

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Matthew 25:1-13

November 11, 2018

Not all who wait for Jesus' Coming are ready. Who is ready?

- The sound of a big heavy door closed and locked - Sense: fate sealed
- The knock - the plea - the reply: *I don't know you. You're not one of mine.*
- Anyone with ears to hear - pays attention. *I need to be wise*, realizing:

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- ❖ Understanding what's going on in this parable.
 - Jewish wedding customs at that time.
 - Couple publicly promised themselves to each other as husband and wife
 - Ceremony and celebration set later - after home set up
 - Then the bridegroom fetches his bride, escorting her to the celebration.
 - ♦ Bridesmaids honored to be escorts, providing light: lamps/torches
 - Here all 10 were honored - all 10 looking forward to it.
 - ♦ Knowing delays happen - 5 came prepared with extra lamp oil.
 - ♦ The foolish - not thinking - look the same, but not really prepared.
 - ❖ Be clear about the central point: The foolish were not ready. Too late.
 - It's tempting to see meaning in every detail in Jesus' parables.
 - ♦ The meaning for the lamps, light, oil, delay, midnight, buying oil, etc.
 - Jesus usually uses parables to teach 1 key point. Did you catch it here?
 - Jesus spotlights it for us:
 - ♦ **Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.**
 - ♦ Was he criticizing their sleeping? Not here. The wise slept too.
 - ♦ Watch for what? To make sure you are **ready**. You are wise. You get it.
 - ❖ The wise live knowing what it means to be ready. Do you?
 - *Isn't it obvious?* - Pack extra oil! - Do you have a torch? What's the oil?
 - ♦ Did the Bridegroom ask to see their supply of oil?
 - ♦ The wise were there **ready** to meet him and go with him.
 - The Bridegroom's reply to the Foolish 5 reveals what makes us ready.
 - ♦ **'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'**
 - They lacked a relationship with Jesus. They knew *about Jesus*, but they **didn't know Jesus**, i.e. **friends through faith**.
 - **Lacking** a New Self they were **not** in a restored fellowship with Jesus.
 - **The wise are** those living with Jesus - made alive in him.
- Look carefully to Jesus' opening words: *At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.*
- ❖ The Parable of the 10 Virgins reveal the state of the visible Church.
 - All 10 gathered and went out to meet the Bridegroom.
 - All consider themselves Christian. What counts is what Jesus knows.
 - This calls for self-examination and care for those self-deceived.
 - Examples of warning signs - evidence of people being foolish:
 - ♦ Instructed Christians who show little or no interest in getting to know Jesus better. That's a mark of *the foolish*.
 - C & E Christians - W & F Christians - Not a relationship with Jesus.
 - ♦ Treat worship as an event on the calendar - a duty vs. a time to meet Jesus - *worshiping the Father in spirit and truth* (Jn 4:23). Not actively engaged with Jesus in worship. Not encouraging others in Jesus.
 - Time in God's Word? *I did that before my confirmation. I know him.*
 - Sobering. A call to wake up. A call to act. Christ's rescue mission.
 - ♦ Our Christian mission of *outreach within*.
 - ♦ Not just for Pastor and Elders. They're here to support you.
 - How do I do this? What can I do?
 - ♦ An invitation to church - interpreted as outward action & badgering.
 - ♦ Work at a relationship - modeling your relationship with Jesus.
 - Ask about this Parable. *Do you remember it? Let's read it and talk about it.* Why? So Jesus' words have the opportunity to work.
 - Guilt and pressure will not bring anyone to Jesus! *Only Jesus' loving warning and welcome - Come know me. Discover true wisdom.*
 - Engage: *I'd like to know what you're thinking. What's your conviction about Jesus? Why do you think that?* Listen, then: *May I share mine?*
 - Strive to get them thinking about what they knew and where they are. People who *live doing* - rarely take time to *think or reflect*.
 - Don't just talk *about Jesus!* Rather share convictions that reflect why Jesus means so much to you. How his promises make a difference: in getting up and getting going - in dealing with others, especially those hard to deal with. Reintroduce them to Jesus as someone you know personally and how much you live with him daily.
 - **Goal:** that they see how unwise it is to know *about Jesus* and what he said, then choose to ignore his words until it's too late.
 - ♦ Even if they don't listen you'll grow wiser engaged with Jesus/his word
 - The Spirit will affirm your status: wise in Christ, ready for him.
 - Looking forward to spending eternity with Jesus, Father, and Spirit.
 - Knowing: **Not all who wait for Jesus' Coming are ready.** Made wise by his word - living with Jesus - by his grace - **I live ready.**