

Wise Preparations

Matthew 25:1-13 - NCBC, August 8, 2021

Main Point: **Be prepared for Jesus' return even though He is delayed.**

- The Parable:
 - The bridesmaids' role: festive torch-bearing (1)
 - The bridesmaids' error: insufficient preparation (2-4)
 - The bridesmaids' crisis: unexpected delay (5)
 - The bridesmaids' tragedy: sudden division (6-10)
- The Principles:
 - The unprepared will be excluded from Jesus' kingdom (11-13)
 - Jesus' return will be sudden and final.
 - You are responsible to be prepared.
 - Live everyday looking for Jesus' return.

Application: **Trust in Jesus while you patiently wait for His return.**

Opening Announcements:

- **August is Life Group Signup Month!** Everyone is highly encouraged to join a life group for the good of your soul!

<<I Need Thee Every Hour>>



Good morning church. It is good to sing out together our dependence on God. "I need you, God... every hour I need you." This song is the heart cry of faith. And sincere faith always brings glory to God.¹

So let's continue our worship now by opening our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 25.**



Today we are focusing on the first 13 verses of Matthew 25. If you need a Bible, simply raise your hand and we will gladly give you one.

¹ Romans 4:20; 2 Corinthians 1:18-20; Hebrews 11:6

I'm so thankful for Pastor Scott's super special summer sermon series on **Philemon** the last 3 weeks. We were well taught about how we ought to live together in God's family for His greater glory and praise.

And if I can get a bit personal with you for just a moment, I just want to publicly thank all our pastors and elders and deacons here at New Castle Bible Church. God has blessed our church with an amazing group of spiritual leaders, and it is such an honor and joy to be under their spiritual oversight right now.

My family and I were able to get away for an extended time of rest and refreshment...and even with all the amazing ministry that God is doing among us all right now, I didn't worry at all about how things were here. God has blessed New Castle Bible Church with a leadership team who truly love God, love all of us, and give themselves sacrificially to praying for us, teaching us God's Word, and shepherding us well to grow deeper and reach farther. It's an honor to be part of this church family with all of you...and while it was good for our family to have a vacation, it's always so good to come home to our New Castle family.

Now Pastor Scott warned us last week that we are returning to the Tribulation today! Our Bibles are open to **Matthew chapter 25** which is the second half of the Olivet Discourse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel			Kingdom offered to all Nations	
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

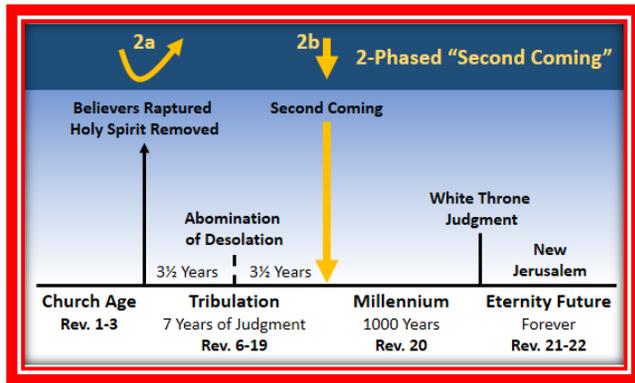
And if you remember, **chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew contain Jesus' teaching about end times.** When Jesus and His disciples walked out of Jerusalem, Jesus had predicted the destruction of Herod's temple.² Now they were sitting on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem and the temple, and the disciples asked in **verse 3 of chapter 24,**

When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and the close of the age?

After all, Jesus' disciples expected Jesus to set up His earthly kingdom now. They rightly believed that Jesus' coming – or the manifestation of His earthly kingdom – would conclude the age of sinful humanity and usher in the eternal state.

But what the disciples didn't yet understand was that Jesus had first come to earth to die...to deliver His people from the slavery of *sin* more than the slavery of *Rome*. And so this Olivet Discourse reveals,

² Matthew 24:1-2



how many different signs, or “labor pains,” must happen before Jesus comes, in His second coming, to set up His kingdom on earth.

