

Matthew 25:1-13: Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps & went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, & five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy & slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose & trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us & for you, go rather to the dealers & buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, & those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, & the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Intro: At the end of Matt 24, we focused on the return of the King! Faithfulness is Jesus' main focus! Now, in Matt 25, Jesus continues to answer His disciples' question from Matt 24 about His return, & He continues to teach about faithfulness & getting ready for His return. To do this, Jesus tells two parables: the parable of the ten virgins & the parable of the talents. And then Jesus gives us a preview of the final judgment itself. Last week: Pursue faithfulness & wisdom like a good slave of Jesus, & Jesus will greatly reward the righteous & punish the wicked. This week: Watch for Jesus with your own, true, saving faith & be prepared to persevere until the return of the King!

1. Weddings During Jesus' Day

Weddings were a time of great celebration in Jesus' day – sometimes the celebration would last a whole week!

Article: the groom would return to his father's house after the betrothal to prepare a bridal chamber. This process traditionally took a year or more. When the place was complete, the groom would return [for] his bride. The bride would not know the day or hour of her husband-to-be's return, so the groom's arrival was usually announced with a trumpet call & a shout so the bride had some forewarning. Before the ceremony, which was attended by a select few (most likely family), the bride would take part in a ritual cleansing. After the ceremony, the couple would attend a wedding feast in their honor. It was customary for a wedding feast to include a much larger crowd than the ceremony itself, & it was a great celebration provided by the groom's family. Jesus Himself attended a wedding feast in Cana, where He performed His first miracle of turning water into wine. At this marriage feast, the groom's family had run out of wine, which could have damaged their reputation. So Jesus' mother, Mary, appealed to Him for help on behalf of the family. Jesus responded by turning the water into even better wine than the family had served previously. (John 2:1–12.) In His time on earth, Jesus often used Jewish marriage customs as a beautiful [picture] of God's relationship with the church, His "bride." Jesus purchased believers with His blood, shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 20:28). He is currently preparing a place for us (John 14:3), & at a future time no one knows (Matt 24:36), He will return for His bride with a trumpet call & a shout (1 Thess 4:16–17). The dead in Christ & those alive in Him will be taken to heaven, where they will be joined forever with the Lord (Rev 19:7) & take part in the marriage feast of the Lamb (v 9).

2. The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

Jesus tells us a parable (earthly story/spiritual meaning) to help us understand what the kingdom of heaven is like.

Matthew 25:1-13: Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps & went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, & five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy & slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose & trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us & for you, go rather to the dealers & buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, & those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, & the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

a. Not everyone who looks like they are in the kingdom of heaven are going to make it into the kingdom of heaven: The five foolish & the five wise virgins looked a lot alike on the outside: all were virgins (they're all very moral people!); all fell asleep (watching & being ready is NOT about not sleeping!); all had lamps (they did religious activity); they were all waiting for the bridegroom (they all go to church – Jesus is speaking to His disciples here!); There are even attempts made by the foolish virgins to be ready – they ask for oil from the wise virgins! (**John MacArthur:** 5 & 5 – not good statistics! Lots in the church will not make it into heaven!)

2 Tim 3:1-5: in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

James Boice: 1) All were invited – they all heard the Gospel; 2) All responded positively to the invitation – they all seemed to accept the Gospel & believe; 3) All were part of the visible church; 4) All had some love & affection for the bridegroom – they all wanted to meet the bridegroom; 5) All confessed Jesus as Lord; 6) All believed in & were waiting for Jesus' second coming.

b. To enter the kingdom of heaven, you cannot borrow someone else's oil: The foolish virgins ask for oil from the wise virgins, but they cannot give it. The point is you cannot be saved by someone else's faith or grace or perseverance or good works or anything else needed to get to heaven! Children, you cannot be justified before God based on the faith of your parents. You cannot be justified before God based on the general blessing of the church.

