

The Oil of Intimacy: Encountering the Bridegroom God (Mt. 25)

I. THE BRIDAL PARADIGM OF KINGDOM MINISTRY AT THE END-OF-THE-AGE

Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom. (Mt. 25:1)

- A. Took their lamps – public ministry that brings God’s light to others
- B. Ten virgins – all are born again believers (2 Cor. 11:2-3).
- C. Went out to meet the Bridegroom – revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom God
- D. Then the Kingdom shall be likened to virgins meeting the Bridegroom – at the end-of-the-age. The word ‘then’ leads us back to the end-of-the-age theme of Mt. 24.
- E. Jesus likened Himself to a Bridegroom (Mt. 9:15), His Kingdom to a wedding (Mt. 22:2), described the ministry as those encountering Him as a Bridegroom (Mt. 25:1) and will return in answer to the intercessory prayer of His Church with a bridal identity (Rev. 22:17).
- F. They took their lamps (public ministry) as virgins (born again believers) and went out to meet (encounter) the Bridegroom. Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ministries seeking Jesus as the Bridegroom. This refers to the End-Time (v. 13). In other words, this is a picture of End-Time ministry with the revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom God. The foolish ministries took their lamps (ministries), but took no oil. In other words, they pursued ways to increase their ministry with greater zeal than to cultivate the ‘oil of intimacy.’ The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps (ministries) as they pursued intimacy more than ministry.
- G. Bridal paradigm: invitation to intimacy with God (1 Cor. 2:9-12)
"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches (discerns) all things, yes, the DEEP THINGS OF GOD...12 Now we have received...the Spirit who is from God, **THAT WE MIGHT KNOW** (experience) **THE THINGS** that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:9-12)
- H. **Summarizing the bridal message** – Holy Spirit is inviting us to enjoy intimacy with God by allowing us to experience the deep things of His heart. The Holy Spirit discerns the deep things of God’s heart (His emotions) that we might know or “experience” them. God opens His heart wide that we would experience a lifestyle of active intimacy with His heart that energizes our heart with God’s power (Eph. 3:16-19). This speaks of receiving the anointing of the Spirit to walk in 3-fold love (anointing to receive God’s affection for us and to return it to Jesus with an overflow for others)

- I. The ‘oil of intimacy’ speaks of cultivating our secret life in God. This results in our hearts being **tenderized** (*sensitized*) to freely feel (*receive*) more of God’s love and desire for us. Our spiritual capacity increases (tenderized emotions to feel God) as it **enlarges our desire** for Him and our **revelation** of God’s desire and beauty. It empowers our emotions with **zeal** for righteousness.
- J. *The background of this parable is the well known ancient Jewish custom* that involved celebrating a wedding over the course of several nights (ideally 7 nights, for a wealthy family). Each night of the wedding has celebratory activities with different aspects highlighted. This parable pointed out how the foolish virgins needlessly missed out on the first night of the wedding celebration.

II. THE OIL OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS AS OUR BRIDEGROOM GOD

Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps (Mt. 25:2-4)

- A. The ‘oil of intimacy’ – cultivating our secret life in God. This enhances our daily communion with God by increasing our spiritual capacity with supernatural ability to encounter Jesus.
 - 1. **It tenderizes** (*sensitizes*) **the heart** to freely feel (*receive*) more of God’s love and desire for us. Our spiritual capacity increases (tenderized emotions to feel God).
 - 2. **It enlarges our desire for Him** as we encounter His desire for us. In other words, understanding His desire for us awakens our desires back for Him.
 - 3. **It illuminates our understanding** with revelation of God’s desire and beauty.
 - 4. **It strengthens our spiritual identity** (revelation of our true self before God). In Christ we are sons before the Father and the bride before the Son.
 - 5. **It empowers our emotions with zeal for righteousness** (Heb 1:8; Ps. 69:7-10; Jn. 2:17). This helps us in our struggle with besetting sins that entrap us. The impartation of new desires of God aids in diminishing our old desires for sin.
- B. The foolish took their lamps, but took no oil – pursuing public ministry as our priority over oil.
- C. The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps – pursuing oil as our priority over ministry.