Chapter 24 teaches that the end of the age must wait for Jesus’ second coming, which will happen in two-phases. First, our current church age³ could end at any moment when Jesus comes to rapture His church⁴ and remove His Spirit from the world.⁵

Once God’s family and God’s Spirit are removed from the earth, there will be 7 years of Tribulation where God pours out His wrath and judgment upon the wicked. These tribulations are like labor pains⁶... becoming more frequent and more severe until Jesus comes on the clouds with power and great glory.⁷

Only then, after Jesus’ *second* coming, will Jesus establish His earthly kingdom, which **Revelation 20** teaches lasts 1,000 years,⁸ after which every soul enters

³ C.f. Revelation 1-3

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1

⁵ 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

⁶ Matthew 24:4-22; cf. Revelation 6-19

⁷ Matthew 24:29-31

into an eternity of blessing or judgment based on their relationship to God Himself.⁹

So the first half of the Olivet Discourse answers the disciples’ question: what is the sign of your coming and what will happen in the end times?

But now, beginning in **chapter 24 verse 32** all the way until **chapter 25 verse 30**, Jesus is going to tell 6 different stories – or parables – that all make the same point: in view of these end times, you must be ready! You must be prepared for Jesus’ second coming!

Several weeks ago we considered the parable of the fig tree,¹⁰ the parable of Noah,¹¹ and the parable of the faithful and wicked servants.¹² Now today, we find the parable of the 10 bridesmaids in **Matthew 25, verses 1-13**.

So please stand to give your full attention to the public reading of God’s Word, as I read from the English Standard Version, from **Matthew 25, verse 1**:

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and 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 and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the

⁸ Revelation 20:1-6

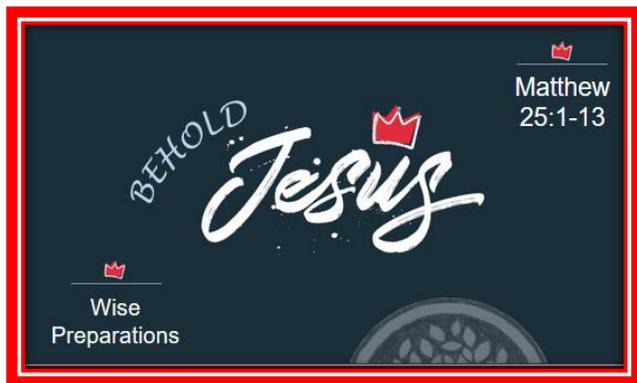
⁹ Revelation 21-22

¹⁰ Matthew 24:32-35

¹¹ Matthew 24:36-44

¹² Matthew 24:45-51

bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and 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 and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and 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.



Let's pray.

I am so excited to teach this parable today. But before we enter into this study, a careful reminder is appropriate.

¹³ For Hilary, oil was the fruit of good works; for Augustine, oil denoted joy; Chrysostom said oil meant giving help to the needy; Origen considered the oil to be the word of teaching; etc. etc. More recent interpreters have taught the oil refers to the Holy Spirit

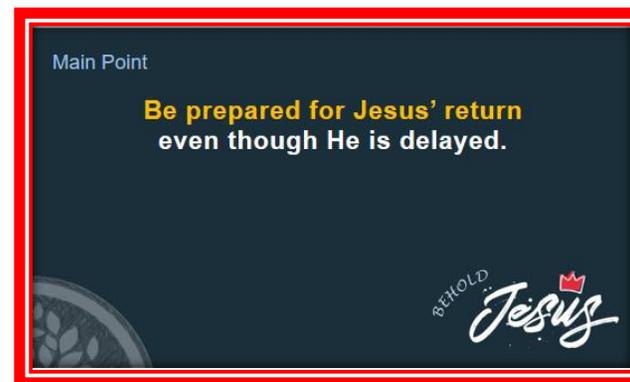
¹⁴ Some teach the dealer represent Moses and the prophets

We must remember that parables are stories that are laid alongside the truth to help illustrate the main point of the teacher. Parables, with all their detail and literary interest, typically just are making one main point.

