

Hymns: 19 The Light of the World Is Jesus 65 This Is My Father's World
40 He Leadeth Me! O Blessed Thought

Scripture: Psalm 37:27-40

Big idea: Be Wise

Our scripture text for today is: **Matthew 24:45-25:46**

This is our third and final trip into the Olivet Discourse given by Jesus to His disciples from the Mount of Olives just a few days before He would go to the cross. He answered His disciples' four questions regarding when the temple would be destroyed and when He would return to set up his kingdom at the end of the age.

We learned that both the rapture **of** the church and the church itself were mysteries **at** the time these words were spoken **and** were absent from **this** narrative. We learned that **signs** were something that Jews watch for while Christians anticipate Jesus return at any moment. Jesus told His disciples to **watch** and **pray** very much like He would tell them a few days in the future right before He was betrayed and arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane on this same Mount of Olives.

We covered the parable of the fig tree which illustrated the principle of knowing what comes next by what has already come to pass. We learned that a **parable** is a **comparison** that uses commonly understood things to show a deeper meaning. Parables have been called "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Jesus' parables were designed to illuminate those **able** to hear while hiding that same truth from those outside the family of God.

We pick up our study today at Matthew 24:45 as we proceed through the parables that punctuate the remainder of this discourse. It's not unusual for Jesus to give a group of (often three) similar parables designed to illustrate the same truth. That's the case here as we have the following triplet:

1. Wise and Evil Servant (vv. 45-51)
2. Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
3. Talents (vv. 14-30)

We'll start with the Wise and Evil Servant.

[45] *Who then is **a faithful and wise servant**, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them [food at the proper time]?*

[46] *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord **when he come[s]** shall find so doing.*

[47] *Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

The **wise** servant did his job faithfully and reliably. In so doing, he was prepared when his master returned. As a direct result of his trustworthy service, this wise servant **earned** a position of **greater responsibility**.

[48] *But and if that **evil servant** shall say in his heart, My lord **delay[s]** his coming;*

[49] *And shall begin to*

*[beat] his fellowservants,
and to eat and drink with the drunken;*

[50] *The lord of that servant **shall come***

*[on a **day** when he does not expect] him,
and in **an hour** that he [does not know],*

[51] *And shall cut him [in pieces], and [put] him ... with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

This evil servant showed himself to be cruel, irresponsible, and self-indulgent. He demonstrated his evil character by his actions. As a result, he received severe punishment reserved for rebellious slaves.

The moral of this story is the **faithful** will be rewarded and the **unfaithful** will be punished. Our second story for today is called the Ten Virgins.

Matt.25

[1] ***Then shall the kingdom of heaven***

Let's stop here. What *then* is Jesus referring to? Could it relate to one of the disciples' four questions? Clearly it does. Notice Jesus references the *kingdom of heaven*. That is the kingdom that comes down from heaven to be established on earth in the person of Christ Jesus. That third question from the disciples sought to know **when** that **kingdom** would begin. As we proceed through this story, we will see that Jesus confirms this at the end of the story (v. 13).

be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

The phrase *be likened unto* refers to a **comparison** or a **parable**. The familiar practice that Jesus used for this illustration is a portion of the Jewish Wedding model. The betrothal had previously taken place – usually about a year earlier. The bridegroom had left his betrothed wife to make a place for the couple at his father's house. The bride and her attendants wait expectantly and prepare for his return (usually at night) with his friends. Suddenly, one night they come with a shout and the bride and her attendants join the procession back to the bridegroom's father's house to consummate the union and celebrate there at a seven day wedding feast.

Notice ten virgins went to meet the bridegroom. This parable is not teaching polygamy. The virgins were **our** equivalent of bridesmaids. They accompanied the bride – **joining** the procession of the bridegroom with his friends – back to his father's house.

With that, let's return to our story.

[2] *And five of them were **wise**, and five were **foolish**.*

[3] *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*

[4] *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

[5] *While the bridegroom tarried, they **all slumbered and slept.***

Notice here they **all** slept. Sleeping is a normal physical function of life. Sleeping was not the problem. The question is: Are they ready?

