

Session 7 Cultivating the Oil of Intimacy with the Bridegroom God (Mt. 25:1-13)

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (MT. 25:1-13)

- A. In Matthew 24-25, Jesus taught on the end times (24:3-31). He identified the signs of the times that will indicate the generation of His return (24:3-31). Then He taught four parables that emphasized how He wanted His people to respond to His leadership in the end times (24:32-25:30). He assured them that He possesses supreme authority over all and that He would evaluate everyone (25:31-46). These two chapters are “one teaching” given to prepare people to walk in victory in the end times.
- B. Matthew 24-25 was Jesus’ final teaching in His earthly ministry before the upper room (Jn. 13-17). Here, Jesus revealed Himself as **Bridegroom** (25:1-13), **King** (25:31), and **Judge** (25:32-46). Jesus is a Bridegroom with desire for relationship, a King with power, and a Judge with zeal to remove all that hinders love. This is also the final description of Jesus in the Bible (Rev. 19-22).
- C. The greatest revival as well as the greatest pressure in history will occur in the generation in which Jesus returns. Jesus taught that the wheat and tares mature together at the end of the age (Mt. 13:30). Jesus highlighted the resistance against God’s people (24:9) and a need for endurance (24:13).
⁹“They will...kill you, and you will be hated by all nations...¹³He who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached...to all the nations...” (Mt. 24:9-14)
- D. The Great Tribulation will be the most difficult and also the most important 3½ years in history.
***²¹“Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been... ²⁹After the tribulation...
³⁰the Son of Man will appear in heaven...coming on the clouds...” (Mt. 24:21-30)***

II. FOUR PARABLES: HOW JESUS WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO RESPOND (MT. 24:32-25:30)

- A. Parable #1: *The parable of the fig tree* (Mt. 24:32-36). Jesus commanded His people to recognize the signs of the times. He warned that most will not take time to recognize them (Mt. 24:37-39). Jesus urged His people to *watch* so as to be spiritually ready and avoid suffering loss. He often used *watch* related to the end times (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36; Rev. 16:15).
⁴²“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also be ready.” (Mt. 24:42-44)
- B. Both Luke 21 and Mark 13 included details from this one teaching of Jesus that Matthew did not include in Matthew 24-25. Luke emphasized the need to watch and pray (Lk. 21:34-36). A heart weighed down with sin and fear is *unresponsive to Jesus*. Believers can *stand in victory* as overcomers and *escape* being entrapped by bitterness that refuses to embrace Jesus’ leadership.
³⁴“Take heed...lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [immorality], drunkenness... and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the...whole earth. ³⁶Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be... [strengthened] to escape all these things...to stand [victoriously] before the Son of Man.” (Lk. 21:34-36)

- C. **Watch and pray:** Jesus' counsel is to *watch* (inform your mind) and *pray* (engage your heart).
1. **Watch:** This is an exhortation *to grow in understanding* by watching the biblical signs unfold progressively in order to realign regularly with Jesus' leadership. Watching includes being an "anointed observer" of what He is doing in society, then responding to that with prayer.
 2. **Pray:** This is an exhortation *to grow in strength in our heart* by connecting with Jesus.
- D. Parable #2: *The parable of the faithful and wise servant* (Mt. 24:45-51) teaches us that there are two types of leaders who confess to follow Christ. Jesus challenged us to be *diligent* to do God's will in the face of pressure and disappointment. Some respond in bitterness which eventually leads to doing "evil." These fallen leaders worked with **wrong motives** that abused their God-given authority.
⁴⁵**"Who is a faithful and wise servant... ⁴⁸But if that evil servant says..." (Mt. 24:45-48)**
- E. Parable #3: *The parable of the ten virgins* (Mt. 25:1-13) emphasizes the need to cultivate intimacy in our relationship with Jesus, the Bridegroom God. Jesus alerted the wise leaders with good motives in 24:45-48 not to work with a **wrong spirit** in neglecting to maintain intimacy with God.
- F. Parable #4: *The parable of the talents* (Mt. 25:14-30) calls us to be faithful in our life and ministry assignment, even when it is small and hard (25:21, 24). Jesus wants us to see the value of ministry when it is small. Those responding negatively worked with the **wrong evaluation** of their labors.
²³**"...you have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many..." (Mt. 25:23)**

III. JESUS DEFINED WHAT IT MEANS TO BE WISE IN STEWARDING OUR MINISTRY

- A. The parable of the ten virgins calls us to prioritize staying connected with His heart (Mt. 25:1-13).
¹**Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.** ²**Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.** (Mt. 25:1-2)
- B. **Virgins:** All believers stand as virgins before God by receiving the free gift of Jesus' righteousness when we were born again (2 Cor. 5:17, 21). We are declared as righteous before God as Jesus is.
²**I betrothed you to one husband...I present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Cor. 11:2)**
- C. **Lamp:** Each of these virgins had a lamp which spoke of a ministry that brought God's light to others (Mt. 5:15-16; Rev. 1:20; 2:5; 11:3-6; cf. Zech. 4:2; Isa. 62:1; Jn. 5:35).
- D. **Bridegroom:** All ten had insight into Jesus as the Bridegroom and went to meet or encounter Him.
- E. **Then:** We ask, "When is then?" The word "then" points back to the end-time theme that Jesus just emphasized in Matthew 24. In the end times, the Spirit will emphasize the revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom (Rev. 22:17). It is then that the kingdom is like these virgins meeting the Bridegroom.
¹⁷**The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)**

