

Get Ready
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Scriptural Text: Matthew 24:25 – 25:13, ESV

The Abomination of Desolation

^{24:25} “See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

³² “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day and Hour

³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹ and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

^{25:1} “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins 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 became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those virgins 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 answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they were going 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 virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹² But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

The message of this parable is simply: Get ready! Few doctrines are emphasized more thoroughly than the Second Coming of Jesus. In the New Testament alone God provides us three hundred and eighty times with this teaching of The Second Coming. In fact, when we read our Bible from cover to cover, we will not be able to get away from this specific truth of the Messiah coming to rule and reign on the earth. In the New Testament this doctrine is taught in one out of every five verses. It is everywhere we find this great and awesome focus upon the future work of Jesus in coming to the earth to rule and reign and to establish His Kingdom. The writer of Hebrews says this,

^{6:27} And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Alexander Maclaren, a Bible teacher of the 19th & 20th Century, writes, “The early church thought more of The Second Coming of Jesus than about death or about Heaven. The early Christians were looking not for a cleft in the ground called a grave, but for a cleavage in the sky called ‘Glory’. They were watching not for the undertaker but for the upptaker.” Are we looking toward the end of our life when we are going to have an undertaker, or are we saying, “No, I believe the Lord’s return is so evident, so possible, and so expectant I am looking for the upptaker, the person who takes me up to glory to meet Christ in the air.”

If this is true of the early church, that their focus was so much upon The Second Coming of Jesus, causes us to ask the question: Why are modern American Christians not eagerly awaiting for Him? Why do we not place our hope more firmly in the promised coming of our Lord Jesus? I believe the answer lies in the truth we often so much love this present world and we cannot get our eyes off of what is right in front of us, the physical things we can see, feel, taste, and touch, to look to this blessed promise. We become deceived our life is really about the here-and-now and some Bible teachers actually teach that idea.

It is no wonder why there is so much despair in this world and we are looking for satisfaction and for sufficient hope, and meaning and purpose from the things of this earth, things which are passing away. God teaches us so often about The Second Coming of Jesus so we would not put our trust and our hope in this present world, but that we would place our trust and our hope in Him who is the Source of Life itself, in Him who is the Exalted King Jesus Christ the Lord of all the world.

We may come to church with brokenness in our life, experiencing some financial crises perhaps or marital strife, physical disease, emotional heartache, or mental distress. We may come feeling all alone with burdens weighing us down and crushing us. The light seems to be growing darker and darker and we despair over our life’s situation. I do not know the specific problems each of us faces today, but there is one truth I do know, there is not one problem we face as Christians that the coming of the Lord Jesus will not completely resolve. On that day, regardless of what problems each of us may be facing, every problem will be completely vanquished and completely resolved when Jesus returns in power and in glory.

Do we have to wait for help until the coming of the Lord Jesus? Scripture answers, “No! We can bring some of that joy and some of that hope into the present day.” Here is God’s prescription for us: God calls us to turn away from our love of this world because that is what is causing us our despair. We are to turn away and repent of our love of this world and to fix our eyes upon Jesus and upon His soon return. We are to have this expectancy and anticipation. Through this fixing our eyes upon Jesus we connect to our future joy today while we eagerly await and love the appearing of the Lord Jesus. God brings this hope from the future into the present circumstances of our life this very hour.

If we are in Jesus Christ, we have come to place our faith in Him and we are united with Him and we are given the life of God in our soul through His death and burial and resurrection. The Bible promises very specific aspects of our future. The Bible promises we will rule and reign with Jesus when He comes to establish His Kingdom. Our future is absolutely established and absolutely made certain.

In deed, it may feel as though we are getting kicked around in the first, second, or third quarter of the game, and, indeed, often we are, but guess what happens, the Champion enters the game in the fourth quarter and He comes and victory is absolutely made certain. Every Christian ends their life with victory because Jesus is the Victorious King.