III. THE CENTRAL NEED FOR CULTIVATING OIL IN THE END-TIMES

But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' (Mt. 25:5-6)

Recommended: M. Bickle on Song of Solomon: Two Study Guides (200 pages each) covering the Song verse by verse plus 20 teaching sessions on CD. This is also available on CD Rom (400 pages of notes). The Condensed Version (7 sessions).

IHOP-KC Mission Base

- A. While the Bridegroom delayed, they all slept. (Mt. 25:5) – natural processes of life
- B. At midnight a 3-fold cry: Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him' (Mt. 25:6)
1. At midnight a cry was heard – dark midnight of history just before the Second Coming
 2. A cry was heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming” – forerunner messengers
 3. Go out to meet Him – make the necessary effort to get up and go out to encounter Jesus
- C. ***Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'*** (Mt. 25:7-8)
1. All the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps – the natural processes of life
 2. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out”
- D. ***But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'*** (Mt. 25:9)
1. The wise said "No" – the necessity of refusing ministry opportunities that are not God's best
 2. Go buy oil for yourselves (Rev. 3:18) – engage in the God ordained process of getting oil
- E. ***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.'*** (Mt. 25:10-12)
1. While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came – God's manifest Presence
 2. Those who were ready went in with Him and the door was shut – place of usefulness
 3. The other virgins came saying, 'Lord, open to us!' – give us the same place of usefulness
 4. The Lord answered, 'I do not know you' – intimacy not salvation i.e., never knew you!' (Mt. 7:23); evil (Mt. 24:48); wicked and lazy (Mt. 25:26); cursed (Mt. 25:41)

- F. ***Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Mt. 25:13)***

IV. THE PRIMARY MESSAGES OF THIS PARABLE

- A. ***There is a point that believers can lose out in their anointed ministry opportunities before God.*** The tragedy is that ministries can lose decades of anointed fruitfulness that they can not make up for. There is a point that we go too far to escape damage that affects our destiny in God so that we do not experience the full destiny of ***all that God ordained for us***. The ‘shut doors’ of anointed fruitfulness are real. This is not the shutting of the door of salvation, but of our full involvement in the End-Times revival.
1. As the ancient Jewish celebration lasted several nights with each evening highlighting something different, so we understand that God is releasing different waves of the Spirit that are building up to the full End-Time revival culminating with the Second Coming which is the grand finale (wedding supper of the Lamb). God will release strategic waves of the Spirit and corresponding ministry anointing that is building up to a glorious End-Times crescendo.
 2. The essential point in this parable is that the foolish virgins would needlessly miss out on the first night of the wedding celebration. The principle is that many ministries will also needlessly miss out on part of the ***“End-Time revival wedding celebratory activities.”***
 3. We must be watchful in order to be ready and equipped to fully participate in each ‘night’ of the End-Times revival (wedding celebration). God is now preparing leaders for the future waves of the Spirit. He insist that only prepared vessels with spiritual reality lead each wave. **IN OTHER WORDS, A LIFESTYLE OF PURSING EVER INCREASING MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES WHILE NEGLECTING INTIMACY LEADS TO MISSING THE FULLNESS OF ANOINTED OPPORTUNITIES (DOOR OF MINISTRY SHUT)**
- B. ***What we gain in God today (heart reality and ministry impact) is often lost tomorrow.*** Over the years, one may develop a larger ministry profile (they are more popular) yet their heart reality and true ministry impact is decidedly less than it was ten years previously. In this parable, all ten virgin ministries started off with oil and a shining ministry that brought light to others. Foolish ministries did not take time to sustain the ‘oil of intimacy’ in their hearts that they had for a season (verse 1).
- C. God ordained ‘kingdom order’ that ***no one can acquire the ‘oil of intimacy’ for another. Spiritual preparedness is not transferable.*** This ‘kingdom order’ is based on Jesus’ zeal for our love.
- D. The call to watchfulness (v. 13) or heart connect (v. 1, 6, 10) with the Bridegroom God.

- E. Other messages – ***God’s delay is longer than we expect*** causing some to lose their watchfulness due to three common giants (mundaneness, pressures, temptations). We overcome by encountering the Jesus as the Bridegroom. They all slept and trimmed lamps (Mt. 25:5, 7) speaks of the natural processes of life (rigors responsibilities in natural realm). Also, ***God’s delay is more challenging than we expect*** therefore, we have urgency to acquire ‘oil’ knowing it is difficult to stay prepared.

V. WATCHFULNESS – WHAT IS IT?

- A. Watching to see that we establish a ***lifestyle of encountering Jesus as the Bridegroom God***.
- B. Watching to see that we ***persevere in careful obedience*** (anointing for wholeheartedness). Careful obedience to not step off God’s path into compromise will not come automatically in light of the escalating pressures and temptations. We need oil to sufficiently hold our hearts steady in the End-Times. Scripture continually emphasizes the need for ***careful obedience*** (Deut 4:6, 15; 5:1, 32; 6:3, 25; 8:1; 11:32; 12:1, 32; 16:12; 17:10, 19; 19:18; 24:8; 26:16; 28:13; 32:46; Josh 22:5; 23:11; 2 Kings 17:37; 21:8; 1 Chron 28:8; 33:8; Ezek 20:21; Titus 3:8; 2 Peter 1:15).
- C. Watching in the sense of seeing (watching) God’s activity with ***prophetic understanding*** (anointed observations) in an eschatological global sense. Jesus rebuked leaders in His generation for not observing the significance of prophetic events (Luke 19:41-44).
- D. Watching to cultivate a ***spirit of prayer*** – partnering with Jesus in changing history by intercession.
- E. Watching speaks of ***spiritual vigilance*** (diligence) – giving our full attention to not subtly slip into spiritual lethargy.

VI. END-TIME FORERUNNERS WITH A 3-FOLD MESSAGE

At midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him' (Mt. 25:6)

- A. Midnight is when it is darkest and most difficult to be awake spiritually. In the midnight of history just before the Second Coming God will raise up a forerunner cry that can be heard by those with ears to hear. The Lord comes suddenly when most are sleeping “as a thief in night” (Mt 24:42-44).
- B. The 3-fold message –
1. ***“Behold, the Bridegroom...”*** – Jesus must be proclaimed as the Bridegroom God.

2. **“Behold, the Bridegroom is coming”** – He is coming (intervention, breakthrough) with power, thus consequences. Things do not stay the same when Jesus manifests His power. Revival results in the ruin of many ministries content with superficiality before the revival.
3. **“Go out to meet Him”** – make the necessary effort to get up and go out to encounter Jesus. We must make the necessary effort (fasted lifestyle) to get out of bed (they were in bed) and exert energy and make pains to rearrange your life. This will involving getting the clutter out and often downsizing our position, possessions, ministry reputation and profile. Most of us do not need half of what we have.

VII. MINISTRIES RECOGNIZING THEIR LACK OF OIL AND DIMINISHING MINISTRY

The foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. 9 The wise answered, saying, “No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” (Mt. 25:7-9)

- A. Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out – the foolish recognize the mistake of their previous neglect. Ministries that once had oil will first burn out then go out. The wise answered in an appropriate way in saying No – ***the realized the necessity of refusing ministry opportunities that are not God’s best*** because nobody can seek this reality for you. This seems harsh but it humility. Our pride with a messianic complex sees ourselves as overly necessary to everyone’s deliverance. Spiritual preparedness is not transferable. This answer is based on Jesus’ zeal for our love.
- B. Go buy oil for yourselves – engage in the God ordained process of getting oil because the wise understand that spiritual preparedness is not transferable. Our supreme preoccupation in life must be to acquire the ‘oil of intimacy’. It will take courage to preserve through other’s disapproval.
I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes (oil of Mt. 25) with eye salve, that you may see. (Rev. 3:18)
- C. The waves of the End-Time Bridegroom revival began to break in (first activities of wedding)
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.” (Mt. 25:10-12)
 1. They ‘went in’ with Him and ‘knew’ Him – intimacy with Jesus in ministry (Song 7:11-13). The wise went in to the wedding celebration (over several nights) referring to the progressive unfolding of End-Times revival through successive waves of the Spirit.