Therefore, whenever we encounter a parable in Scripture, we must resist the urge to allegorize the parable, or make every detail mean something.

This particular parable about the 10 bridesmaids has been especially abused by well-meaning interpreters. Many church fathers debated about the meaning of the oil,¹³ or the oil-dealer,¹⁴ or the lamps.¹⁵ But allegorical interpretation always leads to unnecessary confusion.¹⁶

This parable, like all parables, simply illustrates one point. And the main point of this parable is clear:



We must be prepared for Jesus' return even though He is delayed.

¹⁵ Some teach the lamps represent good works, since Christians are exhorted to let their works shine before men (Matthew 5:16)

¹⁶ After all, how does any allegorical interpretation of the oil and lamps fit with going to buy more of it from a dealer? (C.f. Acts 8:18-24)

Jesus tells this story, along with the other 5 stories in this discourse, to repeatedly urge His disciples to be ready... to be prepared... and not be caught off guard by His second coming.

But notice, this story particularly emphasizes our need to be prepared even when His coming is delayed.

If we just look at the 3 longer parables in the Olivet Discourse, we can better understand how Jesus used each story to highlight various aspects of our readiness.

The Parable: ↓

2 servants	10 bridesmaids	Talents
Matthew 24:45-51	Matthew 25:1-13	Matthew 25:14-30
Be ready ... for Jesus could return anytime	Be ready ... even if Jesus delays His return	Be ready ... by remaining faithful until Jesus returns
Watch Expectantly	Wait Patiently	Work Diligently

REVEAL Jesus

In the parable of the 2 servants, Jesus teaches us to be ready for Jesus could return anytime. In other words, the first parable calls us to “watch expectantly” since Jesus could return at any time!

Today’s parable reverses this point, teaching us to be ready even if Jesus delays His return. We must be prepared to “wait patiently” – so that we are prepared to meet Jesus even when He doesn’t return according to our expected timetable for Him.

The twelve disciples needed this parable, didn’t they? They wanted Jesus to set up His kingdom right here and right now!¹⁷ But Jesus says – you must be ready for my second coming... for it may be more delayed than you prefer.

Next week, we’ll look closer at the story of the talents, which Jesus uses to urge us to be ready by remaining faithful until He returns. In other words, no matter whether Jesus comes early or late according to our expectations, we must be found “working diligently” for Jesus when He returns.

The Parable: ↓

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REVEAL Jesus

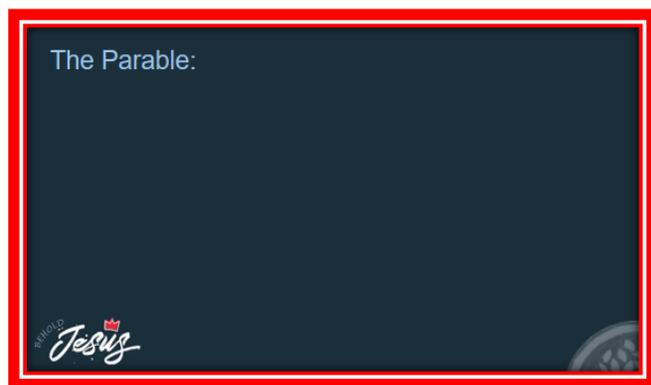
Let’s quickly compare the parable of the 2 servants, the 10 bridesmaids (which is the parable we’re studying today), and the parable of the talents which we’ll study next week, Lord willing.

All of these stories to urge us to be ready for His return. But each has a unique nuance.

¹⁷ Matthew 20:20-23; C.f. Acts 1:6

Does this help you understand how these parables relate together? They are all making the same point, just with a slightly different nuance. Jesus wants His followers to watch, wait, and work... all so that we will be ready to meet Him with joy when He comes to set up His kingdom on earth.

So then, let's dive into:



The Parable of the Ten Virgins, which teaches us to be prepared for Jesus' return even though He is delayed.

