities unto them, he came unto his own. He comes with life. He comes with grace. He comes with everything. And the price tag, it's free. It's free for the asking. Oh yes, it'll change your life. Yes, it will transform your life. Everything will be different. Old things will pass away, new things will come. It will all be new. What you will want, you will desire that. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Well, friends, with such a Savior, such a God, such an invitation, such a gospel, why delay? Why delay? Watch. Watch, my friend, for you know not the day nor the hour. Now is the accepted time. Soon the midnight cry will come. Buy oil. Buy it today for Christ's sake. Amen.

*Gracious God, fountain of all good, pour thy grace into our hearts, we pray. With all our lack, with all our need, with all our emptiness, come and fill us with all peace and joy and believing, with all grace with thy Holy Spirit, through whom all of Christ is open to the soul. O Lord, encourage the heart of thy people. Wake us up, Lord. Wake us up. May we be about eternity. May we be an expectant people. Many of us remember an older generation, many of whom have passed away, whose life was a life of expectancy, to whom the world mattered very little. It was God, it was Christ, it was salvation, it was holiness, it was eternity. It was knowing him whom to know is life eternal. Lord, how far short we fall. We fear greatly when we look to ourselves, but help us to look unto Christ. Help us to be a people, an expectant people, a people marked as a Maranatha people, people whose lips and language are crying for thy coming, but whose heart is melting with yearning for thy coming again. The Lord save the lost, save our children, save our parents, save our friends, save our neighbors. Lord, may this market of free grace, may it have scores of people coming for oil this very night, all to the glory of the bridegroom and his God. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake alone in the remission of every sin. Amen.*

Shall we sing in conclusion 125, 1 through 4, "O Royal Bride Give Heed." 125, 1 through 4.

"O Royal Bride, give heed,  
And to my words attend;  
For Christ the King forsake the world  
And every former friend.

Thy beauty and Thy grace  
Shall then delight the King;

He only is thy rightful Lord,  
To Him thy worship bring.

To Thee, since thou art His,  
Great honor shall be shown;  
The rich shall bring their gifts to thee,  
Thy glory they shall own.

Enthroned in royal state,  
All glorious thou shalt dwell,  
With garments fair, inwrought with gold,  
The Church He loveth well."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
rest and remain with you forever. Amen.