

Matthew Ch. 25

This morning we'll be beginning the 2nd chapter in the Olivet discourse, that being Matt ch 25 but open your bibles to the 24th ch of Matt because I want to actually begin this morning with the 42nd vs of Matt 24. Because for lack of time last week (which I realize is nothing new for you to experience) we didn't expound too much on these scriptures and I wanted it to be that way because these scriptures basically tie us right into the parable of the 10 virgins. and Even though by and large the Olivet discourse is directed (I believe) to the Jews, I believe that it's definitely safe to draw personal application from these next series of exhortations and illustrations and parables. Because surely none of us know the day or the hour that our Lord is going to return for us and therefore the warning goes out and is applicable to each of us personally and also corporately as the body of Christ. That we are to watch therefore and be ready, because we don't know the hour that our Lord is returning. Because we don't know when our Lord is returning (vs 42) that's the reason that we're to watch and be ready because there will be a lot of people that are caught by surprise.

Vs43-44

So what's the emphasis here? He's placing emphasis on a constant preparedness, if you knew that there was going to be a thief break into your house at exactly 4:00 a.m. on this date next month. and It had never happened before or would never happen again, then you'd make the necessary arrangements to deal with that accordingly so that you would be adequately prepared for that situation wouldn't you? Everyone would, now prior to that time, you'd go about your life like it was business as usual, not worried about it, plenty of time to be prepared for that. But when the day came and this was the night, you'd be waiting up, and probably with a shotgun so you wouldn't be caught off guard, and you might even take a nap that day so you wouldn't be sleepy that night. But the key word here in this illustration that Jesus uses is the word "if", sure everyone would be prepared "if" they knew when to be expecting the thief. But the obvious problem is that not to many thieves announce their coming 2 weeks in advance, or for that matter 2 minutes in advance. and So theirs this sense of urgency and the need to always be prepared just in case, because no one expects to be broken into, but we need to be prepared none the less. Well in the same way Jesus is saying, you might not expect Him on a certain day or know when He's coming, but you need to be prepared none the less.

Vs45-46

So doing what, watching, being ready, giving to the household their food in due season, ministering unto the needs of others, being faithful with what the master (that being Jesus Christ) has entrusted to them.

Vs47-51

Notice the danger in believing that the Lord is delaying His coming, 1st of all it breeds an attitude of apathy, and complacency. Which in turn causes one to (really) let their guard down, feeling as though there's always time later to get prepared for their master's return. and So that person begins to misuse and abuse the authority and the privileges that the master has entrusted to him. Notice that in reality he was just a servant, the same as all the rest, the master had just entrusted him with some authority in his physical absence. You see, this is the danger (I believe) of a person teaching or declaring the necessity of a certain event having to take place before the Lord returns for His church. and Really even a seemingly dangerous position to hold concerning the mid-trib, or post-trib rapture theory. Why, because that is in essence saying that they Lord delays His coming until, after the antichrist is revealed or until after the 7yr tribulation period, and so really those who hold those positions are saying that the Lord is delaying His coming.

Jesus said don't say that, because in reality you don't know the day or the hour that the Son of man is coming. That's why that its important that you watch and be ready, and so to teach that the Lord is delaying His coming until after a certain event, doesn't really strike that sense of urgency into the heart, (that the bible speaks so much about) to be serving the Lord with diligence so that you might be found ministering when He returns. But rather it has this tendency to allow slothfulness in our service because we think well, when I see "this" begin to take place then I'm really going to batten down the hatches and get serious because I know my master is returning soon. Jesus said the servant with that attitude would be caught off guard, and not be ready when He returns and therefore he would suffer punishment. and In light of this concept and the need for being diligent and being prepared for the coming of the Lord, Jesus goes on now to give a parable concerning 10 virgins. Now again, there are many interpretations of this parable, some apply it to the Jews; some apply it to the church. But the central theme is no doubt relevant and applicable to us all, and I believe that it is absolutely safe to find application and warning in this parable for you and me today.

Vs1-13

This parable would be very familiar to them in light of their culture; Jesus is really just describing to them what would seem to be a common wedding procession. But He's using it as an illustration to liken it to His relationship to those who are to be watching for His eminent return. In that culture, (taking for granted that you're all familiar with the fact that their marriages were prearranged for the most part by the parents from the time they were very young.)