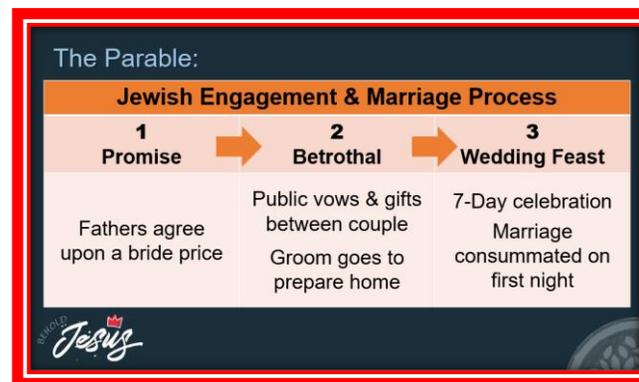
I'll first teach through the story to help us understand it, and then I'll draw out 4 principles to take away together.

In **verse 1** Jesus teaches that His second coming will be like how these 10 girls experienced the coming of the beloved groom.

Many translations use the word "virgins" –emphasizing that all 10 of these girls were not married. In that culture, girls were most typically married in their teenage years,

and their bridal party consisted of their closest girlfriends who were not yet married.

Now to properly understand this story we need to understand the wedding culture in Jesus' day.



In first-century Judaism, engagement and marriage involved three-phases. So teenagers...compare our modern dating customs to the expectations for teenagers in Jesus' day!

The engagement process began with a promise, when the father of the groom negotiated a bride price with the father of the bride. Once the father of the groom had paid this dowry, a legal contract would formalize the relationship and from that point forward, the couple was "betrothed."

Betrothal began with the couple making public vows and exchanging gifts, but they were not yet formally married nor could they live together.¹⁸ During the betrothal period (which sometimes could be a year or longer) the groom

¹⁸ C.f. This is the state Joseph and Mary were in when Jesus was conceived
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by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb – Matthew 1:18-19

would build a room onto his father's home,¹⁹ preparing a place for his bride to come live with him.²⁰

Betrothal could only be broken by legal divorce, which is why Joseph considered divorcing Mary after she was found pregnant during their betrothal period.²¹

Once the groom had prepared a place for his bride, he would send out invitations for their wedding feast.

On the first night of the wedding feast, the groom and all his attendants would travel together in a grand hoopla to the bride's home, where they would take the bride and her attendants back to his new home, where the marriage would be consummated, and the seven-day wedding feast would begin! Only after the couple consummated their marriage on the first night of the wedding feast were they officially married.

So here in **verse 1**, Jesus introduces us to 10 teenage girls who are all bridesmaids, who *took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom*.



Because get this: A Jewish bridesmaid would have one job in a wedding: festive torch-bearing. Every bridesmaid was responsible to carry a torch, even dance with a torch, to usher in the beginning of the wedding feast.

Most wedding feasts began at nightfall to give the guests time to travel during the day. So when the groom and his attendants would come to pick up his bride, all the bridesmaids would carry torches to help light the way.

Therefore, when you see the word “lamps” in **Matthew 25**, don't think small oil-lamps that could be easily extinguished by the wind. Instead think long poles with a copper funnel on the end where rags soaked in olive oil would be lit on fire to light the wedding procession as they all travelled to the bride's new home together.

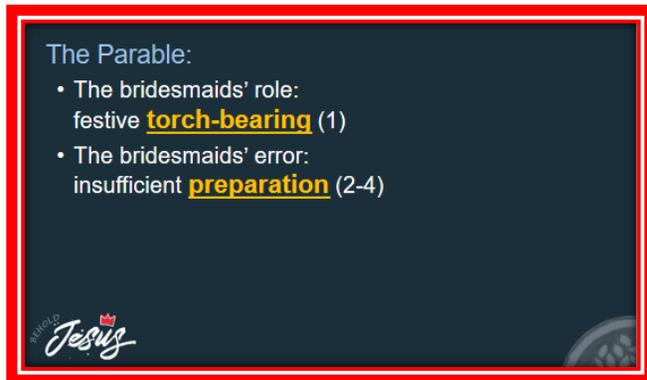
Most typically, an oil-fueled torch like this would burn for about 15 minutes, before you would need to put a new oil-soaked rag in the copper top or pour more olive oil onto the rag that was already burning.