James Boice: The parable reveals that when Christ returns, each person must stand on his or her own. Your mother's faith will not save you. Your wife's faith will not save you. You will not be saved by the spiritual life of your son or daughter. The question will be, Where do you stand? Are you alive in Christ? Are you ready?

You, individually – you personally must do business with Christ! You must believe in Him! **GOSPEL!**

Isa. 55:1-2: Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; & he who has no money, come, buy & eat! Come, buy wine & milk without money & without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, & your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, & eat what is good, & delight yourselves in rich food.

c. If you do not have true, saving, personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus will shut you out:

Vs. 10-12: And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, & those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, & the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'

¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

Hymn: Standing outside while loved ones, enter the pearly gate
Knowing that there forever, you will then separate
To be away from loved ones and by our God denied
Oh! what an awful picture, standing outside?

d. True, saving, personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will persevere to the end: This parable warns us to be prepared & stay prepared! Keep trusting, obeying, loving, & following Jesus! True believers must & we will!

Matthew 13:20-22: As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word & immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, & when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world & the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, & it proves unfruitful.

e. Many will be surprised that they are shut out on the last day: The five foolish virgins are surprised: “Lord, lord, open to us!” **James Boice:** Three similarities in each of Jesus’ teachings about His return in Matt 25:

1) The return of the Lord is sudden & unexpected; 2) The Lord’s return results in an unalterable division between two groups of people; 3) The people who are lost are utterly surprised at their rejection.

f. You must know Christ, & He must know you: You must have a true, genuine, living, vital relationship with Jesus - **Genesis 18:19** For I have chosen [known] him, that he may command his children & his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness & justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

- **Exodus 33:17:** And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

- **Nahum 1:7:** The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him.

- **John 10:14:** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me

- **2 Timothy 2:19:** But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his,"

g. Therefore, you must watch & be ready: V. 13: Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

1) Don’t think that you can just wait until the end & then get right with God – you may not have another chance!

2) Keep believing (**you, personally!**) & following Jesus (treasure Him above all – be eagerly waiting for Him!)

3) Keep repenting of sin

4) Keep pursuing obedience to all that Jesus has commanded & obedience to all of God’s Word

5) Keep seeing that no one leads you astray – like false christs & false teachers & false prophets

6) Keep trusting God in all manner of trials & tribulations

7) Keep enduring to the end

8) Keep pursuing the true Gospel in the face of great signs & wonders meant to deceive you

9) Keep doing all of this in the fellowship of a faithful local church

Charles Spurgeon: A great change has to be [worked] in you, far beyond any power of yours to accomplish, before you can go in with Christ to the marriage. You must, first of all, be renewed in your nature, or you will not be ready. You must be washed from your sins, or you will not be ready. You must be justified in Christ’s righteousness, & you must put on His wedding dress, or else you will not be ready. You must be reconciled to God, you must be made like to God, or you will not be ready. Or, to come to the parable before us, you must have a lamp, & that lamp must be fed with heavenly oil, & it must continue to burn brightly, or else you will not be ready. No child of darkness can go into that place of light. You must be brought out of nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous light, or else you will never be ready to go in with Christ to the marriage, & to be forever with Him.

Watch for Jesus with your own, true, saving faith & be prepared to persevere until the return of the King!

3. The Great, Final, Everlasting Wedding Day

The Bible begins & ends with a wedding! Adam & Eve in the garden. Then Jesus & the church in Revelation!

a. Israel’s Adultery: Ray Ortlund (*God's Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*): Marriage is not just another mutation of human social evolution, like democracy. It is a divine creation, intended to reveal the ultimate romance guiding all of time & eternity . . . & this is why every faithful & loving marriage is precious to God; it shines with the light of Christ's love for His people, & of their devotion to Him, in the darkness of this present evil age . . . the biblical story lifts up before us a vision of God as our Lover . . . the Gospel sounds the voice of our Husband who has proven His love for us & who calls for our undivided love in return. The Gospel reveals that, as we look out into the universe, ultimate reality is not cold, dark, blank space; ultimate reality is romance. There is a God above with love in His eyes for us & infinite joy to offer us, & He has set Himself upon winning our hearts for Himself alone. The Gospel tells the story of God's pursuing, faithful, wounded, angry, overruling, transforming, triumphant love. And it calls us to answer Him with a love which cleanses our lives of all spiritual whoredom.

