

"BE READY FOR JESUS" - Matthew 25:1-13

The Gospel of Matthew 25:1-13, which I read before is the text for meditation for this morning. We begin our meditation in the name of Jesus. Amen

My dear friends, Wednesday, November 11 is Remembrance Day. "That is day we take time to commemorate those in the armed forces, past and present who have made countless sacrifices during times of war and conflict, and continue to serve during times of peace. We honour these men and women and take time to appreciate their service, their sacrifice, and, most importantly, their contributions toward peace."

Our sermon for this morning speak to believers to be ready and prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is appropriate to illustrate my meditation using soldiers as an example. "Soldiers in all armies need to go through basic training. They need to be prepared both mentally and physically when they report for duty. The aim of their training is to build up physical fitness and confidence; training help you how to develop patience, instil discipline and obedience; and teach the fundamental military skills necessary to function in the army."

So as believers in Christ you and I need to be ready before Jesus's return. God's Word before us would teach us Why we would want to be ready and also How.

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 and sometimes months 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 Jesus describes to us ten such bridesmaids who went out to greet a certain bridegroom as he arrived for his wedding reception. Our Lord divides these ten ladies into two groups and he puts a label on them. Five of them he calls **wise**. The others five 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 came. 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. They were not prepared for a late arrival of the groom. Jesus calls them foolish.

What Jesus Christ is telling to all believers is that He is the bridegroom and He is going to return to this earth 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 media, no newspaper, no religious

leader, 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 just having a conversation 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 or couches.

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 this 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 fell asleep having faith in Him. All those who have been raised and all those still alive when He returns will publicly be judged. From Jesus' lips will come the sentence of eternal condemnation to those who rejected and 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 history of the world will end and everything in it will be destroyed by fire. This is the undeniable truth that the Bible, proclaims to us all.

Jesus once made a comparison of this great event with another great event in history. He speaks about this in chapter 24 from Matthew. Let us hear this comparison. **"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 here is a society that did not want to listen to Noah, the preacher of righteousness. They were all wrapped up in its society and in themselves. The Lord was not a part of their lives and they cared less. And so that Flood not only shocked and surprised them. It also destroyed them.

Friends, we believers need to be prepared as soldiers or firefighters prepare mentally and physically in order to report to duties. 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 our world getting ready for Jesus or is it all wrapped up in itself, out-earning, out-dressing, out-playing, and out-sinching. How ironic it is that countries that are 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! 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 they take their lead from show programs which lack of morality. 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!" he 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 and be ready for His last visit to the earth.

Friends, 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 Petro-Canada. This oil is manufactured 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.

Jesus tells us in our text that everyone is responsible for themselves. On Judgment Day we cannot borrow oil from Mom or Dad, or Grandma or Grandpa or from our spouse. 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? Is your religion real and genuine? 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 or any person who is watching us from home, 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 and studying God's Word through Bible Studies; 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 is time you start. Are you living your life out there according to that Word so that when Jesus returns he will find you faithfully waiting for him? If you are 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 closed forever. To those without the oil of faith, Jesus will have to say: **"I tell you the truth, I do not know you."**

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 Lutheran Church.

My dear friends, let us use this precious gift of time wisely. Let us be prepared and let us stay ready to meet Jesus, our Bridegroom and our Lord. Amen

We pray: Dear heavenly Father for Jesus' sake, grant saving faith to us all so that we one day can hear this bridegroom say to us: **"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world."** Amen