¹⁹ <https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/insulas>

²⁰ C.f. John 14:1-2

²¹ C.f. Matthew 1:19

But in **verses 2-4**, we see,



The bridesmaids' error. For five of the bridesmaids made insufficient preparation. They took no extra oil with them. They had one job to do, and they failed to ready themselves to do this job well throughout the evening.

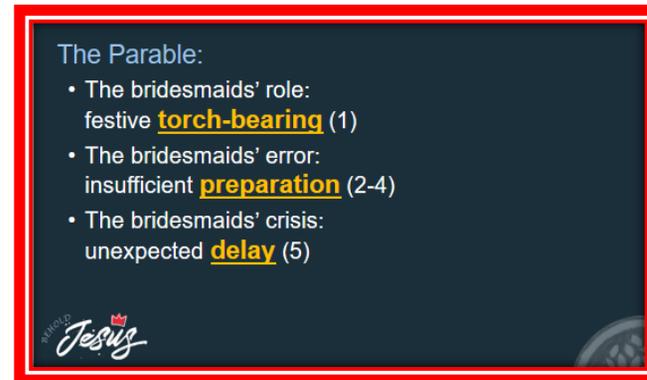
When we understand that these torches only burnt for 15 minutes or so before they needed more oil, we can better feel what the disciples must have felt when they heard this story. How foolish could a bridesmaid be, only bringing enough oil to last 15 minutes?

They were woefully unprepared! They were not ready at all for the groom to arrive and begin the wedding feast! They were so focused on living in the moment and enjoying the company of their other friends that they were foolishly ignorant of how unprepared they truly were.

Is it possible that we could be so foolish today? That we would ignorantly enjoy the company of the saints' fellowship or service, all while we remain personally unprepared to meet Jesus?

²² Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40; c.f. Luke 21:36;
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Now in **verse 5** we see,



The bridesmaids' crisis: the groom's unexpected delay. There were no cell phones or GPS tracking devices...and for some unknown reason, the groom did not arrive when expected.

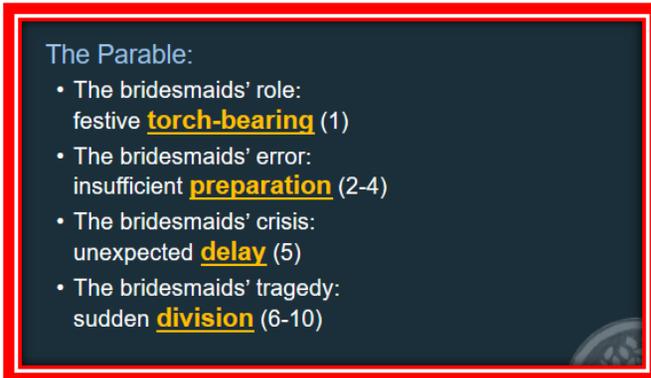
Have you ever stayed up waiting for someone to arrive at your home late at night, and you know they're on the way, but you just don't know when they will arrive?

The later it gets, what usually happens? We fall asleep don't we? And look carefully at **verse 5** – the entire bridal party fell asleep – both the wise and the foolish all became drowsy and slept.

So note this, friends: this parable is not concerned about sleeping or staying awake. Other parables emphasize that point more.²² *Both* the prepared and the unprepared slept. In fact, it was wise for all of them to sleep while they waited, since once the groom arrived they would be up for hours traveling and dancing in celebration.

Revelation 16:15

So the problem wasn't their sleeping. The problem was that some of them were not prepared for the groom to arrive which led to,



The bridesmaids' tragedy: sudden division.

In **verse 6**, they entire bridal party is startled awake in the middle of the night as someone cries out, "I can see the groom! He's almost here! Wake up... He's coming! Let's go and meet him!"

So all the bridesmaids immediately fix their hair, check their dresses, and ready their torches by adding more oil or replacing the burnt-out rags with new ones.

