

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 02.16.2020

TIME TO WAKEUP! – MATTHEW 25:1-13

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

In a Jewish wedding it was common for the Father of the groom to be the one to determine when the son could go and get his bride. The Father would blow the shofar at midnight or some other unexpected time and tell the son to get his bride so the wedding could begin. Are you ready for the Midnight cry? The sound of the trumpet calling us home to be with the Lord? Today we look at the Parable of the 10 Virgins or Bridesmaids. There were 5 wise and 5 foolish bridesmaids. Jesus uses this parable of a Jewish wedding to let us know how we should be ready and prepared for His coming again. Christ calls believers to actively await His return by focusing our hearts to live for His glory and to prioritize His kingdom. Let’s get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray’s message this last weekend?
2. Up to this point in your life, what have you had to work the hardest at waiting for? (Think: engagement, degree, promotion, children, etc.)
3. How did you handle, or how are you handling, the waiting process?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

Have a volunteer read Matthew 25:1-5.

1. Who do each group of virgins—the foolish and the wise—represent?

The virgins in this story were waiting for the groom, and were probably bridesmaids who had the responsibility to prepare the bride to meet the groom. Only one thing distinguished one group of virgins from the other: the amount of oil they had with them. These young women represent all people, because all are invited to be a part of God’s kingdom. Not all enter, but all are invited.

2. What characteristics, both stated or implied, make some of the virgins “foolish”? How do we see these same foolish actions in our own spiritual preparation?
3. On the other hand, what characteristics make some of the virgins “sensible” or “wise”? How do we see these same wise actions in our own spiritual preparation?

Jesus described the unprepared as “foolish.” It was an honor to serve in the wedding party, but they displayed a lack of respect for the one who invited them to participate by not being prepared for an uncertain arrival time. They looked right—after all, they were bridesmaids with lamps—but they only had enough oil to burn for the present moment. Like the groom, Jesus may delay His coming longer than many people expect. But He expects us to live every day as if He is coming then. By contrast, five of the virgins were sensible. They knew what was expected of them, and in their desire to honor the one who had invited them, they made sure they were ready no matter what.

“PREPARE!” in 2020

Have a volunteer read Matthew 25:6-9.

1. Does the response of the wise virgins in verse 9 surprise you? Why or why not?
2. What is the lamp oil representative of in our lives? How does this relate to being prepared for Jesus’ return?
3. What do these verses reveal about salvation? About a person’s relationship with Jesus?

The sensible virgins were not being stingy with their oil when the groom arrived, but understood that each virgin needed enough oil for herself and that sharing would not provide enough for any person. Their desire was to remain faithful to the task at hand, which was to honor the bridegroom as he approached his home. For the sake of Jesus’ story, the point was that there was only one option for the foolish virgins: they had to get the needed oil in the same way the other virgins got their oil. When we think of Jesus’ return, all of us must be prepared. And we do that in the same way—through faith in the grace and salvation offered through Jesus Christ. The foolish virgins had the same opportunity to buy oil as the sensible ones; they simply chose not to take advantage of that opportunity at the right time.

Have another volunteer read Matthew 25:10-13.

1. What stands out to you about the bridegroom’s response to the foolish bridesmaids (v. 12)?
2. How does it make you feel to know the door to the kingdom gets closed for some? Why does this happen? Read John 14:6 for insight.

The bridegroom’s response was sobering for these young women. They had professed to be a part of the wedding party, but their actions showed otherwise. The groom disowned any relationship with them, and his words carry the assurance that there was to be no negotiation in the matter. Many people profess to be Christians, but their actions and attitudes deny any real relationship with Jesus Christ. For those people who never prepared their hearts, Jesus’ words are not “I no longer know you,” but “I do not know you.” There was never a relationship to begin with.

3. What do you learn about God from this parable?
4. From verse 13, what two key points did Jesus want the listeners to know about His future return? What are the implications of these truths for us today?

Verse 13 is the primary point of this parable. Be always alert, always ready, always living your life with a sense of urgency and anticipation of Christ’s return. The Wise were not caught off guard. They were prepared with oil in case of just such an *emergency*. But the foolish were caught without enough oil due to their *lack of planning!* They wouldn’t make in time so they had to go buy oil. They proceeded to run this errand at the worst possible time, just as the *Bridegroom came*. Too late to get into the wedding! Hear my Voice oh backslidden! Hear me oh prodigal Son or Daughter! Hear me all who have wandered far! Its not time to dabble in sin!

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Ray talked about “The Cyrus Mandate.” There are “patterns in prophecy – history repeats itself.” After the Babylonian Captivity, God used Cyrus a pagan king to move His program forward by granting the Jews permission to rebuild their Temple (Is. 44:28). Today, the Sanhedrin (which hasn’t existed for 2000yrs) is calling on President Trump and Vladimir Putin to allow them to rebuild their third Temple. Rabbi Weiss of the Sanhedrin said “The leaders of Russia and America can lead the nations of the world to global peace through building the Temple, the source of Peace. They know they need both of them

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to give them the right to go forward. (We need Trump and Putin to give permission to build the Temple). These are the headlines of Tomorrow! Are you ready? Are you Awake? Time is short.

1. Have a member explained what the “Cyrus Mandate” is according to Pastor Ray?
2. What does this call for the rebuilding of the Temple from the modern Sanhedrin say about what time it is on God’s prophetic Clock?
3. How can you practically be like the wise bridesmaids in being ready for the Lords return?

PRAYER – Ask God to help you and your group members actively await Christ’s return by participating in His kingdom. Thank God for inviting you into His kingdom, ask for His help in urgently inviting others.

“Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."Is. 44:28”