

Matthew 25:1-13 The Parable of Ten Virgins

Alright, today we are starting Matthew chapter 25, Matthew 25:01-13. Matthew chapters 24 and 25 are all one message. In you have a red-letter edition Bible with the words of Jesus in red, you will see that it covers both chapters 24 and 25. It is a continuing message. It is the Olivet discourse, Jesus speaking on the Mount of Olives.

Matthew chapter 24 verse 4 through 31 presents to us the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy, which would be the tribulation period. But beginning with verse 32 of chapter 24, the Lord presented a series of parables and stories to depict the rejection of the Jews concerning Christ as Messiah. Note that in verse 32 of chapter 24 it was the parable of The Fig Tree, and Jesus talked about how the fig tree when it produces leaves you know that summer is near. So when these things happen, that is verses 4 through 31 of chapter 24, when these things happen you know that His coming is near. But He goes on to say this generation will never pass away until all these things, that is all that He has presented in verses 4 through 31 should take place.

In verse 36 of chapter 24 Jesus talks about nobody knows the day or the hour that is going to come, **Even the angels of heaven do not know, but My Father only.** He is the only one who knows when that time is going to be, at Christ's second coming. He went on to talk about that as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be at the second coming of Christ. There will be life as usual, then suddenly Christ will come unexpectedly.

Notice the theme that the Lord is saying from verse 32 on of chapter 24. He says, **Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.** This is the key. Watch because you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. It is not a matter of watching up in the air and looking in the clouds for the Lord coming. To be watchful as we studied last week, to be watchful is to receive Christ. We will see that emphasized even more today. This is very important to carry on into chapter 25, same thing, same message, only a series of parables and stories to illustrate the same thing.

First of all, the parable of the ten virgins, that is verses 1 through 13 of chapter 25. Let us read these 13 verses. Matthew 25 verse 1, **Then the kingdom of Heaven will be likened to ten virgins who having taken their lamps, went out for a meeting of the bridegroom. And five from them were wise and five were foolish. The ones who were foolish having taking their lamps did not take oil with them.** I would say that is foolish, take a lamp and do not take any oil to make the lamp burn. **But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.** So they took extra oil in the vessel containers with their lamps. **But while the bridegroom was delaying, all became drowsy and were sleeping. And in the middle of night a cry had happened: Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.** That is, prepared their lamps to go out. **And the foolish said to the wise, Give to us from your oil, because our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, there should not be enough for us and for you. But rather, go to the ones selling and purchase for yourselves. But while they were going away to purchase, the bridegroom came. And the ones ready, there is the key. And the ones ready entered with him into the wedding feast, and the door was shut. And afterward, the rest of the virgins**

also came, saying, Lord, lord, open to us. But having answered, he said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. Therefore, watch, see, we have the same recurring theme, watch, because you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.

So we have the parable of the 10 virgins. It is only found here in the Bible. It is not found in any of the other Gospels. It is only found in Matthew, which means it is directed to the Jews. It is directed to the Jews, and we will see that in a moment. We will see how the steps of the Jewish wedding have to do with this parable.

There are seven steps of a Jewish wedding that I want to share with you to help us understand exactly what is going on in the parable.

- 1) First of all, the groom - the Jewish groom bargains with the father of the bride. He has to pay money for her. So he has to get together with the father of the bride and come up with an acceptable price.
- 2) Once they reach an agreement the future bride is brought in. This is point number two. And if she approves of it, she drinks from the covenant cup. All three of them drink out of the covenant cup, which means from that time forward they are engaged, or they are betrothed.
- 3) Thirdly, the groom goes back to his father's house to build their living quarters. It is built right off of the family home. And once the wedding takes place and they are now married they go back to his family's home and there will be living quarters there for them at the father's house.
- 4) Fourthly, the father of the groom decides when the living quarters are done and when he can go get his bride. So it can even be finished, this apartment on the side of the house can be finished and the father still say, "No it is not time, give it another month." It is whenever the father decides, and nobody knows when that is. You do not know the time or the hour. It has to be for a minimum of one year, we know that much. The groom can go get his bride whenever the father decides it is time.
- 5) Fifthly, when the marriage announcement is made the people who have already been invited to the wedding feast take their positions along the parade route. So, they get their invitations. They have a fixed position on the parade route, pre-positioned, so that when the procession files by they fall in line and form in the back of the parade. When it gets to the end it is one long parade. And when the announcement goes out, it is actually made by crier, somebody who cries aloud. He yells that the groom is coming for his bride.
- 6) Sixthly, when the groom reaches the bride's house he stands in the distance and blows the shofar, that is the trumpet, for the bride to come out and meet him. Now, I have a shofar. I have not played it in years. But I wanted to show you what these trumpets - it is not a trumpet like what we know a trumpet to be, but the shofar, the ram's horn is what the future groom blows. He stands at a distance, and he blows the shofar for the future

bride to come out and meet him. I am going to attempt to blow it. So he blows the shofar, and she comes out to greet him at the sound of the trumpet.

7) Seventhly, the parade goes back to the groom's house and the wedding feast begins. It takes seven days for the feast, sometimes as long as fourteen depending upon the royalty giving the feast. All the guests in the parade gather in the fellowship hall and the door is shut. Closed. This is not an open public meeting. Only the people invited to the wedding feast can participate in the parade. And only the people who participate in the parade can get into the wedding feast itself. So first of all you have to be invited to the wedding feast to participate in the parade, and secondly, you have to participate in the parade in order to get into the feast itself, or else you cannot get in. The door is shut to the open public.