But in **verse 8**, the foolish suddenly realize their torches are already flickering and going out. Without fuel, they will not be able to fulfill their delightful duty! So they attempt to make their problem someone else's problem...and they tell the wise to "Give us some of your oil!"

But the wise answered, saying, "Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves."

Remember, this is not a parable about sharing or generosity. This is a parable about being prepared.

The wise knew they did not have enough fuel to keep all 10 torches going through the night... so they sent the foolish away to go and purchase the oil that they lacked.

And tragically, while the foolish bridesmaids ran off to prepare themselves, the groom arrives in **verse 10**, and *those who were ready went with him and his attendants to the wedding feast, and the door was shut* – signifying the finality of the division and separation that occurred between those who were ready and those who were not.

So that's the parable. Now Jesus gives the shocking conclusion, which causes us to consider carefully,



The Principles that we should learn from this story.

And you cannot miss the first principle found in **verses 11-13**,

The Principles:

- The unprepared will be **excluded** from Jesus' kingdom (11-13)



The unprepared will be excluded from Jesus' kingdom.

In **verse 11**, Jesus seems to be continuing the story, but it quickly becomes clear that he's no longer talking about teenage bridesmaids and a newly-wed groom...but rather Jesus is referring directly to His second coming.

Because in **verse 11**, *the foolish bridesmaids came to the groom's home, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us."*

Now of course no Jewish bridesmaid is going to come to a wedding feast and disrupt the groom during the middle of his honeymoon night. Nor would a Jewish bridesmaid call the groom "Lord."

No... the language of **verse 11** reminds the disciples of the same warning given at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew chapter 7**, which says:

Matthew 7:21-23

Behold Jesus

²¹ Not everyone who says to me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² **On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'**

²³ **And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'**



Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day ... the day of Christ's second coming... On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."

Foolish unpreparedness dishonors the groom and reveals that you were never part of His kingdom at all.

Look at **verse 12** of **Matthew 25**:

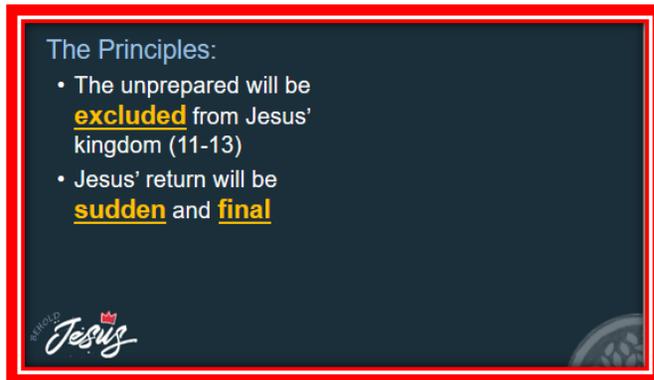
Truly I say to you, I do not know you.

This is devastating judgment. The kingdom is not for those who respond to an invitation, or who just don't want to go to hell. God's kingdom is reserved only for those whom Jesus knows personally, who have been prepared for His kingdom on God's terms – not our own.

So then look at **verse 13**,

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Loved ones, please don't miss this:



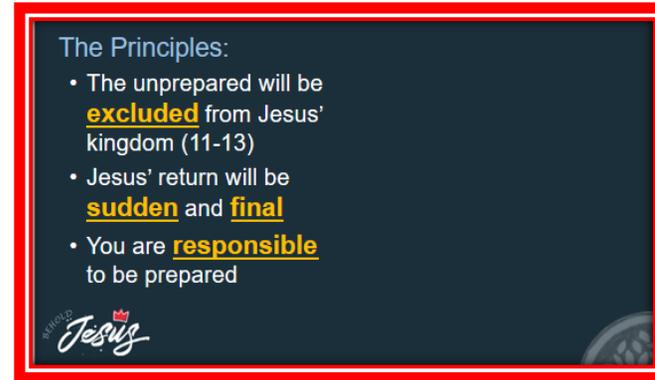
Jesus' return will be sudden and final.

