

Be Ready

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Preacher: Aaron Hoak

[0:00] Before Pastor Aaron comes and preaches the Word of God to us, let us turn to Matthew 25. We'll be reading the first 13 verses. Listen to the Word of the Lord Jesus.

From Matthew 25, verse 1. At that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil and jars along with their lamps.

The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, the cry rang out, Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!

Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 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.

[0:59] Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves. 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.

Later, the others also came. Sir, sir, they said, open the door for us! But he replied, I tell you the truth. I don't know you. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

If Jesus were to come back right this instant, right now, would you be ready?

If the skies were to part and the trumpet sounds, and Jesus were to come down from the earth, and we walk out and we see cemeteries turned up as those who have died go to meet their maker first, and then we were caught up to the skies after that, would you be ready to stand before the great judge of all the earth?

Those of you who have been putting off, getting right with God, thinking you had more time, do you think you would be ready?

[2:30] Right now, at this moment, are you prepared for your eternal destiny? Are you going where you think you're going?

When Jesus comes again? Or when you die? Whichever comes first. We've talked this morning about reasons for which we praise the Lord.

One of the reasons to praise our God is that Jesus is coming again. And that is a glorious truth. And those who are in Christ can say, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

And we find great comfort knowing that our Lord, though He tarries, is coming again. But for those who are not in Christ, those who are not ready, the coming of Christ ought to be something that fills your hearts, your minds with terror.

You won't always have time to prepare. When Jesus comes again, it will be too late to get ready.

We've read this morning from Matthew 25. And Jesus' own conclusion after His parable is this, Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

[3:46] We don't know the day. I can't tell you that Jesus is going to come back at this moment, or within the space of a few hours, or days, or weeks, or months, or years. I don't know the day or the hour when He is going to come again.

But when He comes, will you be ready? One commentator, William Hendrickson, says this is the lesson of the parable. Preparedness is essential.

For the time is coming when getting ready will no longer be possible. The door will be shut. That's how the parable ends. The door is shut. The wise, the ready are on the inside, celebrating the feast with their Lord.

The foolish are on the outside, hearing the words, I do not know you. Which side of the door will you be on when Jesus comes again?

On the inside at the feast, partaking with Him in glory? Or on the outside, consigned to an eternity apart from Him? Our Lord has sobering words for us to consider this morning, and so let us listen carefully to His Word.

[4:55] There are ten virgins in our story, and we're told that the Kingdom of Heaven will be compared to these ten. All of them have the same goal. They all want to be part of the procession of the bridegroom going to the place where the wedding feast will be held.

Partaking in that feast on the night of His wedding. And each are confident that they're going to arrive at that goal. Now, five of them have good reason for that confidence because they're wise, they're prepared. But the other five have no reason for their confidence.

They're fools. And they are unprepared. And to learn from these ten ladies this morning, we simply want to consider the foolish, the wise, and then the question, what will Jesus say to you?

Or you can ask the question, which are you? Foolish or wise? Because to answer that question is to answer the question, what will Jesus say to you in that great day?

Jesus is coming again. Though He tarries, He will come. And the question for you this morning is, what will He say to you when He comes?

[6:05] Will you be ready for the coming of our Lord? We want to first then consider these foolish virgins. The foolish virgins are the ones who were unprepared. And their story is something like this.

It begins with ten of them taking their oil wick lamps to go and meet the bridegroom. It's probably already dark outside. Perhaps dusk is just falling. And it seems that there was a tradition in these days, in this culture, of an evening torch-lit procession to the house of the groom.

It was a celebration. In this case, it appears that the groom is somewhere else. Perhaps he's getting ready with some of his, what we would call groomsmen, with some of the men.

He's at another place getting ready. And then there's going to be a procession from wherever he is now to the house, to his own house, where the wedding feast has been prepared. And others will join the procession, including these ten virgins.

Something like our bridesmaids, perhaps. But it's at the time when the sun has gone down and there's no natural light. And so they have their lamps at ready.

[7:16] So they'll be able to see where they're going. And so the ten go out to meet them in the twilight. Lamps already burning. These are oil lamps with a wick that goes down into some sort of reservoir of oil.

And the oil soaks up the wick and then you light the wick. Some of you kids probably never seen a lamp like that before. We used to have one in my house. I'm not that old. We had electricity too. But we had one for decoration. It was a glass lamp. It had a glass bowl in the bottom. It had oil. And then a place where you could turn a little dial and it would raise or lower the wick. And you would light that wick.

And as long as you have oil down in that reservoir to be soaking up into the wick, you've got light. Closest thing maybe some of you young people have seen is like a tiki torch outside. There's a little canister of oil and the wick goes down in and as long as you've got oil, you've got light.

You've got fire. Higher you've got the wick raised, the bigger the light. Lower the wick is raised, the smaller the flame. And so, in this story, these ten virgins go out with their lamp.

[8:17] But there are five of them that don't have any extra oil with them. Only what's right there in the reservoir is what they have. And they're labeled as foolish. It's the word we get our word moron from.

They're fools. They're not wise because they didn't bring any extra oil. And right at the beginning, we're given these two groups, the wise and the foolish. And that makes us think maybe those two categories will be significant.

And they will be. Well, the bridegroom tarries. We don't know what kept him. It could be any one of a number of things. For us, it would be maybe the wrong size tux and you had to go back and switch things out.

Who knows what kept the man? But he is delayed. And while these virgins wait, they get tired. It's evening already. It's dark out. They're sleepy. It's been a long day of getting ready for the wedding feast.

And they're tired. And so, they fall asleep. And as they sleep, their lamps burn on. And continue to burn. And the level of oil gets lower and lower in their lamps.

[9:21] And they're asleep. And finally, at midnight, comes a shout. The bridegroom's coming! And you can imagine. Have you ever been wakened out of a dead sleep? Maybe an hour or two hours you've been asleep and something, a loud sound, awakes you with a jolt and your adrenaline pumps through your veins and you're a little bit shaky on your feet because you've just woken up and you're not sure where you are or what you're doing.

And all of a sudden, they realize, tonight's the night of the wedding feast. And the bridegroom's coming. That's the shout that awoken them. And so they go and they find their lamps and there's just perhaps just a flicker left at the end of that wick.

And they check and the oil is gone from their lamps. And so they begin to trim their lamps. They cut off the burned part of the wick and raise the wick. and then a sinking feeling for these five foolish virgins.

We're out of oil. There's no oil left in the bottom of the wick.