

sermon study guide

Speaker: Ashwin Ramani

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Sermon Title: The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like... Part 9: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. When you are invited to an event, do you usually arrive early, on time, or late? What influences the timing of your arrival?
2. When it comes to Jesus' return, what feelings does it stir up for you? Gloom or excitement? Fear or celebration? Explain.

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read *Matthew 25:1-13*

3. Pastor Ashwin said those who are very familiar with the Bible are no longer shocked at some of the sayings of Jesus. What parts of this parable are meant to startle us?
4. From this parable what truths about our Lord's return are certain? What details are uncertain? What in this parable concerns you and encourages you?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Who do you think you resemble – the wise or foolish virgin? How do you know? How is God challenging you to join the company of the wise?
6. Pastor Ashwin said, "The question is not do you know Jesus but does Jesus know you?" How would you describe the difference between our knowledge and work for Jesus, and our being known by Him?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

If you feel like you have no "oil in your lamp", the passion and love for Jesus you once had has become ice cold, ask the Holy Spirit to pour fresh oil and to light your heart with passion. If you have the assurance of knowing and being known by Christ, how can you continue to keep watch?

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 25:1-13

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹"'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.'

¹⁰"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹"Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

¹²"But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'

¹³"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

sermon study summary

The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like...Part 9: The Parable of the Ten Virgins **November 14/15, 2020** **Pastor Ashwin Ramani**

The subject of Jesus' return has engaged believers ever since He left earth. The Apostle Paul wrote to instruct the Thessalonians in the first century who believed Jesus would return in their time. 2000 years later, Jesus has still not returned. Disasters, war, and Covid spur some believers into speculating that these events usher in Christ's second coming.

But Jesus counsels us. He was known to shock and startle His followers into listening to His teachings so that they would be wise and not foolish (as the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7:24-29). In Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus tells a most shocking parable about His second coming. This story is based on a Jewish wedding procession in His day. Young maidens received the groom at the bride's home and accompanied the wedding party to his house. There the banquet was held. Torches were critical for an evening procession. Cloth was wrapped around a stick that needed to be dipped in oil to keep it burning. Thus, an extra jar of oil was needed. In this parable, only five of the ten bridesmaids brought extra oil.

The groom was delayed in coming, and the maidens slept. At midnight, the crier announced his arrival. The wise maidens trimmed their torch cloths and added oil. However, the foolish ones wanted to borrow oil from the wise maidens. There wasn't enough to share, so the foolish girls had to go out and buy their own oil. During that time, the wise maidens went in with the bridegroom and the door was shut. Later the foolish maidens returned and frantically knocked to be let in. When the bridegroom opened the door, they heard the most tragic words a person can hear: "Truly I tell you, I don't know you."

Jesus said similar words in Matt 7:21-23. Not everyone who prophesies in His name, performs miracles, and drives out demons is a genuine Christ follower. Jesus will tell them, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"

Jesus is not referring here to genuine believers, but to those whose hearts are still far from God. Like the foolish young women, some people are unprepared for His coming. They project themselves as Christ followers, but they are empty on the inside. They have lost the wonder of the gospel and their hearts are far from God. They have no passion for Jesus, no vibrant faith. When suddenly Jesus appears, their external religion will not save them. The question is not, "Do you know Jesus?" but, "Does Jesus know you? Is your heart fully open to Him?"

Jesus then drives home the point to encourage us: With His delay in coming we are not to be obsessed about possible dates, times, and circumstances. Instead, we are to be alert and ready at all times because we do not know God's appointed time. (Matt 25:13).

What is your response in light of Jesus' delay? Are you like the wise maidens who are ready for the bridegroom's return? Are you faithful in following Jesus? Are you eager and expectant, putting your hope in Christ?

Or maybe you aren't ready for His coming. Your passion and love for Jesus has become cold. Your faith is not vibrant. You put off making things right when God prompts you. God is asking you now to reignite your love for Jesus and the promise of his return. Ask the Holy Spirit to pour fresh oil into your life and restore the joy of your salvation. Receive a touch from Jesus, and let the Holy Spirit rekindle your flame.