

# A Journey with Christ the Messiah

## The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

**Matthew 25:1-13**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This morning we are continuing a series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. In the last several weeks we have embarked on a journey through both the Old and the New Testaments with the purpose of discovering Christ the Messiah that is written there. This morning we are going to look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins. We have a stern warning here from the Lord in this parable beginning in Matthew 25.

### All Stand and Read Scripture

Matthew 25:1-13 (NASB)

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were (wise) prudent. <sup>3</sup> For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the (wise) prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and *began* to sleep. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet *him*.’ <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the (wise) prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup> But the (wise) prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup> And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ <sup>12</sup> But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup> Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

### Prayer

**Let's continue the journey!**

This is another of Jesus' parables. Parables were used of our Lord to communicate a heavenly truth using an earthly example. This parable was given to the people of Israel, but there is application and instruction for each of us. In this parable we can see a picture of the church. We all know that Jesus is coming to call for His bride, and only those who are prepared will be invited to join in the Marriage Supper.

This parable is speaking of the second coming of Jesus Christ which is a glorious event. Christians look forward to the second coming of Christ. But we also tend to forget that the second coming of Christ is a terrifying warning. Just as it is a glorious hope for the true Christian, it is also a terrifying warning to the unsaved.

The fact that we do not know the day or the hour that the Lord is coming again is a great warning to those who profess the name of Christ to be prepared for His return.

Just prior to our text this morning, Jesus gives warning that He is coming again at a time that no one knows.

## ILLUSTRATION:

A priest and pastor were standing by the side of the road holding up a sign that read, "The End is near! Turn around before it's too late!"

A passing motorist yelled out his window, "Leave us alone, you religious nuts!" as he flew by. From around the curve they heard the screeching of tires and a big splash.

"Do you think," said one clergy to the other, "we should just put up a sign that says 'BRIDGE OUT' instead?"

As we will see in this parable, many find themselves in a state of complacency in regard to Christ's return. We live in a day where many are presenting a universal acceptance, with little regard for the teachings of the Bible. We have found ourselves in a day of many **professors** of the faith, but few **possessors** of the faith. Many have a form of godliness, a form of morality, but they refuse to surrender themselves in order to possess a true faith. Salvation involves much more than a religious experience, there must have been a day when we saw ourselves as a sinner and lost before God and cried out unto the Lord for salvation. I want to examine the eternal truths of this passage and preach on a phrase in the text from the King James Version: "**Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh**". As we consider this parable, I trust you will examine your heart to see where you stand with the Lord.

## BODY:

### I. THE TEN VIRGINS.

Jesus begins His parable with a detailed look at those involved. Each of us is seen in one of these groups.

Matthew 25:1 (NASB)

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

We find that there were ten virgins. Each had their own lamp. These maidens were all morally and physically pure. As far as those who knew them could tell, they were pretty much the same. They had lived a good life and resisted the temptations of the flesh. They were virgins! Each had a lamp, which represents their personal testimony. No doubt these young ladies would have felt good about the life they had lived. They had lived a moral life.

There is a great truth to be learned here. All of these virgins represented a **professing** Christian that fully expected to meet the bridegroom, **which is a picture of the second coming of Christ**. We should all live a pure life before the Lord, but as we will see, there must be more than our works and the testimony that we carry before others. We must

know Jesus in a personal way. There must be a time when you were born again. Living a good life cannot bring salvation!

All ten of the virgins took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. In that day after the marriage ceremony, virgins would meet the wedding party with lamps lit to light the way for them. They all expected to have the opportunity to be included in the wedding party's festivities.

Do you see a resemblance to the world in which we live? It seems that everyone we meet is "saved;" they all proclaim that they are going to heaven when they die. Everyone expects to meet the Lord and be accepted of Him. They are all carrying the lamp of their testimony. Well I've lived a good life, I attend church, I've been baptized, I pay my tithes, and I hope that the Lord is pleased with the life I've lived. Salvation is not a "hope so" situation; it is a matter of **knowing** that you have been saved!

To those who knew them, the virgins were all acceptable. There was little difference in them from a worldly perspective, but Jesus knew more than the world could see. Five of them were wise; they had oil in their vessels for their lamps. Five were foolish, having no oil for their lamps.

Matthew 25:2-4 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. <sup>3</sup> For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

This is what makes all the difference in eternity. **Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit.** Five were filled with the Holy Spirit and five were not. Those who have the Spirit within belong unto the Lord. Those who are not filled with the Spirit have no part in Him, regardless of the life they live. We fall into one of two categories – **saved or lost**. There is no middle ground. We have either trusted Christ in salvation or we remain lost in our sin.

John 10:14-15 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup> even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Is there oil in your lamp? Do you know the Lord?

As the bridegroom tarried, the virgins slept and slumbered. They all slept while waiting on the bridegroom. It is apparent that they were confident and complacent with the preparations they had made to meet him. They had no doubt they would hear the call and be ready to meet him.

Sadly this is a picture of many in our day. There seems to be little difference in the church and the world. The church seems to have fallen asleep. We should all be working, striving to reach the lost and serve the Lord in these last days. There is little being done to sound the alarm. The lost have been lulled to sleep by the doctrines of **"easy believism"** being taught in our day. They have been deceived by the desire to boost attendance and add numbers, but there has been no change in the heart.

It is time to wake out of sleep and take a careful look at where we stand. Christian have you done all that He has asked of you? Church member, are you certain of your salvation? Jesus is coming; don't depend on an assumption, obtain real assurance!

## II. THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

Here Jesus reveals the distress of those who were caught with no oil in their lamps.

Matthew 25:5-6 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup> Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and *began* to sleep. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet *him*.'

