



Life Group Study Notes

"Kingdom Come: "

Sr. Ps. James Lowe - February 11, 2017

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What is something unusual or different that was done at a wedding you attended?
- What part of a wedding ceremony do you enjoy most? Why?
- What was the largest wedding you've ever attended? Tell one interesting thing about it.

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Matthew 25:1-13 ESV *"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose 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, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."*

Are we wise and prudent, prepared for our Lord's return? Or are we foolish and irresponsible, being unprepared for his coming? The difference is between an authentic Christian who trusts in Christ and one who is Christian only in name but not in truth.

The parable Jesus taught can be understood as follows.

The bridegroom is symbolic of our Lord Jesus Christ. He deeply loves his bride, the church, which is comprised of all who believe in him and have embraced him as Lord.

The vessels are symbolic of our lives, our whole person, spirit, soul, and body.

The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, who imparts God's saving grace to us, shedding abroad God's love in our hearts, reassuring us that we belong to him. He is the one who ministers to us all the benefits of what Christ has accomplished for us.

Mere religious activity or affiliation with Jesus is not adequate, as Jesus himself pointed out when he said: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'"* (Matthew 7:21-23 ESV).

The foolish virgins were like these people. They were knowledgeable of the bridegroom, but did not have a genuine relationship with him. They were engaged in religious activity, but their hearts didn't belong to Jesus.

The wise virgins, on the other hand, trusted in him and surrendered to him. Those who do have nothing to fear when he returns or when they face their own death. They will participate in the joyous celebration when Jesus comes to join himself for eternity with his bride, his people. At that time, his bride will be crowned as his queen, and together Jesus and his bride will manifest God's glory and rule the creation.

This is the great hope of the Christian faith. Jesus is coming again as a bridegroom for his bride. Therefore, we should be preparing ourselves for his return. We should watch over our hearts and our lives, so that we might be pleasing to him and not be ashamed when he returns.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- When were you born again? When did you trust in Christ and surrender to him?
- How does the Holy Spirit work in your heart and life? What is something he has recently done in you?
- Do you think about and long for the return of Jesus? Why or why not?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for his love for us that is compared to a bridegroom's love for his bride.
- Ask God to cultivate a greater longing for the return of his Son to the earth.
- Ask God if there is anyone you should talk to about their relationship with Jesus who might only be a nominal Christian.