Approximately 1yr before the actual marriage they would enter into what was known as a betrothal period, which was similar to our engagement with the exception that if you wanted out of the marriage at this point you needed a bill of divorcement. But usually the father of the bridegroom would give a portion of land to his son and the son would say to the bride, something like I go to prepare a place for you. *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

So during that period of betrothal the bridegroom would be building their house, trying to prepare it for them. and After that period of time, the bridegroom could come for his bride at any time, (there was sort of a romance to it) because he wouldn't announce his coming. and It could be on that day, it could be 2 weeks or 2months later, it could be in the middle of the afternoon or at 3 a.m., but it was the job of the bridesmaids to be ready. and The bridegroom would send a runner before him (not days in advance) but right then when he was coming and he would say, *“behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him.”* Then boom, he was upon you “like a thief” and you were either ready and prepared, or you weren't. and If you weren't the results were tragic, you didn't take part in the wedding.

Vs1

Now we already know from Matt 9:15 that the bridegroom is Jesus Christ

Vs2

Now these would obviously be represented by those who are guarding that 1st love relationship with Jesus Christ The doers of the word of God, studiers of the word of God; those who spend time in prayer seeking the will of God for their lives, interceding on the behalf of others, ministering to those in need and committed to Jesus Christ (Finish vs)

Vs3

We find that oil in the scriptures is always a type of or an illustration to us of what? The Holy Spirit, and what is it that begins to set these 2 groups of 5 bridesmaids apart? It's the oil, they all seemed to possess it at 1st but those that were foolish weren't prepared for a delay and so as a result their oil began to run dry. In other words somehow their love for Christ became secondary, no longer is Jesus their 1st love, why because they begin to believe that the bridegroom is going to take a while to get there. They'll have time later to get prepared, and so what happens, what do we see in the parable? These are the ones who begin to let their relationship with Jesus get choked out by the cares and the lusts of the world. They have become preoccupied by worldly things and have grown apathetic about spiritual matters. That's why the bible is constantly exhorting us to keep the eternal perspective and not get caught up in the things of the world. In the 1st epistle of John in the 2nd ch 15,16 vs

John says, *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.”*

What's in the world, to put it bluntly; lust, and pride, and people put their lust and their pride in these temporary things, things that are passing away, and yet they are ignorant of the things of God and the truths of God. These foolish virgins seem to represent, the carnal believers, those who were maybe sincere about Jesus Christ at 1 point in time but have become preoccupied, and distracted by the things of the world. You say, Jeff how are you drafting that conclusion, this parable doesn't say anything about becoming worldly. No, it doesn't but what was Jesus talking about that inspired this parable, 2 servants, one wise and faithful, and the other slothful and foolish.

The wise servant was prepared for his master's return, but the foolish that that there would be time to get right later before the master returned and so what did he do? He became carnal, he began to eat and drink with the drunkards, and here we have 2 sets of bridesmaids, 1 that was wise and prepared for the bridegroom, and one that wasn't and suffered the penalty because of it.

Vs5-6

So here is the picture, the bridegroom is Jesus Christ, the bridesmaids, those awaiting His return, and the runner going before the bridegroom telling everyone to get ready because the bridegroom is coming is the Holy Spirit.

Vs7-8

You see there it is, when it came time to meet the bridegroom, they weren't prepared, they were caught off guard, and weren't sensitive to the things of the Spirit. Their oil was going dry; why, because sin had separated them from God. They said, our lamps are going out. Now that's a bad deal, because Jesus said that you are the light of the world, and the world is in darkness and so when you're no longer giving off light, that can mean only one thing, you've become consumed in darkness and you've fallen back into worldliness. and Again notice that they all seemed to be of the same party, they all looked like they were on the same page, but when it came time to meet the bridegroom their was that one ingredient that caused a separation, and that was the oil. The Holy Spirit dwelling in their lives.

You see you might come to church every Sunday, you may set in the midst of the congregation of Jesus Christ and crack your bible and look just like the rest of us. and Outwardly there maybe no distinction, and so you think you're ok, but when the bridegroom comes, you're going to be in for a rude awakening. and If you're setting here this morning, and you're missing that key ingredient, (oil in your vessel) the Holy Spirit in your life, or you've become carnal and have backslidden into worldliness. Then I'd encourage you to pay close attention to the rest of the parable, because it's meant as a wake up call to you.

