

Parable Of The Ten Virgins

Lesson 4.05

The parable of the ten virgins alerts all people about the coming of the Bridegroom. The fools will be denied entrance to the banquet, while the wise enjoy a banquet with their Groom.

Please read [Matthew 25:1-13](#) before starting free Bible study lessons #4.05

Previous Lesson: Parable Of The Lost Sheep #4.04

Preliminary Bible Study Questions:

1. Who does the Groom represent in the 10 virgins' parable?
2. Who do the young ladies represent in the parable of the ten bridesmaids?
3. What was the reason half the virgins were locked out of the wedding festivities?

Parables sometimes aren't taken serious enough, but that usually happens to people who lack spiritual insight. That is unfortunate because parables usually contain one major point, and almost always something fairly simple. To read and study a parable and "not get it" is scary. The Holy Spirit obviously hasn't worked in the heart of this person. This particular parable has one major teaching which should be easily understandable, however critically important. Let's find out what Jesus taught in the parable of the ten virgins.

Parable Of The Ten Virgins Setting

Jesus finished up talking about his imminent return to earth (aka [2nd Coming of Jesus](#)), when he broke into a series of five parables. **Jesus spoke with concern and urgency about the approaching return in Matthew 24. He knew people didn't take his return seriously enough.** The people didn't seem alarmed, they weren't asking questions, they weren't showing a quickening of their spirits.

[Matthew 24:44](#) warns that we can't possibly know when God will send his Son back to earth. The angels and Jesus himself don't know that highly secretive information ([Mark 13:32 ESV](#)). You see, the reason Jesus is so desperate to draw an emotional response from people is the seriousness of the matter. **Once we see Jesus in the clouds returning from heaven it will be too late to act.** His sheep will have been called home already, and the goats will be left on earth. Such a tragedy has never happened to this degree, but Jesus used the [Great Flood and Noah's Ark](#) truths to illustrate the immensity of the disaster of which he speaks.

Parable Of The Ten Virgins

Lets open up the parable of the ten virgins now, and attempt to grasp Jesus' warning. Jesus is coloring a vivid picture in order that people can understand their responsibilities to their Creator. A moment earlier he finished his last illustration by saying that all people, even the lost souls, would be held accountable for how wisely they used the resources that God gave them ([Matthew](#)

[24:45-51 ESV](#)). **Jesus now paints the picture of a wedding ceremony in which the Groom, representing himself, is coming soon to his wedding.** The guests, bride, and 10 bridesmaids, *i.e.* ten virgins, are all waiting at the Groom's house for him to arrive.

This is the parable of the ten virgins because these young ladies represent two kinds of people - the only two kinds of people possible: the wise and fools. You and I are both represented here, but by whom? Which group of five bridesmaids (aka virgins) represent us?

The Ten Virgins' Preparation

The parable of the ten virgins takes us to the wedding feast preparation of the bridesmaids. Five of the bridesmaids prepared their lamps properly and thought to bring sufficient oil to keep the lamps burning. The lamps were used in Jewish wedding processions. **They were a critical element to this particular wedding feast.** The five foolish bridesmaids brought their lamps, but they neglected to figure enough oil to burn for the entire evening.

These foolish virgins were too busy with life to properly plan and prepare for such an important event. They were using their time for untold other matters. Their priorities of life were incorrect. Suddenly, they realized that the wedding feast would last longer than initially considered. They asked the five wise virgins if they would split their oil with them. The wise virgins were smart enough to know that five properly fueled lamps would burn twice as long as ten half-fueled lamps. At least the entire wedding feast would be lit by five torches instead of zero! **Wisdom always trumps foolishness.** The five wise virgins suggested that the five foolish virgins run and purchase some more oil for their lamps. The foolish virgins did just that very thing.

The Groom Returns

The Groom finally returned to his house for the wedding feast! Many guests were prepared and waiting for the festivities. Joy broke out for all the people in the house. **Everyone was accounted for so the Groom locked the door. The celebration began, the five lamps were trimmed and burning, and all the guests were eating and drinking and enjoying one another.**

Before long there was a knock at the door. The five foolish virgins returned with their lamps and extra oil. They were so excited to see the Groom and congratulate him and his bride. No one was answering the door, though, so they shouted, "Lord, lord, please open the door for us!" **The Groom firmly stated through the door, "Listen, I have no idea who you are!" Shocked, the foolish young women were turned away, leaving in tears.**

Foolish vs Wise Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins teaches that the two groups of women had much in common. The Groom was no stranger to any of them, because they all heard much about him. The ten virgins had the address to his house, all being notified of the festivities. They all anticipated the Groom's return, bringing their lamps to the wedding feast. After arriving, the ten virgins all grew drowsy

waiting on the groom, falling asleep while he was away. **There was no shame in any of those things. So, what happened to reveal the foolishness of five of the virgins?**

Five of the virgins properly calculated the amount of oil needed to burn their lamps the entire evening. They were wise enough to take the proper time, using their gifts and abilities to correctly calculate, and most importantly they focused on acquiring the needed oil. **In the end, the five wise virgins were properly prepared for their service and participation in the wedding feast.**

The five foolish virgins, on the other hand, thought too little of the Groom and bride to calculate their needs. They neglected their duties. They obviously thought that they would grab their lamps as they ran out the door to the wedding feast. **The foolish virgins didn't think, didn't plan, and were too lazy to prepare their lamps. It cost them when the wedding banquet started.** They were unprepared and left out of the party. It wasn't the matter of possessing the oil, *per se*, because they eventually showed up with their lamps and oil. **They were foolish because they didn't prepare.**

Applying The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

The Groom is Jesus Christ and he is returning soon to celebrate with all of the wise bridesmaids who were properly preparing for the wedding feast. Once the Groom is spotted in the clouds time will have run out, and he will lock the door. **The foolish bridesmaids will be left on the outside looking in the windows.** Their lamps will soon run out of fuel and they will find themselves in judgment before Jesus Christ on his Great White Throne. The final verdict will be read, leaving them in outer darkness, where they will weep and gnash their teeth.

Grasp This!

The parable of the ten virgins explicitly informs the world that the Son of God is returning soon, possibly being overdue now. Those of us who aren't prepared will be shocked that the end came so abruptly. The thought of being involved in a lifestyle of sin upon his appearing should be a horrific nightmare to all of us. **Think to yourself a moment what will happen if one of these two things happen right this second: First, you die. Second, Jesus returns. Both lock in your eternal destiny. That is scary if you're not following Christ as a disciple.**

The Christian must actively serve God. He must continue to minister to other people both in and out of the church. The parable of the ten virgins is some serious motivation for the Christian to remain in diligent service to his Savior. All of us have moments where we totally burn out. We need to sometimes be ministered to in order to strengthen our spirit. That is understandable and normal. **However, those who fall away from the Groom lose their God-granted authority to presume upon eternal life. Please don't be a fool.**

The fact of Jesus' return is sometimes enough to turn people from their sin to the throne of grace. Tell everyone you know that Christ is returning - you may be surprised at the response. Those who win souls are wise ([Proverbs 11:30](#)).

Next Lesson: Parable Of The Sower #4.06

Bible Study Questions:

1. There is no mention of a bride in this parable. Why do you think Jesus omitted such a key figure?
2. Does the lamp oil represent anything specifically? Why or why not?
3. Does the Groom's delay possibly represent the fact that Jesus' return has also been delayed?

Inspirational Bible Verses:

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.' [2 Timothy 2:19 ESV](#)

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. [Nahum 1:7 ESV](#)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. [Romans 8:28-30 ESV](#)

Prayers Of Thanksgiving:

Dear God Almighty. Please delay Jesus' return so more people can be warned to prepare. I pray for their foolish souls. O Lord, the parable of the ten virgins teaches us to stay aware of Jesus' return, and also to remain focused on serving you. Grant us the power and diligence to remain in steadfast service to you. Keep us from temptation, Lord, help us to flee evil. In Christ's name. Amen

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