

PARABLES

— TRUTH HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT —

Lesson 9: The Ten Virgins

(Matthew 25:1-13)

Introduction and Context

- The parable is set between two other parables that speak of the need to be ready for when the Lord returns
 - Parable of the fig tree (24:32-35)
 - Parable of the talents (25:14-30)
- The clear warning: are you truly in the faith? And is this evident by your preparedness to meet Him?

The Custom

- The parable depicts a wedding process in an ancient Israelite village.



- *Ps. 45:13-15* All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold. In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.

The Story

- *The bridegroom represents* _____
- *The ten virgins are the bridesmaids who represent*

- ***The similarities between the virgins***
 - Each had _____ to the wedding invitation
 - Each seem to have some _____ or _____ to the bridegroom
 - Each wait with eager _____
- ***The difference between the virgins (vv. 3-4)***
 - The difference lies in their _____
- ***The delay (v. 5)***
 - The bridegroom is delayed longer than expected
- ***The realization (vv. 6-9)***
 - Both wise and foolish virgins awake and trim their lamps, but the foolish realize that they have no oil to fill their lamp

- ***The shocking moment of truth (vv. 10-12)***
 - While the foolish or “unprepared” virgins are away the bridegroom comes
 - They find themselves shut out of the marriage feast

Wrong Interpretation

- We should not view this as an allegory
 - *Allegory: a parable with a hidden meaning*
- Rabbinic interpretation
 - Virgins = Jewish scholars
 - Lamps = Torah
 - Oil = good works
- Catholic interpretation
 - Oil = good works
- Protestant interpretation
 - Oil = Holy Spirit

Right Interpretation

- The plot turns on the bridegroom’s delay
- The simple message that Jesus is wanting to emphasize is that there is a devastating blow to those who are unprepared when the bridegroom comes

- ***The shocking moment of truth (vv. 10-12) Continued ...***
 - V. 11, “Lord, lord ...!”
 - The repeated name is a Jewish idiom to express personal intimacy
 - “Abraham, Abraham ...” (Gen. 22:11)
 - “Martha, Martha ...” (Luke 10:41)
 - “Saul, Saul ...” (Acts 9:4)
 - The bridegroom (Jesus) says, “Truly (certainly), I say to you, I do not know you!”

The present reality of the church (Matt. 7:21-22)

- There are many in the church who look like they “know” Jesus, have a relationship with Jesus, and believe that Jesus “knows” them, but the haunting reality is that Jesus will say, “I NEVER knew you!”

The distinguishing mark of genuine believers (v. 13)

- The commonality among all those who have genuine, saving faith is that they are _____ to meet the coming Christ
- ***2 Tim 4:8*** *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*
- What does living prepared look like?