- **Jeremiah 31:31-32:** [the New Covenant will] not [be] like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

- **Isaiah 54:5:** For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name

Israel committed adultery on her wedding night – the golden calf!

Hosea 1:2: When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom & have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

b. New Covenant Hope: Hosea 2:16-17, 19-20: in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' & no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, & they shall be remembered by name no more . . . And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness & in justice, in steadfast love & in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

Ray Ortlund: A fresh betrothal, as if Israel were starting out again as a pure virgin, is set before the corrupted nation as their future hope . . . The ugly past will be forgotten & they will start over again, as if nothing had ever gone wrong. And unlike the first marriage, which was such a disaster that it could not be salvaged, this new marriage will last forever . . . for Yahweh will impart to Israel a new moral character . . . Israel will not again betray her divine husband. Instead, she will 'know the LORD' in personal communion.

c. Jesus: The Perfect & Perfecting Husband: Matthew 9:14-15: Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

John the Baptist thought of Jesus as the Bridegroom: **John 3:28-30:** You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands & hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease. (God is Husband in OT; Jesus is Husband in NT=Jesus is God!)

So Jesus came as the great Bridegroom, but His bride rejected Him! To win His bride, Jesus had to be rejected by His Bride & give His life for her!!

Isaiah 53:3: Jesus was despised & rejected by men; a man of sorrows, & acquainted with grief; He was one from whom men hid their faces; He was despised & was not esteemed.

Jesus came to His own, & His own people did not receive Him (John 1:11).

He was rejected by His own bride, & He was rejected by the One He loved the most on that cross, His own Heavenly Father, when He cried out: "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken Me?" But He rose from the dead

And He is saving His church & beautifying us into His glorious, pure, spotless bride!

2 Cor 11:2: I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ

In marriage, the two become one flesh! One of the great blessings in the Christian life is that we become one flesh with Jesus when we repent & believe in Him! We are united to Him! And what a glorious future we look forward to!

Revelation 19:7, 9; 21:1-4: Let us rejoice & exult & give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, & his Bride has made herself ready . . . ⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to

the marriage supper of the Lamb." . . . ^{21:1-4} Then I saw a new heaven & a new earth, for the first heaven & the first earth had passed away, & the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, & they will be His people, & God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, & death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Jonathan Edwards: The end [goal] of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for His Son Jesus Christ [Who] might enjoy Him & on whom He might pour forth His love. And the end of all things in providence are to make way for the exceeding expressions of Christ's love to His spouse & for her exceeding close & intimate union with, & high & glorious enjoyment of Him & to bring this to pass. And therefore the last thing & the issue of all things is the marriage of the Lamb. And the wedding day is the last day, the day of judgment, or rather, that will be the beginning of it. The wedding feast is eternal; & the love & joys, the songs, entertainments & glories of the wedding never will be ended. It will be an everlasting wedding day!

Watch for Jesus with your own, true, saving faith & be prepared to persevere until the return of the King!

Christ Jesus Is The Great Bridegroom
The God-Man Come From Virgin Womb
Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room
Do Not Delay, He's Coming Soon
Trim Lamps, Don't All Your Oil Consume
Be Ready, Watch, And Don't Presume
But Long With Joy For Your Groom
Who Died And Took God's Wrathful Doom
Then Rose Alive Up From That Tomb
By Faith Alone You're Just And Bloom
For On Your Sin God's Laid The Boom
Christ Comes To All Your Gloom Consume
And Be Your Joy Like Sweet Perfume!