The text of the parable of the Ten Virgins helps us to focus upon this great future event when Jesus returns and to live with an expectancy and anticipation and, most of all, to be ready and be prepared for that day. Jesus teaches this parable in the midst of the larger sermon beginning in Matthew 24 and finishing at the end of Matthew 25 with the Olivet Discourse. This sermon was prompted by a question the disciples asked in Matthew 24, a matter of which the Old Testament prophets prophesied,

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

The disciples were fully expecting Jesus to answer, “Next week,” or “Next month,” or some very, very short timeframe. They did not understand the coming Messiah would come once to make an atonement for sin and then there would be a delay, a period in between, before Jesus would return from Heaven as the Messiah to establish His rule and reign as King over the earth. Jesus answers their question very clearly, in Matthew 24,

³⁶ *“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.”*

It is remarkable to me there are Bible teachers who tell us the exact year of the coming of Jesus. Jesus made this event very clear, “No one knows! Only the Father knows when these things will be.” At the end of this parable Jesus makes this application, “So watch, anticipate, expect, stay away for you do not know neither the day nor the hour.” That is the main idea behind this parable, to make our self ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus. If the Lord were to return today, before we complete this study, and He might, are we ready? Is our house in order? Are we prepared to stand before an infinitely Holy God to give an account of our life? These are the questions this parable addresses.

We will begin our study by considering **the gracious invitation** God gives to us: God invites everyone into His Kingdom and this is an awesome truth of the Gospel. Jesus begins teaching,

^{25:1} *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”*

Jesus loves talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of the Kingdom of Heaven we enjoy right now, but much of the blessing of the Kingdom are yet future when the Lord returns. Jesus wants us to understand, more of this Kingdom of Heaven, this rule and reign of God in our heart and in our life, is over all of creation. The lamps are torches, big stick, bowls with cloths as wicks with oil poured into them to light the way through the night.

This is a story which is very familiar to the audience in Jesus’ day. It is not so familiar to us because our wedding customs are so different from the wedding customs of the 1st Century Jew. The Jewish customs, in the 1st Century, for weddings began with an agreement with parents and then a betrothal. The betrothal is similar to our engagement only it is legally binding. After the betrothal, the bridegroom would go home and make preparations for the wedding. It may take months for this to happen. The bride remained in her home with some of her attendants.

At some point, the bridegroom would “text” his future bride and tell her when he is coming. No, they did not have all of the convenient communications means we enjoy today. No, the bride would never know when the bridegroom would be coming. This may be a long journey to his bride and at the end of the journey the bridegroom would get the bride. The bride’s attendants will proceed through the city streets with their torches. They would be singing so that the whole city would look out of their home and see this was a wedding. They would rejoice in this procession until they came to the bridegroom’s house where all of the feasts and festivities were ready for a week-long party. The door would be shut and they would have the wedding ceremony and then everyone would celebrate. This was the custom behind this parable and it would be very familiar to the 1st Century audience.

The bridegroom in this parable represents the Lord Jesus. The wedding represents His Second Coming, His Kingdom, and all the blessings, all the joy, all the peace, and all the righteousness established in the coming of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

The ten virgins represent the people who have heard the invitation to come and enjoy the blessing of God's Kingdom and who have RSVP¹'d, and they have said, "Yes, we are coming." These ten virgins represent every person who has made a profession of faith in Jesus, a profession to honor Jesus as King and to be a part of His Kingdom. We will discover later this group of ten is divided into two different groups. There is a great difference between five wise virgins and five foolish virgins, but all have been invited to the wedding.

What do we need to do to be invited to the wedding? Jesus answered that question in Matthew 22, through another parable taught earlier in our studies,

²"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come...⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find."

The people who would not come, in Verse 3, represent the Jewish Nation who rejected Jesus. The king, then, decided to invite everyone and that represents the invitation from God to the whole world. Who is invited to the wedding? You are. I am. It is amazing we get to be invited to the wedding of the King and of the King's Son. This is an incredible privilege because we are not worthy.

Some, today, profess God is not loving and unmerciful to keep anyone out of Heaven. We have that all backwards. The world considers each person worthy of God and worthy of Heaven. How dare God keep anyone out. But, the Bible teaches us just the opposite and that is none of us are worthy and all of us deserve to be shut out from the King's wedding because we have clothes which are stinky and filthy and we have defied the King and rebelled against Him. But, God, in His mercy, invites us anyway. The remarkable thing about the Gospel is anyone and everyone is invited.

The hard thing to believe is not that God would shut out sinners from His perfect Holy Heaven, but the hard thing to believe about the Gospel is that God would invite any sinner in. And, He does not just invite any sinner in, He invites every sinner in. That is amazing. God is such a merciful God.

Jesus speaks of His Second Coming throughout His earthly life, but He also speaks of it through the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 22, Jesus says this,

^{7a}"And behold, I am coming soon."

^{12a}"Behold, I am coming soon..."

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

There is no one who is shut out from the wedding feast because they were not invited. You are invited. I am invited. We are invited by God's Spirit. God is graciously extended to you and to me an invitation to the wedding feast of His Son. We need to come.

Why would we want to go to that wedding? Weddings are boring. Why would we want to go? The reason why we need to go to this wedding is because inside this banquet hall there is joy inexpressible. There is forgiveness of sin. There is freedom from the weight of the guilt of our sin. There is freedom from the power of sin so we do not have to be enslaved anymore. There is freedom to enjoy God's very presence and to see Him in this beautiful glory. There is adoption into His family. There is purpose and meaning. There is an inheritance awaiting us in Heaven forever, secured, undefiled, and protected and kept guarded by God Himself that can never be taken away. That is what is inside that wedding banquet hall and that is why we need it so. I want you to know, you and I are invited.

What do we need to do? We need to come in faith, in honor of the King, and ready to worship.

¹ répondez s'il vous plaît, French, a request for a response.

Let us consider **the delayed coming of the King**. Jesus will come at a time which is unexpected,

⁵ *As the bridegroom was delayed...*

The future coming of the Bridegroom is absolutely certain. The disciples knew Jesus is the Messiah, that He and His miracles which attested to His claim to be the Messiah and they had read the Old Testament prophecies and that Jesus had fulfilled all of them and they knew He would reign as King. It is not new revelation to the disciples that the Messiah would rule as King over all the earth. In Isaiah 9, Isaiah the prophet, centuries before the coming of Jesus, said,

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

Recently we had the opportunity to see our son Daniel graduate from the United States Air Force Academy. Vice President Joe Biden spoke. In that speech the Vice President talked about bringing in a new world order. He mentioned that twice. In that new world order the American government and the cadets will bring in, a weighty responsibility, is one of absolute world peace and economic prosperity. I can tell you, no human government will ever be able to fulfill a new world order event of that magnitude. It will be the old world disorder and that is what it always is going to be until this King sets upon His throne, Who has the power, the wisdom, and the righteousness to make the kinds of decisions necessary to establish that kind of rule on the earth...and that King is coming!

His coming is going to be delayed and that was something which shocked the disciples. It was something they had not anticipated, that there would be a period of time between the first coming of Jesus to make atonement for sin and the Second Coming to establish God's eternal plan for earth. But, the delay Jesus wants His disciples to know is not a cause for discouragement or drowsiness.

Peter will later write about the spiritual warfare believers will experience as a result of God's sovereignly planned delay. The delay of the coming of the King is not because the enemies are so strong there must be some strategy and some time to overcome them. No, it is a sovereignly planned delay God established in the counsel of His own will before the world began. The Messiah will come and make atonement for sin through His death, burial, and resurrection and there will be a delay during which God establishes His church. Then Jesus will come to rule and to reign. The disciples did not understand that and Peter tells us God's people will struggle under spiritual warfare as a result,

³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

This is what we find to this day. Peter's words are absolutely true. So, why is there this delay. Peter answers that for us. First, God is eternal. Time has no length to Him. Secondly, God is patient,

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

At the coming of the Lord Jesus not everyone is going to be happy. When Jesus comes He is going to come to bring judgment upon rebels and upon sinners as well as to bring reward to those who have humbly bowed to His sovereign authority. But, the coming of the Lord is delayed so that more of these rebels could see the life, hope, and truth found in the Gospel: repent and enter in to the blessing of this wedding feast. That is why there is a delay.

Jesus is going to say, in Revelation 16,

^{15a} ("Behold, I am coming like a thief!")

That is an odd sort of thing for Jesus the Son of God to say. He compares Himself to a thief. Why is that? It is because for some His coming is not good news so He says, “Get ready because judgment is going to fall on all who continue to resist My kingly authority.”

The third idea of our study is the necessary preparation. Preparedness for Jesus’ return demonstrates personal faith in Him. This is the main point of this message as well as the main point of the parable – preparing our self for the coming of the Lord Jesus. In Revelation Jesus told us He would come like a thief. It is important for us to prepare our self for the coming of this thief who comes in judgment. In Luke 12, Jesus says,

³⁹ *“But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into.”* ⁴⁰ *You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

The coming will be sudden, like a bolt of lightning out of the sky. And, the coming will be at an hour we do not expect.

Not long ago, we had some thieves in the Peoria area who would break into houses. They would tie up the homeowners and they would abuse them and then they would steal their stuff and take off. One of these incidents happened in our neighborhood. I do not know about you, but I began to make greater preparation for a thief to appear at my house during that time. I doubly sure doors were locked. I kept my cell phone by my bed. I even had a weapon. It was a baseball bat! It was something to defend my family.