Vs9-10

When did the bridegroom come? At an hour when they were not looking for him, what was the result? They were shut out of the wedding, and this little phrase "*and the door was shut*" should ring a bell in the heads of you who are even remotely familiar with the OT. Judgment was coming, grace was available, but only Noah and his family responded, 120yrs Noah preached about the coming judgment with people mocking him and thinking there would always be time later until the day came, that none of them were expecting, Noah entered the ark, and the door was shut. and As soon as the door was shut, say what you may, pound on the ark if you like, scream and cry and beg for mercy and forgiveness, it was too late, judgment had fallen and the door would not reopen.

Think about it, how many people do you think were trying to scramble and cling to that ark, how many people do you think were screaming out as Noah was inside, begging for mercy, reminding Noah of how long they had been neighbors. How their kids had grown up and played together, Noah you borrowed my saw to build that thing and please open to us, but it wasn't up to Noah was it, God had issued a season of grace and they all mocked, now judgment had fallen. We see the same thing here, and if we apply this parable to the church who do these 5 foolish virgins illustrate? The apostate church who will be cast into the great tribulation whereby the wrath of God will be poured out upon the whole earth. and They will be forced to go through that period by which the only way they can now come to heaven is if they don't bow to the antichrist and are beheaded or martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ That's what Jesus said to the church of Thyatira, in Rev 2:21-22, He said, "*I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.*" If they found it difficult not to succumb to worldliness during the dispensation of grace, how much more will they be tried when it's a capital offense to be a believer in Jesus Christ

Vs11-12

Again that should jog your memory, where have we heard that before, turn back in your bibles to Matt ch 7Vs21-23 Heavy!! You see it's not in outward reformation, reforming your life so that it takes on the appearance of a believer, trying through the efforts of the flesh to cut this out of your life and that out of your life so that you have the appearance of godliness. The key is in inward transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit in your life by faith in Jesus Christ, outward reformation does absolutely nothing for your eternal well being, Paul the apostle said, *"you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."*

So what's the key, the Spirit of God dwelling in you, having oil in your vessel, notice that no one else could give that to them. You have to do what you need to do to be wise and be ready on your own, your mom can't stand in the gap for you, your dad or grandparents, or for that matter your son's or daughters can't give you the Holy Spirit. You won't make it to heaven on any other person's coattails except the coattails of Jesus Christ, no one else can bridge that gap for you. Now, both met the bridegroom, but one group, those who were wise, those who were watching and ready were accepted and the party began. But those who were foolish, weren't accepted, but rather they were rejected and cast into the tribulation because they didn't know the bridegroom personally, that's the key, knowing Jesus. Not knowing about Him, not setting in church every week and gathering a false sense of security because your name is on a membership roster somewhere. But knowing Him in a personal way, like a friend who is closer than a brother because you've been washed free from sin and made white as snow by the blood of Jesus Christ by faith.

Vs13

So the warning goes out, and this parable ends in the same way vs 42 of ch 24 begins; those vs more or less form parenthesis around the parable exhorting you and me not to slumber and sleep or grow weary of well doing. But rather that we would be found faithful with that which we've been entrusted, and be found ministering at the Lords return.
and That's the concept that leads Jesus into this next parable.

Vs14-15

So already we can see the point of this parable beginning to evolve or to surface, that being the absence of the physical presence of the Master, (that being Jesus) and the interim, or meantime responsibility of His servants with His goods. Again drawing from Ch 24:45 in regards to the faithful and wise servant, and the specific example that He uses is that of a talent, which was the largest sum of money that was used for exchange in their culture.

Now different people ascribe different value amounts to the talent, the bottom line was it was a lot of money, some have said between a year to 5yrs worth of salary. and The key so far is that he gave each one according to their own ability, remember that, he didn't give so much to one person that it was an overwhelming burden and responsibility. He knew their limits and gave to each accordingly, Jesus said My yoke is easy and My burden is light, He's not going to overwhelm you and weigh you down, to the contrary He want's to lighten your load and bear your burden for you because you can't do it on your own. I believe that it's important to note that this parable regards money specifically, but at the same time I think that it's also safe to apply this in regards to whatever gifts, the Lord has invested into our lives and entrusted us to invest them wisely for the glory and profit of His kingdom.