[6] *And at **midnight** there was **a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh;** go ye out to meet him.*

[7] *Then **all** those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*

[8] *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*

[9] *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ... to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

[10] *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they **that** were ready went in with him to the marriage: and **the door was shut.***

Where did we find that phrase before in the Bible? God shut the door of the ark (Genesis 7:16). Jesus is illustrating the same principle here. Those who have **not** prepared will be shut out. They will **not** be saved to celebrate but instead will be condemned.

[11] *Afterward came also **the** other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

[12] *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, **I know you not.***

Now comes the punch line. Jesus tells the reason for the story.

[13] ***Watch** therefore, for ye **know neither the day nor the hour** wherein the **Son of man cometh.***

Jesus again goes back to His admonition to watch and be prepared for you do not know when He will come.

[14] *For the **kingdom of heaven is as***

Recall how this opening matches the one Jesus just gave regarding the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The *kingdom of heaven* repeats the theme of Jesus coming from heaven to establish His kingdom on earth while the *is as* phrase clues us in that this is also a parable.

a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

[15] *And unto one*

he gave five talents,

to another two,

and to another one;

to every man according to his ... ability;

and straightway took his journey.

A talent was a large unit of money. It consisted of 6000 day's wages. We could think of it in today's units as over one million dollars. Even one talent was a large sum of money.

[16] *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

[17] *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

[18] *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

[19] *After a **long time** the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

We can try to get a perspective of how long this long time might have been as we proceed with the story.

[20] *And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

[21] *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

[22] *He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.*

[23] *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

[24] *Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:*

[25] *And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.*

[26] *His lord answered and said unto him, Thou **wicked** and slothful **servant**, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:*

[27] *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money [in a bank], and then at my coming I should have received mine own with [interest].*

There's the clue we needed to estimate how long the lord was gone. Jesus said the lazy servant could have at least put his talent in the bank and earned interest. The going fair rate of that day was similar to today at about five percent. The two faithful servants each doubled their money. Likely, they would have done better than the bank. Perhaps ten percent would be a reasonable estimate for their rate of return. The Rule of 72 says at ten percent interest you double your investment in seven years. If they earned a higher return, the length of time would be lower. With those assumptions, we can estimate the long time the lord was gone was perhaps four to seven years.

[28] *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it []to him which ha[s] ten talents.*

[29] *For unto every one that ha[s] shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that ha[s] not shall be taken away even that which he ha[s].*

[30] *And cast ... the unprofitable servant into **outer darkness**: there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.*

Luke 13 gives insight into weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[27] *But he shall say, I tell you, **I know you not** whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*

[28] *There shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, when ye shall see **Abraham, and Isaac**,*

and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Next comes **in** this progressive story, the point in time when Jesus returns in glory:

[31] When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

[32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

[33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

[34] Then shall the King

Notice Jesus has installed Himself as King.

say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

These people will populate the Millennial kingdom on earth. Neither the Millennial kingdom nor the people living in it were an afterthought. As are each of us also, they are part of the purpose and plan of God before creation (Hebrews 4:3).

[35] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

[36] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

[37] Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

[38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

[39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

[40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

These good deeds reflect the **character** of the individuals doing them. We know that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone which produces a transformed life yielding an honorable character (Ephesians 2:8-10).

[41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

These are those not redeemed by Christ. They will die, rise from the dead and be judged for their sins at the Great White Throne, and then be cast into the Lake of Fire.

[42] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

[43] I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

[44] Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

[45] *Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it **not** to one of the least of these, ye did it **not** to me.*

As with the righteous, the works of these unrighteous reflect their true character.

[46] *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

The word translated *everlasting* and *eternal* here is identical – indicating the permanence of fates of the both righteous and the unrighteous. What is the nature of this everlasting punishment? Here are a few verses that elaborate:

II Thessalonians 1

[9] *Who [referring to the unsaved] shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

We can speculate this destruction eternally separates these souls from the Lord also called the second death (Revelation 20:14; 21:8)

Jude

[7] *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, ... , are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Secondly, their fate will be similar to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah involving an eternal fire that executes vengeance.

Application

Those are sobering words. We can take comfort in knowing that the LORD's judgment will be perfectly just. We can also rejoice that because of His grace we who accept His free gift will live with Him forever.

Benediction

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
To the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty, dominion and power,
both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)*

© Ron Harrod, 2024.

This document may be reproduced for noncommercial use only.