

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

November 26, 2017

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:1-13

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 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, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13 Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Congregational Prayer:

Message: "Oils Well That Ends Well !!!"

INTRODUCTION:

† I consider myself a generally handy man. That means that I can do just about anything that I try, and I get good results - not perfect, but good and functional everywhere I turn. I do have limits, and one limit I have is roofs. A few years ago I was asked to help the Maternity Home to replace their roof. I should have said no. Once I got up to the third story roof, I was terrified. Others are walking on the steeply pitched roof like it was

the sidewalks of Beckwith Street, and I'm feeling like I'm slowly sliding down into the great abyss below. I knew that it was only one step from that third story roof to the lawn to where I could see the ambulance people picking up the broken remains of my body. And I knew that falling was not the problem - landing was the problem. And I could not get this out of my mind. I did manage to do the job (Leaving at the right time with my limbs still unfractured), but was unprepared for the heights.

† I thought I was well readied - I had all the tools, I had been up on roofs before. But I could not fully prepare myself for the steepness of that roof, nor the slippery shingles.

† The ten maidens from Matthew 25 had to prepare for a bridegroom to return - some did this, and were indeed prepared, others did not.

Today, let's look at this parable, and try to understand its meaning for today, and let's be prepared.

Part 1: Wedding Traditions

✚ Here is what I found on the internet about ancient Israelite weddings:

(<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-marriage/>):

“Until late in the Middle Ages, marriage consisted of two ceremonies that were marked by celebrations at two separate times, with an interval

between. First came the betrothal [erusin]; and later, the wedding [nissuin]. At the betrothal the woman was legally married, although she still remained in her father's house. She could not belong to another man unless she was divorced from her betrothed. The wedding meant only that the betrothed woman, accompanied by a colourful procession, was brought from her father's house to the house of her groom, and the legal tie with him was consummated. This division of marriage into two separate events started in ancient times when marriage was a purchase, both in its outward form and in its inner meaning. (Back then a) woman was not recognized as a person but was bought in marriage, like chattel. Marriage, as with any type of purchase, consisted of two acts. First the price was paid and an agreement reached on the conditions of sale. (Then...) sometime later (step two) the purchaser took possession of the object. In marriage, the mohar (bridal price) was paid and a detailed agreement reached between the families of the bride and groom. This betrothal was followed by the wedding, when the bride was brought into the home of the groom, who took actual possession of her."

† Now this might be difficult to understand today, but remember that this was a way to protect and honour wives in a world where there was often

abuse and neglect.

† Back to our scripture reading for today: Jesus told a wedding story with some details that we now understand better. In Matthew 25:1-13, ten maidens were called upon to perform a task for a wedding - they were to wait for the groom. It was their job to escort this groom into the wedding banquet whenever he arrived.. Now, remember the detail that the groom was preparing a place, a home, for his bride. Often this was an addition onto his father's house. The father had complete control, therefore, and would force his son to build onto his house in a certain manner. And so it was up to the groom's father to say when it was truly finished and up to his standard - think daddy house inspector - the Mike Holmes of ancient Israel "Doing it right!" And then, during the day or late at night, the father finally gave consent to the groom, and the groom gathered his grooms men, and the groom went to get his bride and take her home. So as the groom's home neared completion, everyone in the village knew about it, and awaited the moment.

† 10 maidens awaited the coming groom to take him to the bride in Matthew 25. Of those ten girls, five had prepared , and the other five had not - five had oil for their lamps, five did not - five were ready for the

bridegroom, five were not. Five were called wise, five were not - in fact,

Jesus went as far as calling them foolish.

Part 2: So What... 1 of 2

† This parable teaches us many things - here are two (1) There are some things which cannot be obtained at the last minute - you must be prepared.

You cannot be prepared for an examination as you are waiting for the papers to be handed out. You cannot simply hope to be able to accurately know how to perform a complicated task without practice, and most importantly you cannot expect that at the last moment you can prepare yourself for God.

† If Jesus came back right this second, would He find you prepared, and ready since you have accepted Him as your Lord and Saviour? Would He know you because you have prepared yourself by making a decision to give your life to Him?

† It is vital to be prepared NOW for the return of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Who knows how long any one of us has until our final breath?

† I heard a story of a friend's relative who died at the age of 94. A week before he died, he finally gave his life to Jesus after ninety-four years of bitterness and anger. What a joy, he told others, that he had finally had

given his heart to Christ. But he also lamented on the waste of 94 years.

† Why waste your life? There is an expression, WHY should you hang around with turkeys when you can soar with eagles - now, right now, its time to soar.

† The Church can also take note of this meaning of this parable - if Christ came back right now, how would He look at this Church? How would Jesus view our outreach? Would God be pleased with the messages we preach, teach and live? Would we be known as a loving, gracious Church of joy? Would God be pleased at our love for one another? How would God look at HIS Church if He returned today?

† Lesson 1: Are we prepared, as a Church and as individuals?

Part 3: So What... 2 of 2

† (2) This parable also warns us that there are some things which cannot be borrowed. Those foolish maidens found it impossible to borrow oil for their lamps when they discovered that they needed it.

† The message is clear - one cannot borrow a relationship with God - one cannot fake an experience with Jesus Christ - you must possess it.

† “You cannot borrow a character, you must be clothed with it,” says William Barclay in his commentaries. It is up to you to come to terms

with yourself, to wrestle with that part of yourself which denies God out of stubborn pride and arrogance, and to give everything you have to Jesus Christ. You cannot borrow being close to Jesus from someone who is - you must get close to Jesus yourself, just as the maidens found that they could not borrow what they needed to be part of the bridal party.

† The Church of Jesus Christ must also be wise in not trying to borrow - we cannot borrow from the past success of a Church. We cannot sit back and borrow from our past work for Jesus and say, "Well, I've done all that I can, let someone else do it." We cannot borrow from another Church's success and hope that it will rub off on us - we, this Church, must work to earn the right to be called God's Church.

CONCLUSION:

† I found this poem on the internet: "I stand on the side line, I'm waiting just to see, If any of my children will ever notice me! I've begged, I've pleaded, I've been silent too! Waiting to see just what you will do! Time is of the essence, the door is closing fast; The warning to you, my children, Will not always last!"

† The season of Advent is a week away. Advent is a time of waiting, waiting as the maidens did for the groom. Are you ready for Jesus? Are

you prepared? Don't wait until it's too late to prepare for Jesus. You cannot borrow faith. The Lord is coming, Get your lamp oil ready to end well!!