

Matthew 25:1-13

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13 Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Jesus provides us with several lessons on the responsibilities of believers in Matthew chapter 25. It is a continued lesson that is carried over from chapter 24 about the coming of the Son of Man when Jesus will return in all of his power and glory. We do not know when this will be and it is not meant for us to know when this will be. In the parable of the wise and reckless slaves Jesus demonstrates the necessity of watchfulness. There are two courses of action. The wise do not try to compute time; they simply follow the instructions of Jesus. They do what they were told to do. The reckless are complacent and ignore the fact that they are accountable for their actions.

In chapter 25, Jesus paints a picture of the heavenly realm with three major lessons; the parable of 10 virgins, the parable of talents, and the separation of the sheep and the goats. Each one of these lessons is well known and each one is very meaningful. In the parable of the 10 virgins, the bridegroom is Jesus. He is the reason for everything that is happening. It is his party. The bridesmaids represent the audience. Their role is one of responsibility and calling. It is a very important position to be in. Their charge is to provide the light until the groom arrives. The charge to us is to provide the light for the Lord until her arrives. The wise and faithful are ready for the arrival of the groom. They are prepared. The foolish are stuck, they are not ready and have run out of time to get ready. The key point is preparedness and this is not transferable to one that is not prepared.

Today's lesson is on the significance of preparedness and the consequences of not being ready. Matthew chapter 25 is a personal favorite biblical chapter of mine. Jesus is giving us some juicy insight into the heavenly realm. There is a contrast between human expectations and God's expectations. The parables of Jesus provide us with valuable lessons. These lessons put things in perspective that are currently unknown to us in a realistic way that we can do. These are among the most important lessons of all. There is a contrast between assuming one is righteous and actually being righteous in the eyes of God.

In the example provided for us by Jesus, the 10 bridesmaids are there to greet the groom. Their presence is very important and so is their degree of preparation. The 5 smart ones are prepared and have extra oil. The 5 foolish did not prepare. The groom arrives at a time that is later than what is expected and they all fall asleep. Finally, at a very late hour, the groom

approaches. The foolish beg for oil but none is available. They had to go out and get the oil. While they were gone, the groom arrives but only those that are prepared are allowed entry.

This lesson is very serious. It is not just the audience that Jesus is addressing – Jesus is teaching us. Notice his response. “I do not know you.” That is harsh! The beauty of the lesson is in understanding the position of the unprepared. They know the groom. They believe in Jesus. They know he is coming. They assume that they are prepared and will be able to get in. The danger is in the assumption. They assumed they were right but they did not take the time to make sure they were right due to their assumption. The response from Jesus is very hard. “I do not know you.”

Jesus is faced with a problem. It is not the delay of the groom but the attitude of the unprepared. They thought they were ready, they thought they were right, but when they realized they were wrong it was too late. All the people there know who the groom is. All the people involved think they are ready. All of them know he is coming and think they are right. However, out of all the believers, some fail to provide the light. They start off providing the light, but at the most important time, when the light is needed, they stopped providing the light.

In this particular case, the problem that Jesus is facing is the attitude of complacency within the Christian community. The attitude of complacency can be resolved with a life of active devotion. It is necessary for all of the followers of Jesus to devote their lives to prayer, Bible study, and care of humanity. It is necessary for all of the followers of Jesus to be active in one way or another for supporting the Lord’s mission. The Scripture speaks to us today. It hits in the heart. The charge of the bridesmaids is to provide the light. We are charged to provide the Lord’s light and according to Jesus, we cannot afford to get it wrong.

When your time comes you do not want to be face to face with Lord and hear the words “I do not know you.” Look around at the world today. See the reality of the Scripture; absent are the majority of confessed believers that have stopped shining the light. You have to be ready. The wise are ready to enter the glorious kingdom because they live by the instructions of Jesus. I encourage anyone and everyone to read and study Matthew chapter 25.