

The Foolish Will Miss Heaven's Wedding Feast

SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023 Matthew 25:1-13

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Meditation: Are you missing out on what's most important in life? Being unprepared can lead to unnecessary trouble and even disaster! What good is a lifejacket left on the shore when the boat is sinking? Jesus's story of ten single ladies waiting for a wedding procession in the middle of the night seems strange to most westerners today. But Jesus' audience knew all too well how easily this could happen to them.

Don't miss the most important engagement of all

Wedding customs in ancient Palestine required extra vigilance and preparation for everyone involved. (Some near eastern villages still follow this custom.) The bride and groom did not go away for their honeymoon but celebrated for a whole week with their family and friends. It was the custom for the groom, in company with his friends, to come at his discretion and get his bride and bring her to their new home. They would take the longest route possible so that many villagers along the way could join in the wedding procession. Once they arrived and closed the doors, no one else could be admitted. If the groom decided to come and bring his bride at night, then lights were required by necessity to guide the travellers through the dark and narrow streets. No one was allowed on the village streets at night without a lamp!

To show up for a wedding party without proper attire and travel arrangements is like trying to get into a special event today that requires a prearranged permit or reservation. You just don't get in without the proper pass. Can you imagine the frustration travellers might experience when going abroad and finding out that they

can't get into some country because they don't have the right visa or a valid passport.

The consequences of being unprepared to meet the Lord

Jesus warns us that there are consequences for being unprepared. There are certain things you cannot obtain at the last moment. For example, students cannot prepare for their exams when the day of testing is already upon them. A person cannot get the right kind of character, strength, and skill required for a task at hand unless they already possess it, such as a captain with courage and nautical skills who must steer a ship through a dangerous storm at sea.

When the Lord Jesus comes to lead you to his heavenly banquet will you be ready to hear his voice and follow? Our eternal welfare depends on our hearing, and many have trained themselves to not hear. We will not be prepared to meet the Lord, face to face, when he calls us on the day of judgment, unless we listen to him today. The Lord invites us to feast at his heavenly banquet table. Are you ready?

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *The Kingdom of God compared with ten maidens*, by Hilary of Poitiers (315-367 AD)

"The whole story is about the great day of the Lord, when those things concealed from the human mind will be revealed through our understanding of divine judgment. Then the faith true to the Lord's coming will win the just reward for unwavering hope. **For in the five wise and five foolish virgins (Matthew 25:2), a complete separation between the faithful and unfaithful is established...** The wise virgins are those who, embracing the time available to them, were prepared at the first onset of the coming of the Lord. But the foolish were those who were lax and unmindful. They troubled themselves only over present matters and, forgetting what God said, did not direct their efforts toward hope for resurrection." (excerpt from the commentary *ON MATTHEW 27.3,5*)

OPENING PRAYER: - **Lord Jesus**, make me vigilant and attentive to your voice that I may always heed your call. May I find joy in your presence and delight in doing your will.

Amen

CLOSING PRAYER:- **"World Peace"** Lord, we pray for the victims of the recent Earthquake in Marrakesh Morocco and the bush fires in Australia that they have the resolve to rebuild their lives and homes after the forces of nature have turned against them, also the war in Ukraine and now Israel with Palestine that those effected have the strength to go on and the leaders of these countries find a peaceful resolution to these wars. **Amen.**