

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Psalms, Proverbs & Parables
Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13)
based on “*The Oil That No One Sees*” by Jeremiah Knight
Drue Warner
8-2-26

Last Week – Psalm 78 – “*What’s God’s Story?*”

This Week – Matthew 25:1-13 – “*Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids*”

Recommended article, “*The Oil That No One Can See*” by Jeremiah Knight

- Additional commentary from Simon Kistemaker and R.C. Sproul

1 At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten bridesmaids (virgins, maidens, unmarried daughters, bridal party) who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

The parable/metaphor of marriage align perfectly with the imagery that is presented over and over in the Old Testament, Jesus, and the New Testament, and is the big picture for what is going on in this world.

- 1. AFFECTION:** A man “sets his love” on a young woman and decides to marry her (**Deut. 7, Psalm 90, Isaiah 35, Revelation 5**)
- 2. ENGAGEMENT / BETROTHAL:** He promises to marry her, and provide for her, and many other benefits (**Ephesians 5**)
- 3. PREPARATION:** He then goes away to build her a house for their marriage and expected family - *most often an extension of his father's house* (**John 14**)
- 4. WAITING:** During this "waiting time" the engaged woman is expected to make herself ready, remain faithful to her husband and wait for his return (**Ephesians 5**)
- 5. MARRIAGE FEAST PREPARATION:** The husband is also expected to arrange a marriage feast and ceremony, complete with invited guests (**Revelation 19**)
- 6. BRIDEGROOM RETURNS / WEDDING:** The husband returns at an unexpected time to claim his bride and enjoy the wedding feast (**Matthew 24**)
- 7. EVER AFTER:** After the wedding, the husband takes the new bride to the home he has just completed to live with him (**Revelation 21**)

SIMILARITIES

- All ten bridesmaids were in the wedding party.
- All ten carried lamps that were lit and burning
- All ten fell asleep waiting

This parable is not about the differences between Believers and non-Believers (so to speak) but between those who claim to be Believers. For all intents and purposes, everything was the same (at least on the surface).

DIFFERENCES

But there was a difference, and it was something that no one could see... oil.

"For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps" - Matthew 25:3-4.

The lamp was public. The flask was private. In the darkness, everyone could see what was in the lamps, but no one could see what was in the flasks. And there is the whole parable in a single picture.

MEANING

- **LAMP** – the outward life (i.e., testimony of faith, church attendance, acts of service, etc.)
- **FLASK** – the hidden life before God
- **OIL** – inward reality of genuine spiritual life produced by the Holy Spirit

When I read this parable, I felt like it had exposed my empty flask of oil. My flask was dry, I was vulnerable, and I was in need. And knowing that, was a gift of God's grace.

Two people can carry identical lamps and only God knows which flask is empty.

Every one of us carries a flask. The only question that matters is whether there is anything in it.

- It's the difference between, *"I'm here for the party vs. I'm here for the wedding."*
(greed) (love)
- *"The thing about Christianity is it's easy to fake."* – Steve Brown

Now watch what exposed the difference, because this is the hinge of the parable.

"Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep" - Matthew 25:5.

- **Not persecution, not scandal, not argument. Simple, uneventful, grinding time. ... Delay**
- *"The foolish virgins were equipped for a short wait and a quick celebration, and if the bridegroom had come early, their emptiness might never have been exposed at all. But he delayed, and the delay did what delays always do, it outlasted everything that was not real. This is the searching truth our generation of instant decisions and raised hands needs to hear."*
– Jeremiah Knight

Time tests profession.

- The seed on the rocky ground sprang up immediately, and the same sun that made the rooted plant grow scorched the rootless one, *"and since they had no root, they withered away"* Mark 4:5-6.
- **Endurance** reveals true faith.
"We glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance (endurance); perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." – Romans 5:3-5
- **Crisis compresses time's testing into a single hour**
Situations of distress reveal what's in the flask.
 - **Not, "What's in your wallet?" but "What's in your flask?"**
Is your flask filled with God's Spirit, another one of the many spirits we can run to for satisfaction, or is it empty?

6 At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

7 Then all the bridesmaids (virgins) woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 9 "No," they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

- We see here that each person must carry their own supply of oil. In the same way that oil cannot be borrowed, neither can faith.
- This was not selfishness. It was impossibility. Faith cannot be shared.
 - You can't borrow faith from a parent, spouse, child, friend, pastor, neighbor, or anyone else. It must be yours.
- There are many people who claim to be Believers and think they're "saved," but the reality is that their entire spiritual confidence is borrowed. They've never had a faith of their own. There is no oil in their flask.
- They're riding the faith coat-tails of their parents, church activity, the emotion of a worship experience, the prayers of a spouse, etc.

10 But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The bridesmaids (virgins) who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

- **The door was shut.**
 - Four words that should sober every soul that keeps postponing reality. There will be a time when there are no second changes.

- This was the case in Noah's day (Gen. 6-9) when God shut the door.
- **"Behold! Today is the day of salvation!" – 2 Corinthians 6:2**
- **"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim." – Romans 10:8**
- **What is faith?** Trusting God. Yielding to His Lordship. Humility. Surrender.

And then the most chilling exchange in the parable...

11 Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!' 12 "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.' 13 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

- The final tragedy of the foolish virgin is not a missed feast but a missing relationship. The bridesmaids were near the bridegroom's company all along but they were never known by the bridegroom Himself.
- Eternal life is not about being religious. It is being known (by Christ).
 - *"If anyone loves God, he is known by Him." - 1 Corinthians 8:3.*
- The reason Jesus told this parable was to drive home his teaching in Matthew 24:13 to **"Keep watch (be on alert), because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."**
- The command for "watchfulness" is about having "oil in your lamp."
 - **Believe + Receive = Become**
"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." – John 1:12
 - **Confess + Believe = Saved**
"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." – Romans 10:9

CONCLUSION

For the 5 Bridesmaids in this parable, the hour had come, they missed the bridegroom, they were locked out of the feast, and it was over. But, that's NOT the case for us!

The oil that cannot be borrowed can still be sought from the Giver Himself.

- **"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." – James 4:8**

Where do we get the oil for our lamps? There's only one place to go... Jesus. Go to Christ, confess your empty flask, and ask for Him to fill you up. He will!

- *"He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." - 1 John 5:12*

And when you go to God, He has promised, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit (the oil) within you." - Ezekiel 36:26-27

Romans 5:6-8, 11 tells us, "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

And THAT'S Good News!