

keep your lamps lit

THE BEGINNING OF THE END :THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, PART 10 · MATTHEW 25:1-13 · MAY 8, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day or the hour." (Matthew 25:13)

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like..." (25:1)

That time and Jesus' coming (*parousia*)

The kingdom of heaven

An Overview of the Parable (25:1-12)

The setting of the wedding and anticipation of meeting the bridegroom (1-2)

The two categories of young women: foolish without oil & wise with oil (2-4)

The delay and falling sleep (5)

The announcement (6)

Awakening and preparation (7)

The contrast in readiness: foolish needing to buy oil & wise ready with sufficient oil (8-9)

The arrival of the bridegroom and welcome for the wise who are ready (10)

The sad situation of the foolish who were not ready (11-12)

An Exhortation Toward Watchful Readiness (25:13)

Let us keep watch for Jesus' return (Matthew 25:13)

Let us build our lives on Jesus' teaching (Matthew 7:24-27)

Let us walk in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 25:4; Revelation 4:5; Galatians 5:22-25)

Let us speak to others about Jesus and the good news (Matthew 24:14; 1 Peter 3:15)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever fallen asleep at the wrong time or missed something important because you weren't paying attention? What happened?
2. As we continue our series, "The Beginning of the End," this week we build on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24 by looking at a parable in Matthew 25:1-13. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then read that passage aloud.
3. This parable expands on themes in Matthew 24:36-51. You may want to read that passage again for background. Based on 24:42-44, what would you say is the most important point of that previous passage?

4. *Background: Middle Eastern weddings during Jesus' day often involved guests waiting at the bridegroom's home while he went to the house of the bride, bringing her back through the village to his home, inviting people along the way to join in the celebration that would take place at his home.*

5. What is the situation of the two groups of women described in this parable in verses 2-4? What is similar about them and what is different about them?

6. All ten of these young women fall asleep waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom since his arrival is delayed (verses 5-6). What do you think this mention of a delay communicates to Jesus' audience and to us as disciples?

7. Why do you think there might be a delay in Jesus' return? What Scripture passages may help explain this delay?

8. What happens with the two groups of young women in verses 7-9 after the announcement of the bridegroom's imminent arrival?

9. What is the different result for these two groups of women as recorded in verses 10-12?

10. Considering the entire parable and verse 13, what do you think Jesus is trying to speak to His hearers and to us?

11. What is one thing you learned or sense God is speaking to you through this study? If you're in a small group, share that with one another. If you are on your own, write it down and share it with someone this week. Conclude your study in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize Matthew 25:13
- Draw, ink, or paint Matthew 25:1-13 as a basis for prayer. Take time to talk with God as you depict the scene in your own way. What is God speaking to you?
- Consider watching the Bible Project video, "The Day of the Lord": bibleproject.com/explore/video/day-of-the-lord/.
- For further insight into this parable, consider reading:
 - Kenneth E. Bailey's wonderful book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*: ivpress.com/jesus-through-middle-eastern-eyes
 - "The parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25" by Ian Paul: psephizo.com/biblical-studies/the-parable-of-the-wise-and-foolish-virgins-in-matthew-25/