Notice: While they all slept, the bridegroom arrived. The call went out that he was coming and it was time to go out and meet him. This was the moment they were all awaiting to arrive! . When he came there was no time to make any further preparations. Those who were ready would have a part, while those who were not would be left behind.

Sadly the foolish virgins delayed too long. They slept when they should have been obtaining oil and watching for his return. There is coming a day when the Lord will step out on the clouds and call for His bride. Those who are saved are going to be caught up in the air to meet Him. Those who have delayed their preparation will be left behind to face the Tribulation of God. Now is the time to prepare!

2 Corinthians 6:2b (NASB)

Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"—

You have already seen the last sunrise that you are **guaranteed** to see. Jesus may come at any moment! Are you ready should He come today?

Matthew 25:7-9 (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.'

When it came time for their lights to shine, the foolish virgins had no oil in their lamps. They had not made the necessary provisions to meet the bridegroom. In their despair they sought the oil of the others, but there wasn't enough oil for two lamps. The wise had oil, but the foolish did not. It was impossible to obtain oil from the others.

There is a tremendous lesson here. My salvation is only sufficient for me. It is never good enough for my wife, my children, or my friends. Each of us must make the necessary provisions to ensure that there is oil in our lamp. It makes no difference how faithful others were to the Lord. Salvation is a personal experience with each and every believer. You have the responsibility to secure your own salvation! You will never make it to heaven on someone else's "coat tails." The question remains – is there oil in your lamp?

The foolish virgins lay sleeping, confident that they would have plenty of time to secure more oil if it was needed. When the bridegroom came they frantically searched for somewhere to buy the precious oil. They assumed that there would be plenty available whenever they needed it. Sadly the time had come and they were found without any oil.

Jesus is coming and only those who have oil in their lamps are going in. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who will receive it, but it cannot be purchased with money or works. We are saved by grace through faith, not of our works. Jesus is the only source of salvation. He alone supplies the oil!

### III. THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

In this we see a representation of the coming of our Lord for His bride. On that day, the curtain of our lives will be pulled away. We will stand as we are before the Lord Himself. Let's consider the response of the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:10 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

As the foolish virgins were away seeking oil, the wise were received into the marriage celebration with the door being shut behind. The bridegroom received those who were prepared to meet him. Jesus will one day come for His own and those who belong to Him will be ushered into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. All of the saved and only the saved will be found at this gathering. I rejoice that I have made preparations for that day. We are promised a place at the wedding in the sky!

Matthew 25:11-12 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' <sup>12</sup> But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

The response to the foolish virgins was completely different. As they came and found the door shut, the foolish virgins began to knock at the door. They knew they were late because of their lack of oil and pleaded to be let in. The bridegroom answered: "I do not know you". Those who were not prepared were left outside the door. It made no difference how much they pleaded. They missed their opportunity and were not allowed in.

As I thought of this occasion my mind went back to the days of Noah. The ark represented the salvation of the Lord and God sealed the ark. Those safe inside could not be brought out, and those without were not let in. Can you imagine the horror of such a time? Don't be as these were, begging outside the door to be let in. Jesus spoke of that time in...

Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB)

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Jesus closes this parable with application for every generation.

Matthew 25:13 (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

We must not be as the foolish virgins in this parable. We are to watch with anticipation for the coming of our Lord. We don't know the day nor the hour, **but** we must be ready. Now is the time to ensure that you have oil for your lamp to burn. If you wait until the Lord returns it will be too late.

**CONCLUSION:**

Each of us is represented in this parable. You either have oil in your lamp or not. If Jesus were to come today, would He find your lamp trimmed and burning? Do you know without a **doubt** that you belong to Him?

The scriptures tell us how to receive the "oil" that Jesus speaks about of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

When Peter had proclaimed to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost that they had crucified the Son of God, the Messiah, they were devastated when they realized what they had done! Standing brokenhearted before Peter, they asked him, "**What must we do to be saved?**"

Acts 2:38,41 (NASB)

<sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

...<sup>41</sup> So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Three thousand souls had received the miracle of forgiveness of their sins and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives that day. Peter was repeating to the Jews what Jesus had taught the disciples before He ascended to Heaven.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Paul explained to the Romans exactly what happens when we are immersed in baptism.

Romans 6:3-11 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.

<sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Paul explains that when you follow Christ's command to believe and trust in His promises, repent, and are immersed in baptism, a **miracle** occurs in your life. Just as Christ died and was buried, you die to your old worldly self and your sins are buried. Just as Christ rose from the dead out of the grave, you also raise from your death of sin from the waters of baptism into a new life in Christ free from sin. At that time you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (the oil for your lamp). **You must be born again!**

This is salvation is a free gift from God given to you because of your faith in God and not because of your works. There is nothing that we can do on this earth to earn the free gift of salvation. It is given freely to us when we hear and obey His commands.

As we will learn in next week's parable of the talents, **our salvation is not gained by works**, but our salvation is a **salvation that works** (or labors for the Lord) because of our love for God.

I read earlier from John 10 about the good shepherd. I would like to read it again and add verse 16.

John 10:14-16 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup>even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Here is what I want you to hear!

<sup>16</sup>I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

God is patiently waiting for all of His sheep to come to the fold. Jesus **is** coming again!

In this parable, five were filled with the Holy Spirit and five were not. Those who have the Spirit within belong unto the Lord. Those who are not filled with the Spirit have no part in Him, regardless of the life they live. We fall into one of two categories – **saved or lost**. There is no middle ground. We have either trusted Christ in salvation or we remain lost in our sin.

Do you have oil in your lamp? Do you know the Lord?

He stands waiting to save you today. This is why we read and study God's Word. This is why we get up on Sunday morning and attend church. **To be prepared for Christ's return!** I urge you to accept His call today!

**He is Lord!**