

## Jesus Gave the Parable of the Ten Virgins

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the judgment that will come on every person that is not prepared for the coming of Christ to rule on this earth. Jesus went on to give a parable about ten virgins. Five of these will prepare for the coming of Christ to rule and five will not. In this topic, we will see how to help our children learn to explain this parable to others.

In this parable, we see that Jesus used the pattern for a Jewish wedding, during the time He was on the earth, to teach a very important lesson about the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 25:1-5 says, “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.” The first events of a wedding happened when the groom came to the home of her parents to get the bride. This was followed by the wedding procession that went from the home of the bride’s parents to the home of the groom. Then, the completion of the wedding and the celebration happened at the home of groom, which became the home of the new couple.

Most weddings happened in the evening so the virgins (bridesmaids) would each bring a lamp or a torch to provide light for the wedding procession from the first home to the second home. In this parable, we see that five of the virgins were wise and five were foolish. All the virgins took their lamps. The difference between the two groups was that five took oil for their lamps and five did not take any oil for their lamps. Jesus illustrated an important lesson about oil when He began His public ministry in Nazareth by quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2a. In Luke 4:18-19, we read, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Here, we see that oil is used to speak of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The night of the resurrection of Jesus, John 20:22 says, “And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Then, before Jesus returned to heaven, Luke 24:49 says, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” This was the promise to the disciples that all followers of Christ would receive the Holy Spirit to give them power to share the Gospel and serve the Lord. The promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. For us today, Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of our eternal salvation. As a result, the lack of oil represents the lack of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the five foolish virgins.

Since the wedding was at night, the virgins were all falling asleep and some even were sound asleep. Matthew 25:6-10 says, “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: “Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!” Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, “Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise answered, saying, “*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.” This is a reminder of the fact that no one knows the time when Christ will come.

Suddenly, we see that the foolish realized they were unprepared for the wedding. They had no oil in their lamps to give them light so that they could join in the wedding procession. Luke 11:34-35 says, “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.” Those virgins without oil were in spiritual darkness because they had no light. We see that they tried to borrow oil from the wise virgins. Today, we see many people who think that because they have family members or friends who trust in Christ, the faith of family or friends will be enough for them to have eternal life. These verses make it clear that those lacking spiritual life cannot depend on the spiritual life of others.

In contrast, we saw that the wise virgins took oil in their containers with their lamps. This is a reminder that these virgins have spiritual life. At the same time, they realized that others could not depend on their spiritual life to have spiritual life. They instructed the foolish virgins to go to those who sold oil and to purchase oil for their lamps. We see that only the Lord can give salvation. Isaiah 55:1-3 says, “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, and your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.” Here, we see that God said that He offers salvation at no cost because salvation can be received without money and without price.

However, the foolish virgins waited too long. The bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding celebration and the door was shut. This is illustrated by what happened in the time of Noah. Genesis 7:16 says, “So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.” Throughout the time that Noah was building the ark, 2 Peter 2:5 says, “And did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” Here, we see that God provided the opportunity for the ungodly to hear the message of righteousness and repent of their sin of unbelief. That opportunity was available right up to the moment when God shut the door. In the same way, the virgins had the opportunity to enter into eternal life until the door was shut. Those who do not believe before Christ comes to rule will have no opportunity after He has come.

Then, we see that Jesus went on to give a warning to the unprepared. Matthew 25:11-13 says, “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us!” But he answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” Here, we see the key message of this parable. Jesus made it clear that each individual must be prepared for His coming because no one knows the day or the hour of His coming. When a person comes to Jesus in repentance toward their sin of unbelief and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, his or her name is written in the Book of Life.

Philippians 4:3 says, “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.” Here, we see that all those who come to Christ in repentance and faith have their names written in the Book of Life. In fact, Revelation 3:5 promises, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” White garments are the robes of righteousness that each person receives at the moment of repentance and faith. In this verse, we see that no one who has this white garment will have his name blotted out of the Book of Life.

However, only those who have their names written in the Book of Life can enter into eternal life. Revelation 21:27 says, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Here, we see that every person who has eternal life has his or her name written in the Book of Life. In contrast, Revelation 20:11-12 warns about the final judgment, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.” This is the judgment of all who do not believe and repent of their sin of unbelief. They will be judged out of the books that have recorded all of their sins.

That is why this parable concludes with the warning to watch. The word translated “watch” means to give strict attention to so that calamity or destruction will not overtake a person. We could say that it means to get ready in advance so that a person is prepared. This is essential when Christ returns because no one knows the day or hour that Christ will come to rule. Only those who are prepared will enter into the kingdom where Christ will rule for a thousand years. Those unprepared will be taken off the earth by death and will be in the place of torment until the great white throne judgment. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain these things clearly so that they can use the Word of God to warn every person about the importance of being ready when Christ comes. For us, this will be the time of the Rapture. For those alive in The Tribulation, it will be the time when Christ comes to rule for a thousand years. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.