

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13 King James Version (KJV)

25 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Introduction:

- How many of you have ever run out of gas? In most audiences, this would be nearly everyone. It would appear that every year at least a half million people

call for roadside assistance because they have run out of gas.

- One might understand this happening a generation ago, when gas gauges were not entirely accurate, and when all the warning lights of our day were non-existent.
- But now we have warning messages that our fuel is running low (giving us perhaps an hour more of driving), and then additional progressively urgent warnings indicating just how many estimated miles of driving we have left.
- One must say that most people who run out of fuel today are “without excuse.”
- Why, then, do we do it, seemingly as often today as people did years ago, when all of the advantages of technology were not available?
- We’ll come back to this question at the end of our message. In our text, it is not gasoline that is lacking, but olive oil “the fuel burned in the lamps of Jesus’ day.
- And, I believe we will discover that the five foolish virgins did not really “run out” of oil; they never had any.

Context: Who Jesus is talking to!

- Matthew 24:3 (NET)
- 24:3 As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, **his disciples** came to him **privately** and said, “Tell us, when will these things

happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

- **Our Lord issued various warnings (Matthew 24:4-5)**
- 24:4 Jesus answered them, “Watch out that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many.

Matthew 24: 32-51

- Jesus speaks of what His disciples can and cannot know, and on the basis of both, He gives some specific words of instruction regarding the last times.
- 32 “Learn this parable from the fig tree: Whenever its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near, right at the door. 34 I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. 36 “But as for that day and hour no one knows it “not even the angels in heaven “except the Father alone. 37 For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. 38 For in those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark. 39 And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the same at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 There will be two women grinding grain with a mill; one will be taken and one left.
- 42 “Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been alert and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when

you do not expect him. 45 “Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom the master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that slave whom the master finds at work when he comes. 47 I tell you the truth, the master will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But if that evil slave should say to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ 49 and he begins to beat his fellow slaves and to eat and drink with drunkards, 50 then the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not foresee, 51 and will cut him in two, and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:32-51)

The parable of the fig tree

- The parable of the fig tree is employed to teach us that there are certain signs which indicate the “season” of His return.
- When the fig tree begins to sprout new leaves, we can be assured that summer is near. So, too, when we see “all these things” “ that is, the things Jesus has just described, including the abomination of desolation “ then we can be assured that the season of our Lord’s return is at hand. Just how broad is this time frame, this season? One generation in length (Matthew 24:34).
- Although we are meant to recognize the “season” of our Lord’s return, we are not meant to know the exact time “ not the day nor the hour.
- This parable, like others in this section, indicates that this distinction between believers and unbelievers, between those who will enter the kingdom of heaven and those who will be confined in hell, may not be apparent until the coming of Christ.
- It is at the second coming, when men stand before our Lord, that their true spiritual status (and thus their destiny) is known.

- Several times in the Gospels, Jesus makes it clear that there will be some surprises (regarding who is in the kingdom and who is not) when He returns.

The Unique Contribution of the Parable of the Ten Virgins

- What, then, is the unique contribution of the parable of the ten virgins?
- Several clues to the unique message of this parable should be noted.
- *We see that this parable describes what the “kingdom of heaven” will be like at the time of the second coming.* Some would say (and I would agree) that **this parable describes the condition of the church at the second coming.**
- **Jesus is speaking here (as in this entire discourse) to His disciples;** He is not speaking to His adversaries, the Jewish religious leaders, nor to the crowds. **Thus, this parable, like the others in this section, should serve as a warning to the church.**
- **Second, we should observe that for some period of time the five foolish virgins were almost indistinguishable from the five wise virgins.**
- **The five foolish virgins addressed the groom as “Lord” twice (Matthew 25:11).**
- **The five foolish virgins looked just like the five wise virgins. They all were invited to the wedding celebration, and they all came, expecting to participate in the wedding.**
- **The five virgins were not different from the five wise virgins, except for one thing “ the foolish virgins brought their lamps but no oil.**
- **Third, none of the ten virgins knew when the groom would arrive, and all ten slept when he took longer than expected to arrive. We do not find the**

five foolish virgins asleep, while the five wise virgins are busily at work. All slept, and all were awakened by the news of the groom's approach.

- The emphasis here is not really on working, as it is in the earlier and later parables. This is because our salvation is not the result of our works, but of His work on Calvary (Ephesians 2:1-10).

Closing

- **First**, those who run out of gas (or refuse to buy oil) are the people who refuse to heed the warnings of God's Word and the invitation of salvation through faith in Jesus.
- Those who don't purchase fuel are those who don't think they need it, at least at the moment.
- ***Second***, those who run out of gas are lulled into a false confidence by the fact that everything appears to be fine at the moment.
- The engine is running smoothly; there are no preliminary chugs or sputtering of the engine. And so we feel confident in our choice not to purchase fuel. Jesus told us that He would come at a time when we did not expect Him (Matthew 24:44).
- ***Third***, those who run out of fuel are those who wrongly suppose that they still have plenty of time to get it later.
- **We know when our gas gauge is low. Good grief, we can see the flashing lights on the dash or heads up display.**
- But we lull ourselves into thinking that there is still plenty of time to deal with the problem.
- Surely there will be another gas station ahead, and not too far. This false confidence has gotten many people into trouble.
- **The coming of our Lord will be sudden and unexpected, and when He comes, all chances of changing our course have been**

forfeited. The coming of our Lord ends our opportunity to turn to Him in faith, and it seals our doom.