

## Are You Ready for Jesus - Matthew 25:1-13

The grace, mercy, and peace of Christ Jesus rest upon each and every one of you this morning.

Amen

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Dear Christian Friends,

Our text today is about our life's journey on the road to heaven. It is about the life of faith. It is about that lamp that is the heart of every man, woman, and child, which is faith. It is about that heart being ready for the coming of the Lord or not. It is about whether that heart of faith is full of the oil of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, or whether it is empty.

So, ARE YOU READY FOR JESUS?"

Jesus uses an illustration from everyday life in Palestine to teach us about His 2nd coming. That illustration is a Jewish wedding. In Jesus' day when a couple got married there was a religious ceremony of betrothal which legally bound the man and woman together as husband and wife. Weeks later, the bridegroom went to the house of his bride in order to bring her to his home. The bride's attendants would go out and meet the groom and escort him to his bride. They carried lamps on poles which burned brightly to light the way and to provide festive lighting for this happy occasion.

In our text our Lord divides these ten ladies into two groups and He puts a label on them. Five of them he calls wise. Five of them he calls foolish. This label has nothing to do with their IQ, but this label does have everything to do with their preparation for the bridegroom's arrival. Not one of these ladies knew when the groom was coming, but five of them made sure they would be ready no matter when he come. They had brought along extra oil for their lamps. That's why Jesus calls them wise. The other five had only the oil that was in their lamps and that was it. Because they were not prepared for a late arrival of the groom, Jesus calls them foolish.

Our text says: The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. Then comes this sudden announcement at midnight: "**Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!**" That announcement woke everybody up, but now there is an oil shortage. Only the wise bridesmaids had enough oil with their extra supply to greet this bridegroom. The lamps of the five foolish bridesmaids are empty. The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out." But that was impossible, for we read: "**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."

My friends, Jesus is speaking to us in this parable. He is the bridegroom and He is going to

return to this planet to claim His bride, the believers who make up His holy Christian Church. No one but the Lord himself knows when that day will be. No fortune teller, no newspaper, no religious leaders, can predict when Judgment Day will come. But it is coming. And for both believer and unbelievers it will be an unexpected surprise. All of us will be going about our daily lives. We may be sitting in school or out on the gym floor or lying on the beach or playing outside with our friends. We may be out working in the fields or the factory or the office. We may be in our homes setting the table for dinner or washing the dishes or sleeping in our beds.

While we are doing those things, Jesus Christ will return to our world in all his glory surrounded by his holy angels. All those who are in the graves will hear His voice and come out. The souls of the damned and the souls of the saved will re-enter their bodies. Jesus will put back together and glorify each body of every person who has ever fallen asleep in Him. All those have been raised and all those still alive when he returns will publicly be judged. From Jesus' lips will come the sentence for all to hear of an eternity in hell upon those who did not believe in Him. From Jesus' lips will come the announcement for all to hear of an eternity in heaven to those who embraced Him as their Savior.

On that great day the world's history will end and everything in it will be destroyed by fire. This is the undeniable truth that the Holy Scriptures, proclaims to us all. Jesus once made a comparison of this great event with another great event in history. I believe we would all do well to hear that comparison this morning. Jesus tells us: "As it was in the days of Noah, so also it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood came, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away."

This is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. What Jesus is talking about is a society that did not want to listen to Noah. They were all wrapped up in this world and in themselves. The Lord was not a part of their lives and they could have care less. And so that Flood not only shocked and surprised them. It also destroyed them.

The Lord Jesus will come, the Bible says, like a thief in the night. He will take the world by surprise just like the Flood did back in Noah's day. It looks a lot like Noah's day right now, doesn't it? Is North America getting ready for Jesus or is it all wrapped up in itself, out-earning, out-dressing, out-playing, and out-sinning the rest of the world. How ironic it is that North America that is so blessed and so able to produce so many good things, can at the same time turn out some of the most corrupt, violent, and immoral of human beings!