IV. FIVE WISE VIRGINS: ACQUIRING OIL AS THEIR FIRST PRIORITY

- A. In this parable, Jesus' warning is that the wise can become foolish if they neglect to continue to cultivate intimacy with Jesus (as they previously did when they went met the Bridegroom in 25:1).
²Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (Mt. 25:2-4)
- B. ***Took oil***: Oil here speaks of the presence or the anointing of the Spirit touching our heart as we spend time with God (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). The two witnesses are "sons of oil" (Zech. 4:14; Rev. 11:4).
- C. The oil of the Spirit touches our hearts in different ways including the following:
1. *It tenderizes our heart*, enabling us to feel more of God's desire for us.
 2. *It enlarges our desire* for Him by encountering His desire for us.
 3. *It illuminates our understanding* with growing insight into God's beauty.
 4. *It imparts zeal for righteousness*, which helps us to overcome various temptations.
- D. The foolish took their lamps (their ministry), but they ***took no oil***. This describes those who pursue more ministry activity *before* acquiring the "oil of intimacy" in their walk with Jesus.
- E. The wise ministries ***took oil*** in their vessels with their lamps. In other words, they pursued acquiring oil as their first priority *before* seeking to expand and network their ministry.
1. Jesus connects being wise to watching or taking time to encounter the Bridegroom God.
 2. Our relationship with Jesus is to be the most important "dream of our heart." It is to have a far great priority over increasing the size of our ministry influence.

V. THE FORERUNNER MESSAGE IN THE END TIMES: A 3-FOLD CRY

- A. At the midnight hour of history, the Lord's messenger's will cry out with a 3-fold message.
⁵While the Bridegroom delayed, they all slept. ⁶At midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, go out to meet Him." ⁷...All those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (Mt. 25:5-7)
- B. First, *Jesus is coming* in context to releasing waves of revival that will progressively increase in the end times until culminating by Jesus coming in the sky to rapture the Church.
- C. Second, *Jesus is coming as a Bridegroom God* with deep desire for relationship with His people.
- D. Third, God's people must *go out to meet Him* or to make the necessary effort to position themselves in worship, obedience, prayer, the Word, and fasting to encounter Jesus.
- E. ***They all slept***: They all slept and trimmed their lamps. Sleeping in this parable is not bad. The wise and unwise both sleep (Mk. 4:27). This speaks of cultivating oil in the midst of the natural processes of life. We sustain intimacy with Jesus in the midst of the rigors, routines, and mundaneness of life.

VI. JESUS EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO CULTIVATE OIL IN THE END TIMES

- A. The foolish ministries recognize their great mistake in neglecting to acquire oil (25:8-9). Many ministry lamps will go out because of lacking the spiritual vitality that comes from the Spirit's oil. Christian "self-help" pop psychology sermons will not meet deep spiritual needs in times of crisis.
⁸*The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out."*
⁹*The wise answered, "No, ...but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves." (Mt. 25:8-9)*
- B. **Give us your oil:** The foolish asked the wise to give them oil to "bolster" their diminishing ministry. The wise understood their limitation, knowing that their spiritual preparedness is not transferrable.
- C. **Buy from Me:** Jesus exhorts us to "buy oil," that is, to engage in the God-ordained process of acquiring intimacy with God. We do not earn this, but invest ourselves in a costly way to receive it.
¹⁸*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich... (Rev. 3:18)*
- D. When Jesus comes back as the Bridegroom, some ministries (lamps) that had once encountered Him as the Bridegroom (25:1) will not contribute in the events associated with His coming (25:10-12).
¹⁰*While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut.* ¹¹*Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!"* ¹²*He answered, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."* ¹³*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Mt. 25:10-13)*
- E. **Bridegroom came:** Jesus will come to His people in seasons of revival before He comes in the sky. The waves of the Spirit's activity will increase, leading to the fullness of the end-time revival.
1. Only those who were *ready* (25:10) by engaging with the Bridegroom were called to participate in the celebration on the *first* night. This may speak of those who will be prepared to help others encounter Jesus as Bridegroom—a main emphasis of the final end-time revival.
 2. A wedding feast might continue for seven evenings for wealthy families. Those closest to the married couple were invited to the first night and subsequently to the following nights.
- F. **I do not know you:** This may have two applications—loss of usefulness and/or loss of salvation.
1. First, He did not know them as ones who had been engaging with Him as the Bridegroom. He called them *foolish*, not evil, wicked, or cursed as some were called (Mt. 24:48; 25:26, 41).
 2. Second, because they are lacking intimacy with God, they will not stand in the pressures seen in the Great Tribulation, and thus they fall away from the faith (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2).
- G. **Open to us:** The ministries without oil will seek in vain for an "open door of opportunity" to make a deep spiritual impact on others in the end-time revivals. Doors will only be open to those with oil.
- H. **Watch:** Jesus' advice is to watch or to develop intimacy with Him as the Bridegroom King.