Vs16-17

Now it's not important what they did to increase the talents, the point is that they made good and effective use of what was given to them.

Vs18-19

So we notice the long time, and then it was time to settle up, this alludes to the judgment, where each individual will stand before the Master to give an account.

Vs20-23

Now what are we seeing here, we're basically listening to Jesus' own expository teaching on vs 46-47 of ch 24 (read) now we read of the account of the last servant of the parable.

Vs24-25

So instead of giving an account of what he did, the 1st thing he does is begin to make excuses and try to justify himself as to why he did absolutely nothing with what the Master had entrusted to him. Even though he knew that the Master expected something of profit for his investment, he says I know you reap where you don't sow and gather where you don't scatter, in other words I know that you expect profit on your investments. But yet we see in vs 25 that for his entire life (you could say) he did absolutely nothing with what he was entrusted, he finished right where he started.

Vs26-27

Hey, at the very least put it in a c.d. or an interest bearing checking account and don't write checks on it so that it will at least earn a few %, you don't have to be a wise investor to do that. But you've done nothing of value whatsoever.

Vs28-30

So the emphasis of the parable is that God has invested gifts, money, talent, time and ability into each person, some more than others. But to the degree that He entrusts those gifts to you is the degree that He expects you to use them for the profit of His kingdom. and Notice the reward was the same for the 2-talent person as it was for the 5-talent person as it could've been for the 1 talent person. Because the emphasis isn't on how much, of what you have, it's on how faithful you are with whatever has been entrusted to you, in investing that into the kingdom. Everyone has been given something to be accountable for in the physical absence of Jesus. You say, not me Jeff, I don't have any gifts man, I can't play the guitar, or stand in front of however many people and teach the bible, can you change a diaper? Sign up for the nursery, can you shake a hand while reflecting the joy and the countenance of Jesus, be a greeter or an usher. Maybe God's blessed you financially, be a wise steward of it, invest it into the kingdom instead of being a penny-pinching miser. Paul tells us to command those that are rich to *"be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*

You see there's no need to be doing nothing, at the very least put it in the bank, in other words don't be lazy, make a minimal effort at the least to be of some benefit to the kingdom, this is not a spectator sport. Nor is everything the Pastors job, we're a team and we're all in this together, I heard somewhere that 10-15% of the people in the average church does 85-90% of the work. Don't you want to be the exception to that, to the praise and honor and glory of God, Jesus continues now to emphasize this concept of *"giving food in due season"* or glorifying your Father in heaven by your good works and how important it is.

Vs31-34

Jesus is in reference to Himself calling Himself the King, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Vs35-40

So there was no ulterior motive in their good works, they were just an overflow of their love and commitment to Jesus Christ

Vs41-

Notice who the everlasting fire was prepared for, for the devil and his angels, hell was not intended for man, but if man chooses to rebel against God even as Satan did, then he chooses the same fate. God sends no one to hell, people choose to go their by choosing to reject the love and grace of Jesus Christ

Vs42-45

Paul the apostle would put it like this, these are they that *“profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”* You say Jeff, it sure sounds like your preaching works righteousness, or salvation by works. No, I’m saying that saving faith will naturally produce good works in your life, out of the overflow of your love for Jesus. James said you show me your faith with out your works and I’ll show you my faith by my works. True faith is not complacent, it’s active, you see James said, *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

That’s what Jesus is saying here, don’t tell me you love Jesus, show me, by the way you live your life, He’s teaching on the severity of sins of omission, not doing anything. We so often think of sin as doing something wrong, but it can be just as bad to not do something right.

Vs46

Those words eternal and everlasting are identical, even as heaven is everlasting, even so is the lake of fire just as eternal. The good news is that you don’t have to go there, God has created a means of escape and only one, and it’s by means of the cross and believing by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, don’t be caught off guard, or with out oil, in your vessel. Watch and be ready, don’t put off another day what needs to be done right now, if your not right with Jesus Christ today is your day and this moment is your moment don’t let it pass, lest Jesus Christ return when your not ready and you be appointed your portion with the hypocrites.