The Wise Virgins

Zanesville, OH | December 15, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Matt. 25:1-13

**Intro**:

* The Parable of the Ten Virgins is one of three parables told in Matthew chapter 25. It concludes Jesus’ Olivet discourse and forms the cornerstone for why He went to the cross. This parable and all parables of Jesus find their ultimate fulfillment at the end of human history when everyone will stand before their maker and answer for the deeds they have done. With that in mind, Jesus tells a story of the two groups of people He will return to find at His second coming. This morning our intention is to focus solely on the behavior and characteristics of the wise virgins. What do they tell us about our lives as Christians and what it needs to be?

1. **The Five Wise Virgins**
   1. There are ten virgins in this story. The number is probably intended to be symbolic and therefore representing all of humanity. All of humanity can be divided into two groups as Jesus Himself will state in this very chapter (25:32-33).
   2. The use of the imagery of virgins recall the Jewish wedding customs of the day. Virgins formed part of the wedding party in which the bridegroom escorted his new bride to the wedding feast. They were to be prepared for his coming because it was unknown.
   3. Jesus separates the ten virgins in His description of their characteristics (vv. 1-4). Five are foolish and five are wise. We will focus on the wise. The five virgins who are called wise is not Jesus’ way of denoting their intellectual capacity but rather Jesus is pointing out their success in making the right decision by properly executing their duties.
   4. The first thing that we are told about the wise virgins in the story is that they took oil in flasks in addition to the oil that was already in the lamps they carried (v. 4). They were a prepared group. For doing this, they are described as being wise.
   5. The other aspect of this story that shows their prudence is the response they give to their compatriots. Knowing that if they share their oil they will not have enough or even run out, they rightfully decline their oil to those who were clearly unprepared. This makes them wise because they understand the importance of the bridegroom’s coming.
   6. Because of their behavior, we can conclude that these wise virgins to do presume to know when the bridegroom is coming. The don’t set expectations that cannot be met but instead they simply prepare in the event that he is delayed (v. 4). And because they are prepared, they can go to “sleep.”
   7. The meaning of that phrase is probably that which pertains to the passing of time in the ordinary day to day activities of life. The wise virgins can afford to go about their day as usual because the bridegroom is always at the forefront of their mind. On any given day, they are ready for his coming.
   8. **Who are these wise virgins and what do they mean in relation to us?** The wise virgins in this story symbolize the faithful disciples of God. They do not sit around and assume a relationship with God that may be non-existent.
   9. They labor in the kingdom from day one to ensure that their lives are right with God. Part of making one’s life right with God is ensuring that preparation is done so that when Christ returns, regardless of when that is, they are ready to meet Him.
   10. The lives of prepared Christians is dominated by their acts of prayer, benevolence, love, willingness to change when necessary and constant growth. The best athletes do not settle for one win or one championship. They keep improving and growing. The same is true for Christians (Eph. 4:22-6:18; 1 Thess. 4:1, 10).
   11. Prepared Christians know the ball is in their court and the pick it up and run to the other end to make it count. They put in the work (Eph. 5:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:13). They suffer, they sacrifice and they serve.
   12. The saints that will enter the feast with Christ are those who will be willing to respond to their friends across the aisle in the same manner the wise virgins did (v. 9). It’s not that they’re selfish and don’t want to share but instead they understand the nature of salvation and faith. It is individual and personal.
   13. Faithful disciples will advise and offer as much help as they can but they will also encourage them to grow their own faith, make the necessary changes and do what it takes as long as they have opportunity.

**Conclusion:** When Jesus returns, He will take notice of those whose lamps are burning brightly. Those are the ones who will enter the feast with Him (Lk. 12:35-38; 1 Pet. 3:15). Going back to Jesus’ conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 7:24-25, we learn what makes these virgins wise. They are wise because they heed the word of God and start with Jesus, stay with Jesus and end with Jesus! They can afford to go about their daily activities because Jesus is always first in the lives. He is truly their Lord and they long for the day He returns. They are ready! May we do the same.