

Sermon ~ Sunday, September 4, 2022, by Pastor Dwight Benoit

Text: Matthew 25: 1-13

Title: "Ready or Not, JESUS Is Coming!"

This section of Matthew, chapter 24, it *speaks* of 'The Consummation,' The End of Things. Chapter 25, 'JESUS Teaching,' and chapter 26 speaks of 'Transition,' the end of JESUS public ministry and events of HIS crucifixion.

In this morning's text, JESUS *teaches* another *parable* about "HIS Return" ... the third one ... Matthew 24: 42-44, HE *taught*, HIS Return will be swift and sudden. There would be no opportunity for afterthought, last minute repentance, no bargaining. The equation is Choice + determination = Eternal destiny.

Matthew 24: 45-51, JESUS taught, we ought to spend our expectance time of HIS return on "others," rather than on "me, mine, myself, and I, both within the Church-house and outside of it. Knowing that HIS return will be sudden, ought to motivate us to always be prepared. For all have allotted responsibilities.

Matthew 25: 1-13 stress "preparedness," in the face of an unexpected long delay.

If you can raise your hand – Are you Ready for JESUS return? Are you Living with a continual Readiness? Is your attitude constantly expecting CHRIST' return?

"Ready or Not, JESUS Is Coming!"

In the text, JESUS *teaches* a *parable* of how HIS *disciples* should be *ever* and *always* "ready" for HIS Return.

Vss. 1-5, HE points out...

--The KINGdom of Heaven (The Rule of GOD'S domain) ... is like ...

--10 virgins... which each took their lamps ... they all went out to meet the bridegroom.

--5 was wise... 5 were foolish...

--The 5 foolish took their lamps (each in one hand) and no extra jars of oil for their lamps.

--The 5 wise took their lamps (each in one hand, but in the other, they took a *jar of extra oil* in other hand.

--The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

[Now, we don't know much about 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish Hebraic Weddings, but from what I read, In the evening just before the sunset, the bridegroom would leave his home with some close friends, going to his bride's home ... various ceremonies took place ... then a processional took place through the streets ... after *nightfall* ... on his way home with his bride. The point, everyone in the processional was expected to carry his or her own lamp. Those without a lamp were assumed to be "*party crashers*" or "*brigands*," gang members that ambush and rob people.

Another thought... the bridegroom came with friends at *night* to the bride's house where she expected him ... the bride-maids upon notice of the bridegroom arriving, went out with their lamps in their hands, to light him into the house and the ceremonies and celebrations took place.]

Point: The lighted lamp of the participant in the wedding was most important!  
Without a lighted lamp...

Notice,

--All were virgins ... All brought lamps (wise/foolish). But only the wise brought "oil in jars" to *re-supply* their lamp, should it go out. Question? Why were they called "wise?" Answer, because they "*prepared*" for the possibility that the bridegroom would tarry!

See this,

--The bridegroom coming represents—**The Second Coming of CHRIST**.

--The delay—seemed, that **JESUS** tarried in coming.

--The 10 virgins are **The Church**, the *disciples*, The **CHRISTian** communities.

--The burning lamps represent "the state of *readiness* for **CHRIST' Return**."

--The sincere **CHRISTians** are "the wise" virgins.

--The hypocrites are the "foolish" virgins or "foolish builders."

--From the outside, All looks the same! All were waiting for the bridegroom! All carried lamps! All had oil, but *extra* some thought, was not necessary for All! All were willing to use their hand, but All were not willing to use both hands! All need **GRACE (GOD'S Redemptive Act Cost Everything)**, but All did not show the need for more **GRACE!**

All had a name to live using their hand, but not All had **The LIFE of GOD (JESUS) Living** in their souls! All became drowsy and fell asleep, just before midnight, but All were not Ready when the bridegroom came! All were invited to The Wedding Celebration, but All did not enter in for "For while some went to buy... the door was shut!"

[Oh, don't say, another will be open... Oh, it will but only to Hell!]

Point: The difference is only seen when "the lamps" were needed for use!

Church, we need a "permanent" **LIGHT!** **JESUS** said, "**I AM The LIGHT of the world: he that followeth ME shall not walk in darkness, but shall have The Light of Life.**" (John 8: 12)

To many "*profess*" and to few "*confess and profess*" ... some *glitter or flash, flicker and fade out* and other keep "the lamp burning!" We need a "permanent" **LIGHT!**

But the permanent **LIGHT** need "a lamp!"

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