

LESSON 13 – LIVE LIKE JESUS IS COMING TOMORROW! JUNE 28, 2020

Background Scripture: Matthew 25

Lesson Passage: Matthew 25:1-13 (NIV)

Introduction: How many of you have ever run out of gas? In most audiences, this would be nearly everyone. I cannot verify these statistics, so I caution you that they may be flawed. It would appear that every year at least a half million people call for help because they have run out of gas. Besides flat tires, dead batteries, and misplaced keys, running out of gas ranks right up there in the reasons why people call for roadside service. 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 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 it.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 25:1-13 (NIV)

1 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ 7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ 9 “No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 “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. 11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ 12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ 13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Memory Verse: 13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour (Matthew 25:13) NIV

Topic Explored: “Live Like Jesus is Coming Tomorrow” ~ One of the greatest spiritual challenges you will ever have comes from our text today. This great spiritual challenge is to live your life like Jesus is coming today. God is calling us in this section of this book to be holy people. He wants us to be distinct from the world, separated from the world, and to live like Jesus would live. To be holy means you do His will, obey His commands, have His attitudes and demonstrate the character of Jesus Christ.

God gives us in this text some steps of action we must take in order to be holy. The first two He gave us we have already covered. He has already told us in order to be holy we must prepare our minds and learn to control our spirit. The third step of action to be holy is to learn to live your life like Jesus is coming today. Let's see what the Word of God says about living like Jesus is coming today.

Lesson Focus: Matthew 25:1-13 (NIV)

Verses 1-13 ~ There was a wedding, to which ten young virgins were invited as participants. It would seem that in some way they were instructed to bring lamps, so that at the right time they could form or lead some kind of torchlight procession. All ten virgins brought their lamps, but only five brought the necessary oil as well. They all waited for the groom to arrive. Time passed and darkness set in. The groom tarried longer than expected and so all ten bridesmaids (virgins) slept until he arrived.

Suddenly, at midnight someone cried out that the groom was approaching. All ten virgins are awakened by this cry, and they begin to prepare their lamps for ceremonial service. The need for these lamps is now particularly obvious (it is midnight, pitch dark). The five foolish virgins ask the five wise virgins to share their oil, but their request is denied. It wasn't that the five wise virgins didn't care; it was because there would not be enough oil for all ten lamps.

The foolish virgins were told to go purchase their own oil, which they did. But during their absence the torchlight parade took place, and the groom, accompanied by the five wise virgins entered the celebration hall. The doors were then closed. Later, the five foolish virgins arrived, with oil, but it was too late. That part of the festivities had already been completed. There was no need for the services of these five virgins, and they were not allowed to enter and join in the wedding celebration. Even though the five virgins pled, "*Lord, Lord ...*," they were sent away with the words, "*I do not know you!*"

Our Lord then concludes this parable by applying it to His disciples (and thus the church). He urges His disciples to stay alert, because they, too, do not know the day or the hour of His return. Because we do not know precisely when He will return, we must be constantly in a state of alertness. We must be ready. This parable is about being ready. It highlights one aspect of what it means to be ready.

We believe that the five foolish virgins had no oil for the very same reasons people continue to run out of gas, even when the flashing message on their instrument panel tells them they are. *First, men don't believe the warning signs.* They don't think things are as bad as they are reported to be. "I must have more gas than that!" Or, "I've gotten this same message before, and I've always been able to get to the gas station before running out."

We know when our gas gauge is low. We can see the indicator lights on the dash. But we lull ourselves into thinking that there is still plenty of time to deal with the problem. There will surely be another gas station ahead, and not too far. This false confidence has gotten many people into trouble. Those who think they will have other chances to come to faith in Jesus are making a very dangerous assumption. 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.

The coming of our Lord was not to be immediate, as the disciples supposed, but at a much more distant time. But when He does come, it will be without warning, and at a time we don't expect Him. When He comes, our fate is sealed, and there will be no opportunity to change our minds then. We must therefore be prepared now (and from now on) by acknowledging our sins, our helplessness, our need for salvation, and by trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in our place. Being ready means, among other things, trusting in Jesus, and having our sins forgiven.

Let's talk about it. . .

- The difference between the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins is salvation. These five foolish virgins were not once saved, but then "ran out" of salvation. They were lost, and never had it. They never had oil. They were just empty lamps. They looked useful, they seemed to give promise of light, but they never produced it.

Making it personal:

- Must we wait until the coming of our Lord to learn, much to our dismay, that we were not really saved? God wants us to know for certain that we are saved. He wants us to be fully assured that our sins are forgiven and that we have a salvation that is certain. He wants us to be confident that we are saved!

Closing Prayer: *"Father God, forgive us for not always being ready for your return for your Church. Lord, help us to live our lives like we really believe that Jesus is coming back for us. God, we don't want to be caught out of place when He comes. In His Name we pray, Amen!"*

Notes:
