

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOV 28TH-29TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

BRIDESMAIDS (MATTHEW 25:1-13)

5 WISE AND 5 FOOLISH

The wise bridesmaids "took oil in their flasks with their lamps," but the foolish ones didn't fill up on the substance needed to keep their light on. This wasn't just **irresponsible**, it was **disrespectful** to the Groom. **We tend to live for ourselves. In our irresponsibility, we show disrespect to the King that is preparing a place for us.**

THEY COULD AFFORD TO GET SOME REST

The sleep mentioned does not imply spiritual laziness. Because the wise bridesmaids had prepared, they could afford to fall "asleep." But, the foolish ones still needed to prepare.

- This is very practical. **If we are full of "oil" (relationship with God) we can find peace and rest in all corners of our lives.**

WHAT DO WE DO IN THE DELAY?

The "delay" mentioned by Jesus is the time period between His resurrection and His return. When in "the middle of the night" we hear "Here's the Groom! Come out to meet Him," will we have been prepared? The "oil" characterizes **a relationship** with God. **Are we filling our lives with the things of God and preparing to see Him?**

PREPARATION CAN BE TAUGHT BUT NOT SHARED

The foolish bridesmaids asked for some of the "oil" from the wise ones, but were told that they had to acquire it themselves. This simply means that **salvation is dependent on our personal relationship with Jesus, and the righteousness of others cannot be transferred to us. Shifting blame will not work either.**

"TRULY I TELL YOU, I DON'T KNOW YOU!"

The wise bridesmaids were happy to see the Master because they knew Him. But, because the foolish ones were **self-centered and didn't know the Master**, they missed the banquet.

- The ultimate questions in life are "Do we know Him?" and "Does He know us?"

INVESTMENTS (MATTHEW 25:14-30)

A MAN SETS OUT ON A JOURNEY

This 2nd parable is also about preparation, but with a focus on what we do with our time, talent, and resources.

- **In the time between Jesus' ascension and His coming back, all people are entrusted with resources.** When we mishandle these resources (our lives), this makes God angry.

WE ARE ALL UNIQUE IN WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER

The servants were given different "talents" based on "ability." This lets us know that **God knows us and what we're capable of. No one is given more or less than they can handle.**

- We're entrusted with **time, spiritual gifts, personalities, material resources, and talents** that God intends for use in His kingdom.

LEARNING TO BE OBEDIENT

Many people don't invest their resources well because they are selfish, others don't out of fear of failure and the "risk" involved in getting invested into others.

- **Christians are called to be obedient even when it looks risky. This isn't taking foolish chances, but knowing and applying the principles of God's Word.**

GOD FAITHFULLY HONORS THE FAITHFUL

The faithful servants that put their "talents" to work for God's kingdom were faithfully rewarded, regardless of how much or little they had to work with in this life.

- The question should not be "Are we the most gifted?," but **"Are we being faithful with what God has given us?"** If we are, God will reward us for our obedience.

ONE DAY OUR ACCOUNTS WILL BE SETTLED

The 1st and 2nd servant used their "talents" wisely and for the Master, but the 3rd one "hid" the Master's talent and never did anything with what had been entrusted to him.

- Not only will we be held accountable for how we use our resources, but **we will also face judgment for being spiritually passive. We are commanded by Christ to be active.**

IT GOES BACK TO THE WHY

The servant that passively hid his talent did so because he feared the wrath of the Master.

- **If we are more concerned about a fear of Hell than a love for our Creator, we will be immobile and displeasing to God.** It goes back to the motive of why we're here.

"...GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SERVANT"

Because the 3rd servant lived in fear and self-preservation, he was thrown out (hell) and his inheritance was given away to faithful servants.

- Real talk. Have you ever noticed how many meaningless lives are around us? **It is not that people aren't valuable, but that they live in a way that demonstrates no value.**

JUDGEMENT (MATTHEW 25:31-46)

THE GREAT SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The 1st and 2nd parables talked about judgment for unprepared people, but the 3rd parable highlights the return of Jesus seen by all people at the end of time.

THIS PARABLE BUILDS OFF V26

The main focus of this parable is to remind the Christian that we have a mission before He returns to judge humanity. Failure to use our gifts and be passive is the **sin of omission (not doing something)**. Using our lives just to glorify ourselves is the **sin of commission (doing what is wrong)**. Both are equally evil.

WE ARE NOT SAVED FROM WORKS, BUT...

Some people will take this parable to mean that we're saved by works of social justice, and that is not true (Eph. 2:8-9), but **after we're saved by grace we should be producing good works that honor the Father (Mt. 5:15-16)**. This reference about living in **obedience**.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A "SHEEP?"

It's not social justice, but an obedience to Christ that makes one a true follower of the Shepherd. **Following Jesus begins with building a personal relationship with Him, but eventually evolves into serving others as well.**

"THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL ANSWER HIM..."

The true follower of Christ lives in **righteousness**. This means having a relationship with God and following the standards of the Bible. To be righteous is **not just knowing what is good or only doing what feels good, it is applying the principles of God's kingdom to every facet of our daily lives. It is submitting to Jesus' authority.**

THE "LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS AND SISTERS"

Because of the "sheep's" love of God, they also loved and served people.

- The "least" isn't always the poor and imprisoned. In our culture it can be the wealthy, the racist, or **whomever society has deemed worthless. These are to be included in the people the church loves.**

AND WE WILL BE REWARDED

God honors our commitment to Him and to His greatest creation, humanity. If we have a **genuine relationship with God and love others as we love ourselves**, we inherit eternal life with a perfect Creator.

- This is not an easy task, but **if we can keep pushing forward God will bless us.**

BUT FOR THE REBELLIOUS AND SELF-SERVING...

The "sheep" follow the Shepherd, but the "goats" wander aimlessly doing whatever they want to do. If the faithful are rewarded, the faithless and selfish receive punishment.

- **When people fail to follow God they also fail to properly love His most prized creation, and when people neglect and hurt others, God gets angry.**

SPIRITUALLY MYOPIC / LOOKING FURTHER AND DEEPER

There are only 2 eternal destinies for people; eternal punishment or eternal life. Think about the phrase **"came and settled accounts"** in v19. This is a sobering reminder that one day God will thoroughly examine and hold accountable, by His standards, every person that has ever lived on planet earth. Our problem is that we are so caught up in the moment or our culture that we fail to see long distance. We tend to become **spiritually static** because of selfishness, distractions, hectic schedules, or simply making ends meet, and **in our myopic and static lifestyles we hurt ourselves and the people around us**. Think about the phrase, **"Truly I tell you, I don't know you!"** That should deeply disturb us because people that don't know Jesus will not live forever with Him! We are told to prepare ourselves and to do all we can to love people so they will see God in us and know Him as well. **We must be alert today in preparation for eternity.**

- Are there sins of commission that hinder our faith that we need to address? Have we been guilty of sins of omission?
- What are we doing today, this week, this year to build a relationship with God? Are we biblically loving people, even the most despised and marginalized?