The likelihood of a thief coming to my house is probably pretty small, but it still made preparations. Jesus is saying, “The likelihood of a thief coming to your house is 100%. It is absolutely certain. It is an undeniable fact a thief is going to come. Are you ready?” If you are ready, He is not a thief, He is a gift-giver. But, if you are not ready, everything you have which you believe is precious is taken and judgment awaits. In Matthew 24, Jesus says,

⁴² *“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming...”* ⁴⁴ *Therefore you also must be ready...”*

Over and over, Jesus continues to make this plea, “Be ready!” Jesus does not delight in the lack of preparedness of a single soul. He wants all of us to be ready.

Remember, the ten virgins represent every person who had made a profession of faith in Jesus. I trust most of you have made a profession of faith in Jesus. These ten virgins represent you,

² *“Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.”*

Among those who make a profession of faith, who say, “Yes, I want to be a part of the wedding. Yes, I want to enter into the Kingdom of God. Yes, I am making a verbal response to the invitation,” He says, if there are ten of those, five of them are foolish and five of them are wise. On the outside all of them look alike. All were virgins, in other words they were moral people. They all gave an RSVP. They all believed the bridegroom would come. They all had torches. They all had wicks in their torches, but there was a huge difference within this group. Half of them had oil for the wedding procession and half did not. Half were ready and half were not,

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.”*

Preparedness simply means having oil for your torch. What does the oil represent? It represents God’s saving grace, His salvation, His Holy Spirit. All of these are talking about the same thing: the qualification of God’s internal work in a soul wrought by God’s Holy Spirit to produce God’s life inside of us as we believe in Jesus.

Jesus looked at Nicodemus who was a professor of faith in God. He said, “Nicodemus, you have all of the outward appearances of a person who is going to be a part of the wedding feast, but you must be born again. You must have an internal change or you will not enter the wedding feast. You teach God’s Word. You follow God’s Word in your morality. You go through the motions of religious ritual. You make all kinds of great doctrinal affirmations, but,

Nicodemus, you must be born again. You must have the oil of God's Spirit because that which is born of the flesh is flesh. It is only that which is born of the Spirit that has God's Spirit."²

Are you ready? Do you have oil in your torch? Do you have God's Holy Spirit which works internally, not only on the outside of affirmations and participation, a lifestyle of habitual commitments, not a measure of outward interest in spiritual things, but I am talking about a personal experience with the Living God through the Holy Spirit's inner working as a result of your faith in Jesus Christ? That is the question.

It is possible to know and affirm many objective truths about God without experiencing God Himself through the working of the Holy Spirit. Only such a work of God's Spirit truly changes us. If there is no essential change in our inner life as a result of our profession, there is no real faith. If there is no real faith there is no real salvation. If there is no real salvation there is no part in God's Kingdom and that is disastrous.

I believe there is a reason why Jesus does not say, "There are ten virgins. One of them was foolish and nine of them were wise." He said there were ten people who professed to be a part of God's Kingdom. Five were foolish and five were wise. I do not believe Jesus is teaching there is an exact mathematical principle that half the people will profess faith in Him and their salvation is lost. I believe His intention is to say, "There are a lot of them." And, I believe there are such ones listening to this sermon today and the passion of this message is that it might awaken you by God's Spirit." You see, I am not ready and I want ten out of ten at Bethany Baptist Church to profess faith in Christ to be a part of the wedding banquet. I cannot tell, and nobody can tell, from the outward. That is a question each one of us must ask our self, "Do I really have the life of God inside my soul, a personal experience from the Living God which changed me from within and it has moved me from a lover of this world to a lover of God?" Has that really taken place?

Jesus tells us, in Matthew 7,

²² "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Do you have oil for your lamp? Do you really have a personal experience with God's salvation and His life inside your soul? There is no reason why any person would have to wonder about that question. God's Gospel has made it clear so we can graciously enter into the joy of our salvation.

Fourth, we will consider the futile appeal. This aspect of the story teaches us no one can share their own preparedness for Jesus' return with another person,

⁷ "Then all those virgins 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 answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'"

The foolish did have a little bit of oil because they had some flickers and some sparks and some smoke, but they did not have enough oil. This part of the parable confused me as a little boy because my mom taught me I should share. I wondered what was going on with these five wise virgins and why weren't they sharing their oil. Were they selfish? No, and we miss the point. It is not that the five wise virgins would not share, it is that they could not share.