2. While the foolish ministries *went to buy oil* in finally heeding the need to acquire the ‘oil of intimacy’ the move of the Spirit broke out across the land. Therefore, they were too late to be prepared to be an authentic voice or “light bearer” for the first part of the wedding activities (initial waves of the End-Times Bridegroom revival). In other words, the Bridegroom came or broke in with a season of God’s manifest Presence (wave of revival).
 3. **Door shut** (Lk 13:25) – opportunity for ministering with depth in that particular wave of revival was lost. **“Lord, open to us!”** – open the door of anointed opportunity. The Lord answered, ‘I do not know (intimacy) you’ in terms of **“intimacy in End-Time Bridegroom ministry.”** This is not a reference to salvation as when Jesus said, “I never knew you!” (Mt. 7:23). Jesus did call them evil (Mt. 24:48); wicked and lazy (Mt. 25:26); cursed (Mt. 25:41)
- D. Watching must be the supreme issue in our lives. We must grasp the difficulty in managing the “tyranny of the urgent” to stay the course to go deeper in God and walk out God’s best. **Watch therefore, for you know...the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.** (Mt. 25:13)

VIII. MY JOURNEY INTO 24/7 PRAYER

- A. In May 1983, during a Solemn Assembly (21 days of fasting and prayer), the Lord spoke audibly in context to Ps. 27:4, saying: **“I will release 24-hour prayer in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David.”** David gave leadership to a prayer and worship ministry in his generation that was led by 4,000 full-time paid musicians and 288 full-time paid prophetic singers (1 Chr. 23:5; 25:7).
- ⁴ One thing I have desired of the LORD...that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple. (Ps. 27:4)**
- B. In July 1988, the Lord spoke saying that He would release the anointing of the Spirit according to Song 8:6-7. The Lord wanted the message of Song of Solomon to be foundational at IHOP.
- ⁶ Set Me (Jesus) as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for (God’s) love is as strong as death, (God’s) jealousy as cruel (demanding) as the grave; its flames are flames of fire...⁷ Many waters (persecution, sin, pressures, etc.) cannot quench love... (Song 8:6-7)**
1. In the ancient world, kings put a “seal of wax” on important documents. They encased them with wax then stamped it with the king’s signet ring. God sets a “seal of fire” on our heart. It is the fire of divine love or the anointing to experience the love of God.
 2. This love is as strong or as comprehensive as death. Death claims all. Its grasp is comprehensive. Nothing in the natural order escapes the power of death. So also, God’s love will not allow any areas of brokenness to escape its grasp. God’s love poured in our heart will conquer every area of sin that we continually yield to Him. This love is also described as being “as jealous as the grave” or as demanding (unyielding) as death.
- ⁵ The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)**

3. Water always puts out fire (unless it is God's supernatural fire). The enemy will send the waters of persecution, temptation, apathy, disappointment, pain, etc. to put this fire out.
- ¹⁵ *The serpent (Satan) spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman (End-Time Israel), that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. (Rev. 12:15)*