So then we have The Parable of the 10 Virgins itself, we have our text for today. **Then the kingdom of Heaven will be likened to ten virgins who having taken their lamps, went out for a meeting of the bridegroom.** So they are taking their station along the parade route, and they took the lamps with them in case he comes at night, unexpectedly. **And five from them were wise and five were foolish. The ones who were foolish having taking their lamps did not take oil with them.** So if the bridegroom comes at night to get his bride they cannot participate. They have no oil in their lamps, they cannot see. **But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delaying,** see the announcement came that the procession is about ready to start, but there has been a delay. Obviously, the father has put a halt to it for now. **All became drowsy and were sleeping.** Nothing wrong with that. You got to sleep at night. **They became drowsy and were sleeping.**

The Cry of the Crier. **And in the middle of night a cry had happened: Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him.** That is what he said, that is what the crier said, **Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him.**

The Condition of the Oil verses 7 through 9. **Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, got their lamps ready. And the foolish said to the wise, Give to us from your oil, because our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, there should not be enough for us and for you. But rather, go to the ones selling and purchase for yourselves.** In other words, if we give you some of our extra there will not be enough for us. Go get for yourselves. Go to the ones who are selling the oil.

Verse 10, The Coming of the Bridegroom. **But while they were going away to purchase, the bridegroom came. And the ones ready,** and again I emphasize to you, that is the key. **But the ones ready entered with him into the wedding feast, and the door was shut.** That means they could not participate. They were in line in the procession but did not participate in the parade. Therefore, the parade was over. All the guests were inside the fellowship hall and the door was shut. No one else could enter.

The Consequences verses 11 and 12. **And afterward, the rest of the virgins also came, saying, Lord, lord, open to us. But having answered, he said, Truly I say to you, I do not**

know you. It is interesting that the requirement was not that the people at the door knew the Lord, but it is whether the Lord knew the people.

Jesus mentioned this before. In Matthew chapter 7 verses 21 through 23, He says, **Not everyone saying to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one doing the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name? And cast out demons in Your name? And in Your name do many works of power? Matthew 7:23, And then will I confess to them, I never knew you: depart from Me, the ones working lawlessness.** So again, it is not whether we know the Lord. It is whether the Lord knows us, what makes us belong to Him, shows whether He knows us or not. The person that belongs to Christ is somebody that Christ knows.

In Galatians chapter 4 verse 9 Paul says, **But now, after that you have known God or rather you are known by God,** you see he corrected himself. He is going to tell them that after you have come to know God you should be living a certain lifestyle. But he says, **After you came to know God, rather after God came to know you.**

In II Timothy 2:19 Paul says, **The Lord knows those who are His.** See, the Lord is the One who saves us. Me being a Christian or me belonging to Christ is not based on what I have done, it is based on the Lord. And it is the Lord who saved me and what makes me belong to Christ, He has given me His Spirit. That is what makes me belong to Christ.

We are making reference to Romans, three places in Romans chapter 8:

Romans chapter 8 verse 9 says, **If a person does not have the Spirit of Christ he does belong to Christ.**

In Romans 8:14 it says, **Those who are led by the Spirit of God of the children of God.**

Romans 8:16 says, **The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.**

It is all His witness. It is all His identity to us that makes us belong to Christ. He made Himself known to me first and that is how I know Him. He revealed Himself to me. And what makes me belong to Christ is He has given me His Spirit; He has saved me.

So again, The Consequences, **And afterward, the rest of the virgins also came, saying, Lord, lord, open to us. But having answered, he said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you.** It is not whether they knew Him. It is whether He knew them, whether they belonged to Him.

The Conclusion, verse 13, **Therefore, watch, because you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.** So, **Watch therefore.** You see again, it is the same message as verse 42 of chapter 24. **Watch.**

Notice about the steps of the Jewish wedding. The groom cannot get to his bride until the father decides. It might be completely finished, and the father may say, "Give it a month." It is up to the groom's father to decide when he goes to get his bride. So, the conclusion is, be watching. The five foolish virgins were not ready. They had no oil in their lamp and they were not ready for the coming of the Lord to come at night-time.

So in conclusion I want to point out something to you. Like I said at the beginning, this is found nowhere else in the Bible. It is a Jewish parable, not a Gentile parable. First of all, what this means in Jewish language, Hebrew language and Jewish culture, these symbols have a lot of meaning.

The number ten - both in Hebrew language and as far as Jewish culture goes - the number ten signifies completeness. Completeness. For instance, you need to have ten Jewish people in order to have a synagogue. If you have less than ten you do not have a synagogue. So we have ten virgins, you have the number of the completeness of the representation of the Jews. Completeness.

The term *virgin*, why ten *virgins* in the story? Because the virgins do not belong to anybody except for the Lord. So they are on His time, following Him.

What makes the difference between the wise and the foolish is the oil. That makes the difference. The oil in the Old Testament always signifies the Holy Spirit - always - which God said He would pour out upon His people.

So, all ten were virgins. You have a complete representation of the segment of the Jews. Five have oil and five do not. The five that do not are just like the evil servant at the end of chapter 23, where he says, "My Lord delays His coming." You see, it is having the oil that makes you ready, the oil being the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit is what saves people. Being born of the Spirit of God is what saves people. That is when Jesus knows us. It is not whether I with my head knowledge I know the Lord. It is whether He and His Spirit, He knows me and has made me personally His by Him coming into my heart and life.

Let's close with prayer.