Through this story Jesus is teaching us the spiritual life the Spirit gives to us cannot be borrowed or shared with another person or from another person. We cannot borrow a relationship with God from someone else. We cannot borrow from our mom or dad, our grandma or grandpa, as godly as they may have been, an aunt or an uncle, a brother or sister, a son or a daughter, not from a pastor or Sunday school teacher, as much as they love us and they want us to be in the Kingdom, they cannot share their life with us. They can only point us to the One who can give us life and each of us, personally, must receive this life for our self. We must personally get this oil and obtain it for our self.

² John 3:1-8

The Gospel of God simply calls us to ask Him in faith for oil, for saving grace, for the life of the Spirit. Believe in His Son as your great treasure as the King over your life and as the Savior of your soul. It is important to understand the five foolish virgins lacked oil because they willfully neglected it. They could have had oil. There was oil all over the place. It was not hard to find oil. If we go to Israel we will see olive trees all over the place – oil, oil, oil. They could have had it but they willfully neglected it.

No one can ever say they do not have oil because it is unavailable to them or it is out of their reach. This parable warns us we cannot obtain salvation if we delay receiving it until the last minute. By then, it is too late.

There are many who live their life saying, “I will live my life this way for...” and they generally have some time frame set. It could be through high school or college years. Maybe it is some single guy or gal. maybe it is early in the marriage and they want to do certain things, “Then...” and they point to a day when they would get the oil. The problem with that plan is the King comes suddenly and at a time we do not expect and we are found unprepared.

The fifth issue of getting ready is the most solemn and sobering issue of this story and it is the closed door. God Himself will close the door to His Kingdom upon those who are not prepared. This is the sober truth of the Gospel.

Jesus does not want any of us to experience such horror. That is why He teaches this story, so that we would not,

¹⁰ *“And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.”*

Who shuts the door? God Himself, the Father of the Groom. Once the door is shut it will be forever closed. Those on the outside remain on the outside. Those on the inside remain secure on the inside. Those on the outside are excluded. Those on the inside are included. Jesus simply says, “The door was shut.”

There is an awful finality to those words. Think of the moment of sheer terror they must have experienced when the door was shut and they knew there was no hope. In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of His coming to be like the days of Noah. It is estimated it took Noah one hundred years to build the ark from the promise of the flood and the falling of the rain.

Noah is called a preacher of righteousness and we believe he preached righteousness to people, “God is righteous and we need to repent. God is offering His salvation through the ark,” and the people mocked and scoffed at him,³

³⁷ *“For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”*

As we only can imagine how horrible it must have been. They mocked when they heard Noah talk about rain. They had never experienced rain before. God told Noah to get into the ark. Noah got into the ark and the door was shut! The rain began to fall, first with a drop, and they wonder what that was. It became a deluge and they looked at the huge ark sitting there and they realized what was happening and the truth of the message Noah had been giving them, sent by God. They began banging on the outside of the door but the door was shut and it was too late. That is what Jesus is teaching us.

Then we read these terrifying words,

¹¹ *“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’”* ¹² *“But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”*

Here is the message and the application,

¹³ *““Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”*

Watch! Anticipate! Expect! Be ready!

³ Genesis 6:9-10

If we have the Lord Jesus and we have united with Him and have been given the life of God's Spirit, we watch with such expected joy.

When I was single and attending Dallas Theological Institute, with my engaged girlfriend living in Kansas City, and we had not seen one another for a month or six weeks. She was going to fly in and I was sitting at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport waiting, anticipating, and watching. The air traffic controllers overseeing Kimberly's flight knew a whole lot of details. They knew the kind of airplane she was flying in, they knew the flight path, they knew the altitude of the plane, they knew its speed, they knew the length of the runways, they knew the direction she would come. I did not have any of that information. And, I did not care. I did not need to know those things. What I did know was that my bride was coming and I was going to get to see her. All those other details did not matter. I was going to get to see Kimberly and I was excited. I waited and I watched as I was waiting.

We do not know a whole lot of information about this coming of the Lord. We do not know the flight path, the altitude, the timing, the when, or the where, but here is what we do know, Jesus our Savior is coming and He is coming suddenly, at a time we do not know and He saying, "Watch for me!" I believe if we watch with that kind of anticipation and expectation our life will be changed and we would grow more and more like Jesus and we would grow less and less in love with this world. And, I believe this church would be changed for the glory of God.