The second coming of Jesus will bring immediate and irreversible judgment upon all who are outside of God's kingdom. His return shuts the door to Heaven forever.

There are no second chances. No redos. No extra time to make things right.

Now is the day of salvation... now is the time to prepare your soul for Jesus' return!

You must not be so foolish to delay the preparation of your soul to meet our Lord.



You are responsible to be prepared when Jesus comes back.

Verse 8 reminds us you can't transfer someone else's preparedness to yourself. Every soul will give a personal account to God individually.²³

So then, your parent's preparation cannot benefit you. Your spouse's preparation cannot benefit you. Your best friends or your church family's preparation cannot prepare you. You – only you – are responsible to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus.

Today is the day of salvation where you personally can make eternal preparations for your own soul, and then

²³ Romans 3:19; 14:10-12

The Principles:

- The unprepared will be **excluded** from Jesus' kingdom (11-13)
- Jesus' return will be **sudden** and **final**
- You are **responsible** to be prepared
- Live everyday **looking** for Jesus' return

Live everyday looking for Jesus' return.

Only fools content themselves with now-oriented living. But the wise live everyday with an eye on eternity. Looking and watching and staying ready for Jesus' return. Wise souls live with an eternal perspective. As Jim Elliott said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Therefore today I urge each of us with all the energy and sincerity that I can muster to,

Main Point

Be prepared for Jesus' return even though He is delayed.



Be prepared for Jesus' return even though He is

delayed.

Learn from the story of these bridesmaids... and even though it's been nearly 2,000 years since Jesus promised to return ... you must not be so foolish as to be caught unprepared!

Get ready for the second coming of Jesus today!

Now then we ask: what does it mean to be prepared? How can I prepare my soul to meet Jesus as my true Lord and King?

And the simple answer is to,

Application

Trust in Jesus while you patiently wait for His return.



Trust in Jesus while you patiently wait for His return.

To be prepared means to be born again, or to have your soul converted by the Spirit of the Living God.²⁴ To be prepared is to in fact receive the heavenly wedding garment of righteousness²⁵ that is only given to those who cast themselves entirely upon God's mercy for their

²⁴ John 3:3-5; Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:3-5

²⁵ Isaiah 61:10; c.f. Matthew 22:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21

salvation. To be prepared to meet the Lord is to be given a new heart²⁶ that truly loves God²⁷ and His appearing!²⁸

You see, there's only one way to prepare your soul for entrance into God's kingdom ... and that is to repent of your sins... turn from your self-salvation projects... and humbly depend on the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus for your salvation.

Perhaps I can say it this way... You are only prepared for Jesus' second coming after God Himself has prepared you. So cry out for God's grace today... for everyone who humbly depends on Jesus will be saved!²⁹

This is a very important sermon loved ones. How you respond to this sermon has the potential to affect your life 10 billion years from now.

So let me gently but boldly speak to the different people who are listening right now.

If you know that you are currently wandering far from God, and you know that you are not prepared to meet Jesus today... let me urge you... do not let the conviction of this moment pass you by! Do not believe that it will be easier in the future to make spiritual preparations for your soul. That is Satan's lie!

Every time you say no to God's invitation for salvation, your heart becomes more resistant to God's grace. Today is the day of salvation – none of us are promised tomorrow. It will never be easier to surrender your pride

²⁶ Jeremiah 32:36-41; Ezekiel 36:22-32

²⁷ 1 Peter 1:8-9

²⁸ 2 Timothy 4:8

and turn from sin than right now. Cry out to God in prayer right now – confess your sins, believe that Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension is sufficient to welcome you into God's family today.

Likewise, if you are religious, but you don't honestly love Jesus nor look forward to His second coming... wake up and smell the spiritual coffee today! Your association with God's church is not sufficient to prepare you for eternity. No amount of religious ministry or external sacrifice is sufficient to prepare you.

You must receive a new heart that truly loves Jesus more than you love sin. You must be born again by God Himself.

Listen, no matter who you are, no matter how proud you may be... hear the good news of **John chapter 6 verse 37**: *whoever comes to me I will never cast out!*

Therefore dear false professor... Humble yourself and trust in Jesus, that you may be genuinely prepared for eternity today!