People kill other people without regards of their lives. Waves of crime in the streets have become commonplace. Family and home are broken done as marriage vows once spoken in earnest, are flung aside at the drop of a hat. Children are no longer taught to be respectful and obedient, but instead take their lead from smart-aleck Bart Simpson. More and more people proudly trust their own wisdom and arrogantly have fashioned God into their own image.

Yes, Noah's day and ours are not all that different. Jesus will be coming back soon! Are you ready for Jesus? "Keep watch!" Jesus says, "because you do not know the day or the hour." But our Lord does not leave us hanging with just this one thought of an unexpected and surprise visit to end history. In this parable, our Jesus also teaches us how to prepare for His last visit to the earth. We read: "But while they were on their way to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut."

The bridegroom took the five prepared bridesmaids, in with Him to the wedding banquet. Meanwhile the five foolish girls were at the store buying oil. When they came back from the store it was too late. The door had been slammed shut and they had been locked out. But worse than that, when these women begged the bridegroom to still let them in, he told them: "I tell you the truth, I do I do not know you".

What does it mean to prepare for the return of the Jesus Christ? Our Lord says: "Make sure you have oil in your lamp!" This oil is not produced by Texaco or Exxon. This oil is made and maintained by God the Holy Spirit! This oil is called faith. Faith in Jesus as the only Savior there is from sin - that's what prepares any sinner for Jesus' return. The sinners who have that kind of oil, not just on the day they were baptized or the day they were confirmed, but sinners who have that oil in their hearts and lives until their existence on this earth comes to an end, those are the men and women and children who will sit down with this Bridegroom at an eternal wedding reception called heaven.

Friends, Jesus tells us here that everyone is responsible for themselves. We cannot borrow oil from Mom or Dad, or Grandma or Grandpa or from our spouse, daughter, son or a friend on Judgment Day. Each of us will stand or we will fall with our own faith or lack of it. Have you checked your oil lately? If Jesus comes back today or if you should die before He returns, are you ready for Jesus? Are you truly concerned about your daily sins and your standing with almighty God? Do you feel that you need forgiveness? Or are you satisfied just to be a church member, but your heart is empty and cold and your relationship with the Lord is strained?

If that be the case with any person here, please repent of such indifference and such pride and humbly embrace Jesus as your loving and forgiving Savior once again. He will take you back,

no questions asked! But do that today, because tomorrow may be too late. Have you been reading your Bible daily, praying or attending a Bible study where you learn more and more about God's love for you through Jesus Christ; have you be attending worship regularly and joyfully and frequently and eagerly receiving the Lord's Supper so that you may always have a never failing supply of faith in your heart and life?

If that's not the way you have been treating Word and Sacrament, just maybe it's time you started. Are you living you life out there according to that Word so that when Jesus returns He will find you faithfully waiting for him? If you're not, today is the day to start living that way. Do you know someone right now who is not ready for Jesus to come back? If you do, what are you doing about it? Maybe it is that friend or neighbor who never goes to church anymore. Maybe it is a son or daughter or someone else in your own family who has forgotten about the promise they made on confirmation day. Now is the time to sit down and gently talk to them about Jesus and urge them to come back to his family again.

Tomorrow may be too late. Jesus has shown us in this parable what will happen to those who are not ready when He returns. The door of heaven will be slammed shut forever. To those without the oil of faith, Jesus will have to say: **"I tell you the truth, I don't know you." ...Depart from me you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and all his angels."**

Our merciful Lord God has given to me and to everyone hearing my voice a most precious gift. We call it time. One day that precious gift will end on this earth. Who knows how many of us will still be here to worship in this building next week or if this will be history's last worship service at Grace. My dear friends, let's use this precious gift of time wisely. Let's get ready and let's stay ready to meet Jesus, our Savior! Amen

Father in heaven keeps the lamp of our faith filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit so we will be ready when our Jesus Christ comes to take us home on the Last Day. Amen