IX. WHAT IS THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE?

- A. The Bridegroom message includes the revelation of Jesus' emotions for us as a Bridegroom God. Jesus the Bridegroom is filled with tender mercy. He is gentle with our weakness. Some confuse rebellion and immaturity. God is angry at rebellion, but He is tender towards sincere immature believers that seek to obey Him. He enjoys us even in our weakness (Ps. 18:19, 35; 130:3-4). Knowing this makes us run to God instead of from Him when we see our sin and weakness.
- B. Jesus the Bridegroom has a heart of gladness (happy heart). Jesus had more gladness than any man in history (Heb. 1:9). Most of Church history has viewed God as mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us. Jesus is mostly glad when He relates to us, even in our weakness. Jesus the Bridegroom has fiery affections or has burning desire and longing for us. Jesus the Bridegroom also possesses indescribable beauty as He fascinates our hearts (Ps. 27:4). The Church will be cleansed by experiencing the cherishing heart of Jesus (Eph. 5:26-29). To understand Jesus as a passionate Bridegroom is to soon see ourselves as a cherished Bride.
- C. The End-Time Church will be in deep unity with the Holy Spirit in saying and doing what the Spirit is saying and doing. What is the Spirit doing? He is interceding for Jesus to come. What is the Spirit saying? He is revealing the Church's bridal identity (who we are as Jesus' Bride).
- ¹⁷ *And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)*
- D. Rev. 22:17 prophesies of the function of the End-Time Church in 4 ways: 1). anointed with the Spirit, 2). engaged in intercession, 3). established in our bridal identity and 4). effective in the Harvest. This will be the first time that the Church world wide will be in unity with the Spirit.
- E. The three fold prayer of the End-Time Church for Jesus to come:
1. **Come NEAR US in intimacy** (individual breakthrough of my heart in God)
 2. **Come TO US in revival** (regional or national breakthrough of the Spirit in revival)
 3. **Come FOR US in the sky** (historical breakthrough by the Second Coming of Jesus)
- F. As we experience the 'oil of intimacy' with Jesus we feel loved and in love. Without this, we more easily compromise or become discouraged and wounded and spiritually bored.
- G. We can lose perspective by becoming focused more on our secondary blessings (circumstances). If we lose the 'oil of intimacy' then our heart gets wounded and burned out. Some of our wounds and disappointments are a signpost that our secondary rewards have become first place in our heart. Some of our pain that results is designed to let us know that our heart must return back to the place where our focus is again on Jesus as our primary reward.

- H. When Jesus is our primary reward, there is no guarantee that we will live pain free. However, when our spirit is invigorated by encountering Jesus, our disappointments are much more manageable in the grace of God because we see things differently. I have prayed, “Lord shock me now not at the Judgment Seat. Wake me up, even if You use the pain of disappointments.”

X. THE REVELATION OF GOD’S DELIGHT IN HIS PEOPLE

- A. In November 1995, I had a prophetic dream exhorting me to call God’s people “Hephzibah.”
⁴ You shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...5 For as the bridegroom rejoices (enjoys) over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. 6 I have set watchmen on your walls...they shall never hold their peace (be silent, NAS) day or night...7 give Him no rest till He establishes...Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. 62:4-7)
- B. The “Hephzibah message” is that God delights in us and rejoices over us as a Bridegroom rejoices over a bride. It is the same as the Song of Solomon message or David’s beauty of God message. They each point to intimacy with God and a revelation of God’s emotions.
- C. Jesus as our Bridegroom is ravished with desire and has passionate affection for His people.
⁹ You have ravished My heart...My spouse; you have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes... 10 How fair (beautiful) is your love... (Song 4:9-10)
- D. The “watchman message” is the call to seek the breakthrough of God’s blessing through persistent prayer. I labored in prayer for years for a breakthrough of revival without experiencing the “Hephzibah” message. One of the main reasons that intercessors get burned out is the lack of encountering Jesus during the years of waiting for the breakthrough of revival.
- E. When God delays the answer to our prayers, we can become disappointed. When our hope (expectation) is delayed or deferred, then our heart becomes sick with despair.
¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick... (Prov. 13:12)
- F. Our prayer life can only be sustained and energized by active intimacy with Jesus. God desires that we experience our greater reward (inside of our heart) as the way to sustain us while we wait on God’s blessing and power in outward circumstances.
1. Our primary reward is the Lord Himself fascinating and tenderizing our hearts.
 2. Our secondary reward is the breakthrough of God’s blessing and power on our ministry, physical body (healing), family, finances, relationships, etc.
- G. Experiencing intimacy with God causes our hearts to be lovesick for Jesus.
⁵ Sustain me...refresh me...for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)

⁸ *If you find my Beloved (Jesus)...tell Him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)*

- H. The Holy Spirit will soon emphasize God's plan to call the Church into her bridal identity as the way to sustain persistent intercession for the great End-Time revival before Jesus' return. The Spirit is raising up forerunners who will walk out and announce this plan to prepare the Church.