I recognize as well that there are some genuine believers here this morning who have weak consciences. Although you trust in Christ, you wonder if in fact you've trusted well enough?

O for you dear weak Christian, let me assure you that God does not call us to sinless perfection but to continual preparation.³⁰ It is your sensitivity to these warnings that

²⁹ Romans 10:9-13

³⁰ 1 John 1:8-10

assures you of your salvation, and warning passages like these are actually a means of God's grace to keep your soul depending on Christ's finished work on your behalf.

Therefore, never look to your own religion to find your own assurance. Rather look only to the finished work of Christ, and therein squarely place your confidence. For Christ alone prepares souls for a blessed eternity in His kingdom! Salvation belongs to our God!³¹ He will not cast out anyone who repents of sin and trusts Him for their salvation.

Finally, if you are listening today with the blessed assurance that God's grace has mercifully hidden your past, present, and future in Christ,³² and you have been prepared to meet the Lord, then I urge you to live for your future now. Invest your money, and your time, and your energies, and your relationships in the kingdom that will soon be revealed.

Being made wise by God's grace, we must no longer live as fools. Cast off living for the approval of men and the accumulation of riches. Look for Jesus to come quickly and work diligently for His glory while we patiently wait for His return.

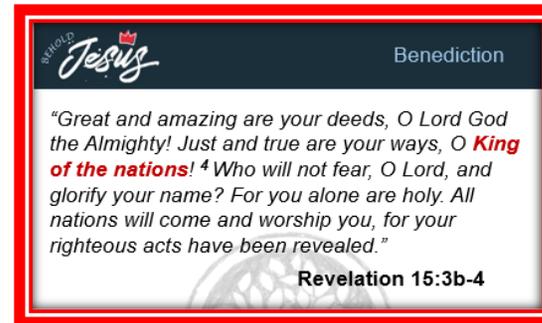


After all, even though His coming is delayed, we all must be prepared for His return.

Let's pray.

<< Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy >>

Let's pray our benediction together:



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

³¹ Exodus 15:2; Psalm 3:8; Isaiah 12:2, 43:11; Jeremiah 3:23; Hosea 13:4; Jonah 2:9; Revelation 7:10, 12:10, 19:1

³² Colossians 3:1-3

Recommended Resources on Wise Preparations:

- Deuteronomy 29:18-19
- Jeremiah 2:32
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Mark 13:32-37
- Luke 12:35-40; 13:24-28
- Romans 13:11
- 1 Corinthians 7:29, 31
- Titus 2:12-13
- James 5:7-9
- 1 Peter 4:7
- 2 Peter 3:8-10
- Revelation 16:15

- Dr. Vlach on The Olivet Discourse - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3yOW-Gc0Uw>

- *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, Paul Benware
- *Maranatha Our Lord, Come!*, Renald Showers
- *The Second Coming*, John MacArthur

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Matthew 24:3. What questions were the disciples asking Jesus? What answers would they have been expecting (c.f. Mt 21:9-11; 23:39; 24:2; Acts 1:6)? How does the parable of the 10 virgins (Mt. 25:1-13) help Jesus answer their questions?
2. Read Matthew 25:3. Recount a time when you foolishly lived in the moment without proper regard for future consequences. How did it turn out for you in the end? How did it turn out for the foolish bridesmaids in the end (c.f. 25:12)?
3. Review Matthew 25:5. How does the delay in Jesus' second coming tempt you (or others) to justify our unprepared condition? (c.f. 2 Peter 3:1-18, esp. vv. 3-4, 11, 14-15, 17). How should true Christ-followers respond when His return is delayed beyond our expectation?
4. Review Matthew 25:8-9. Were the wise uncharitable? Why can't your own preparation to meet Jesus be transferred to another? What does it mean to be prepared to welcome Jesus' return?
5. Compare Matthew 7:21-23 with 25:11-12. What is meant by verse 12? Why is this so tragic? Are you prepared to meet our Lord even now?