

Are You Ready?
Matthew 25:1-13
April 26, 2015

Introduction

This is the last sermon on the Glory of Heaven series. We have scaled heaven and seen what it looks like and then we have seen our rewards. The biggest reward that we will receive as Christians is when we see our God face-to-face and be with Him forever. When we see God, we will receive our eternal rest. When we see God we will struggle no more. That is the beauty of heaven. We cannot comprehend, conceive, or even imagine what heaven will be like apart from a few descriptions of it in the Bible. The question I have to ask from all that we have studied, are we ready for heaven?

Today, we are looking at Jesus' parable of the Ten Virgins, and it is an apt ending to our series. It is apt because Jesus warns us to be ready. His warnings still rings throughout the years and will continue to do so until He comes back. This is the sermon that Jesus gives to the disciples about His Second Coming, and it is found in **Matthew 24 and 25**.

The sermon begins when the disciples ask Jesus a question.

Matthew 24:3 *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

The disciples want to know when Jesus will establish His Kingdom. Jesus says four times in **chapter 24 of Matthew** that no one will know the time when our Lord comes back.

Matthew 24:36 *No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

Matthew 24:42 *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

Matthew 24:44 *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

Matthew 24:50 *The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.*

Four times Jesus gives us this warning to be prepared for His coming. He then gives this parable of the Ten Virgins, and at the end of the parable, He warns the listener to be ready when He comes back again. This is what the parable is about: the unexpectedness and suddenness of His coming. When He comes, we should be ready. Jesus tells us which group was ready and which group was not ready. This is a simple parable with rich meaning.¹

¹ This parallels the fact that in His First Coming, people were not ready for Him. There were plenty of signs for the Jews to recognize that Jesus was coming, but they did not see it. He came to His own people, but they did not recognize Him, nor did they accept Him (**John 1:10-11**). Because they rejected Him, God has hidden Himself from them (**Luke 19:41**).

Matthew 25:1-13

1 At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

- At that time
 - His Second Coming
- Meeting the bridegroom (wedding)
 - For the Jews—wedding was THE event in villages and towns
 - Extended celebration for everyone; a joyous festival
 - Three elements of a Jewish wedding²
 - Engagement Period
 - Official contract between 2 fathers who were giving their son and daughter to each other
 - Sometime after the contract, the couple would make vows and binding promises (betrothal)
 - They were considered married, even though they have not lived together or consummated their marriage
 - For them to break up = divorce
 - The young man has to provide a place for his bride (as add-on or his own house, purchase land and cultivate it)
 - Consummation Period
 - When everything is ready; bridegroom and his men will go to bride's house and collect his bride and go to his house (along with her bridesmaid)
 - Usually after sundown—they would go through village with torches
 - Celebration of singing and joy
 - Bridegroom and groom would consummate their marriage
 - Celebration Period
 - Wedding Feast for up to 7 days!
- Ten virgins
 - Virgin = unmarried girl who is a virgin, usually young
 - Ladies that were with the bride, to get ready to go to the feast
 - Carried lamps
 - Actually torches³
 - Wooden stem with dish to hold cloth dipped in oil (used for lighting)
 - Torches were invitations to get into the wedding feast
- Meeting the bridegroom
 - Meet = greeting an official, a special event

2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise.

- Who are the virgins?
 - Professed Christians who are waiting for the coming of Jesus
 - They have the outward mark of believing and waiting for Jesus' coming
- 5 foolish and 5 wise
 - Not easily distinguished (outwardly because they have the same garment on)

² Packer, J.I. and M.C. Tenney, *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 431-439.

³ Vincent, Marvin, *Vincent's Word Study* (E-Sword module). See also A.T. Robertson *Robertson's Word Picture*.

- However, God knows who is wise and who is foolish
- What is the difference?

3 *The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4* *The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.*

- Oil jars
 - Jars that carried oil so they can use to light the cloth on top
- Oil—what is it?
 - True salvation—those whose hearts have been changed by God
 - Imputed righteousness—symbol of transformed inward life
- Wise = prepared
 - Had flask with them—they were prepared
 - They were saved
- Foolish = unprepared
 - It was all external
 - They professed to be Christians but they are not saved

Matthew 22:8-13 *Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. 13 Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

2 Timothy 3:5 *having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

James 2:26 *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

- Five of them were unprepared
 - Common problem in church?
 - Yes, many people think they are Christians but are really not

5 *The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.*

- Period of waiting before He comes

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

- Midnight
 - Not a normal time to start a wedding
 - Unexpected

1 Thessalonians 5:2 *for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*

- Cry rang out
 - Second Coming

7 Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. **8** The 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.'

- Salvation is non-transferable
 - We cannot offer salvation for others
 - Every person must have his / her life right before God
 - Christians cannot share their oil with others
 - Oil was plentiful and available, but not at midnight!

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. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' **12** But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

- Too late
 - Very similar to Noah when God shut the door
 - Very frightening scene

Luke 6:46-49 Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? **47** I will show you what he is like who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice. **48** He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. **49** But the one who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.

Matthew 7:21-23 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. **22** Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' **23** Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'

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

- Ongoing warning to all

Coram Deo

Do not be caught unaware or unprepared. Do not be caught in the snares of life and forget heaven. IT is easy to be deceived. We are to examine ourselves to see if we are still in the faith (**2 Corinthians 13:5**).