

Stories Jesus Told

This Wait is Killing Me - YAWN!!!

Matthew 24:43-44

February 27, 2021

The Context:

Jesus and His disciples left the Temple for the last time. As they climbed the slopes of the Mount of Olives they turned and the disciples gazed in awe at the splendor of the Temple, *"Look at how beautiful it is!"* they gasped.

In a sweeping motion Jesus responded, *"Do you see all this? Not a single stone will be left standing."* And with that, Jesus began his last great sermon, combining events that would unfold in less than 50 years with events many thousands of years into the future.

- **Matthew 24:36-37, 43-44** - No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

In order to help the disciples understand, Jesus told a story:

The Parable {Matthew 25:1-13}:

At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² 5 of them were foolish and 5 were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them. ⁴ The wise, however, took extra oil. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶ "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' 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.' ¹⁰ "The bridegroom arrived while they were gone to buy oil. The 5 wise virgins went in with him to the wedding banquet and the door was shut. ¹¹ "When the 5 foolish virgins returned, they called at the door, 'Open the door for us!' ¹² "But the groom replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' ¹³ "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

The Lessons:

The key question being asked by this story is, "Are you ready to meet Jesus --- Are you prepared?"

For ancient Jews, marriage consisted of two ceremonies – the betrothal and the wedding – each was marked by a celebration separated by an interval of time – often between 1 and 2 years **{It was the groom's father who decided that the preparations were complete and the wedding could proceed}**. At the betrothal the woman was legally married, although she still remained in her father's house. The Groom returned to his father's house to prepare a new home for his Bride. The Wedding Procession was a loud and a colorful event that consisted of a large parade of people. The Groom would make his way to his Bride's home. Then he would take her from her father's house and would bring her to the new house they would share. The Bride never knew when the Groom would arrive and so she was always prepared, always living in expectation of His arrival. She'd always keep the lamp burning, just in case he arrived in the middle of the night.

Jesus is the Bridegroom and before He left, He promised that after everything had been prepared, he'd come back **{John 14:2-3}**.

He also made a couple of things very clear: Stuff is going to happen in the meantime and only my Father knows when the time is right for me come and get you. And since neither one of us knows when that will be, get ready and remain ready --- be prepared at a moment's notice.

The 10 bridesmaids represent God's people – those who have accepted the wedding invitation. At first, they are all filled with joyful anticipation..... The Groom is coming!!! Soon!!! Anytime now!!!

But He doesn't arrive. And as everyone knows, waiting can be exhausting. Boredom sets in and one by one eyelids grow heavy, someone yawns in the corner and finally the lamps go out.

EVERYONE falls asleep.

From outward appearance the bridesmaids look the same. They're all wearing the same dress --- it's difficult to tell them apart. The only difference was the oil. The five foolish bridesmaids had made a simple life choice – not to bring extra oil – as a result they were not prepared for the Grooms unexpected arrival and were locked outside the wedding feast.

Remember the wedding culture ... there was nothing unexpected or unusual about the delay. Because delay was a part of wedding tradition, it actually became the source of the lack of preparation. All the bridesmaids intended to be a part of the wedding feast and the action of the 5 foolish girls was not malicious. It was a matter of neglect.

Just because you look right, doesn't mean we are right.

- **1 Samuel 16:7** - But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

It's possible to look like a Christian, talk like a Christian, carry a Bible and go to church every week and even desire to go to heaven like a Christian and yet be unprepared because your Christianity is only skin deep. You have no actual relationship with Jesus **{loving church and loving Jesus are NOT the same thing}** and therefore your life has not been transformed into the image and likeness of His life. You don't know Him and He doesn't know you.

There are many normal, everyday things that can distract us. Work needs to be done. Bills need to be paid. Groceries need to be purchased ... and on and on it goes.

It is vital that we don't get caught up in the routine of the world and forget our relationship with Jesus because we may not even notice the spiritual oil is missing, until it is too late.

A relationship with Jesus will not just happen.

Let's reread **verses 8-9** - **The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'** '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.'

That seems a bit mean spirited doesn't it? Why didn't they just share?

Remember the bigger question is "Are **YOU** ready for the return of Jesus?"

You cannot acquire a relationship with Jesus by osmosis

Faith does not rub off just by sitting next to someone who has a vital relationship with Christ.

You cannot **"catch"** faith like you catch a cold.

You cannot borrow it from your parents.

You can't transfer spiritual growth.

A relationship with Jesus is intentionally built and there are no shortcuts to the process.

The 5 foolish virgins may have appeared to be religious and righteous, but they were devoid of the Holy Spirit... Instead of living lives that had been truly transformed by the power of Christ, they were playing a part.

This may sound harsh, but it's important to hear the truth... It's important for each of us to assess the genuineness of our faith...

I am certain Jesus ended His sermon the way He did because humans find it so easy to focus on one aspect of the story **{the events}** while totally ignoring what's most important **{being prepared}**.

SDA's are really well known for a few things: food, Sabbath, and end-time prophecy. When it comes to end-time prophecy, much of what we focus on are the events themselves. Every time there is a war or the stock market crashes or there is some great natural disaster, we sound the alarm, **"It's a sign!! Jesus is on His way!! Soon!!! Anytime now!!!"**

It is very much like the boy who cried wolf. And just like my grandfather, who always missed the exit because he was concentrating so hard on looking for road signs, we lose sight of the importance of being prepared because we are so focused on events.

- **2 Peter 3:8-14** - But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. ¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.
- **Ellen White {COL 411-414}** - Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan. The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live In this life they have not entered into fellowship with Christ; therefore they know not the language of heaven, they are strangers to its joy We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven. {COL 413.2}

It doesn't matter when the Bridegroom returns and all the things that happen in the meantime should not be our focus. What matters is this, are you prepared? Do you know The Bridegroom and does He know you? Are you ready when He does come back?

The story of the 10 bridesmaids is a timeless reminder of the vital importance and eternal significance of our daily walk with Jesus.