

**AT THE MIDNIGHT CRY
MATTHEW 25: 1-13**

Introduction:

Our Lord was a master story-teller. Even though the circumstances set forth in his stories are so different from the world in which we live, we still sense that they are addressing something important.

This is especially true of the story about the ten virgins. The setting for the story is that of an Eastern wedding. The ten young women would be somewhat similar to brides-maids in our weddings. When the bridegroom came to take his bride from her father's house to his house, they would joyfully accompany the bride, and would be included in the celebration that would follow. An Eastern wedding was not a private affair; it involved the whole community and would go on for most of a week. It was a special honor to be such an attendant for the bride.

The lesson in this parable is rather clear—it is extremely important to be ready when Jesus comes to claim His bride. Preparation for that event is everything!

In His story Jesus emphasizes the delay in the coming of the groom. And He emphasized the suddenness and surprise of His coming. His coming was announced with a “midnight cry!” This is consistent with what Paul

would later teach about “the shout and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.” What a startling moment! Suddenly the quiet of the night is shattered with this shout, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!” It is so important to be ready when this midnight cry comes!

Let us learn the lessons of this story.

I. THE MIDNIGHT CRY ENDS THE DELAY OF THE LORD’S COMING.

A reason for the delay of the Bridegroom is not given. It is wise to remember that the time of His coming will be decided by Him. He is sovereign in all such matters. However we are given some insight into the delay in other places. Peter explained that the “Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (1 Peter 3:9) So we know that it is for our benefit that He delays. It is to extend the opportunity for salvation. He does not want anyone to be caught unprepared and unsaved like the five foolish girls in the story. But there is a limit to the delay. The “midnight cry” will announce the end.

1. It announces the Coming of the Bridegroom.

The positive thing about the “midnight cry” is that it announces the coming of the Bridegroom. In the parable we are to understand that the Bridegroom is none other than the Lord Jesus. He is the One who has been delayed by the plan of the Father in His return. But the delay is over! With the cry of a friend or a servant who went before him, the bridegroom’s approach is announced.

Will it not be something when an archangel sounds forth for all to hear, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh.” Then there will be the sound of the trumpet. The trumpets were used in the Old Testament to announce important events in the nation. In this case the trumpet will announce the greatest event of all time. Then there is a “shout.” Will this “shout” be the voice of the Lord Himself as He calls for His people to join Him for the wedding in the heavens? Probably.

What a moment! The Bridegroom is here!

2. It awakens everyone to the great event.

It is of interest that in the parable all of the virgins were slumbering. It was late at night—the midnight hour. The body was weary from the wait, and the needs of the body had taken control. But you will notice that no blame seems to be implied for being drowsy.

These ten virgins represent the whole of the visible church. Included in the outward church are the wise and the foolish. Their true condition is revealed when the trumpets sounds at the midnight hour. But everyone becomes aware of the coming of the Bridegroom.

What a moment it will be for the church when the midnight cry is heard! It will awaken everyone to His presence.

II. THE MIDNIGHT CRY REVEALS THE UNPREPAREDNESS OF THE FOOLISH.

- 1. Their unpreparedness is personal.**
- 2. Their unpreparedness is costly.**

III. THE MIDNIGHT CRY INTRODUCES THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PREPARED.

- 1. They share in the joy of the Lord.**
- 2. They enjoy the presence of the Lord.**