

How To Live Until Christ Returns

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Matthew 25:1-46

How to live until Christ returns

They were foolish because they took no oil with them.

Jesus told the following parables to clarify further what it means to be ready for his return and how to live until he comes.

In the story of the 10 bridesmaids (25:1-13), we are taught that every person is responsible for his or her own spiritual condition.

The story of the three servants (25:14-30) shows the necessity of using well what God has entrusted to us.

The parable of the sheep and goats (25:31-46) stresses the importance of serving others in need. No parable by itself *completely* describes our preparation. Instead, each paints one part of the whole picture.

The Parable of the ten virgins.

Matthew 25:1-25

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

[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.

Oil is a symbol of The Holy Spirit.

[5] While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. [6] And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

The foolish virgins asked the wise virgins to share their oil with them.

[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 ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

They were not prepared for a waiting period.

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

Jesus told the following parables to clarify further what it means to be ready for his return and how to live until he comes.

Understanding:

This parable is about a wedding. On the wedding day the bridegroom went to the bride's house for the ceremony; then the bride and groom, along with a great procession, returned to the groom's house, where a feast took place, often lasting a full week.

These 10 bridesmaids were waiting to join the procession, and they hoped to take part in the marriage feast.

But when the groom didn't come at the expected time, five of them were out of lamp oil. By the time they had purchased extra oil, it was too late to join the feast.

**When Jesus returns to take his people to heaven, we must be ready.
Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute.
Our relationship with God must be our own.**

The story of the talents.

[14] For the kingdom of heaven is as 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 several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Faithful in making use of the money given.

[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 reckoned with them.

The one with five talents gained five more.

[20] And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou delivered 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.

He that had been given two talents gained two more.

[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.

The one with one talent did nothing with his talent.

[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.

The Lord was displeased with his decision.

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 ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

The talent was given to the one who had 10 talents.

[28] Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

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

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

Jesus told the following parables to clarify further what it means to be ready for his return and how to live until he comes. In the story of the 10 bridesmaids (25:1-13), we are taught that every person is responsible for his or her own spiritual condition. The story of the three servants (25:14-30) shows the necessity of using well what God has entrusted to us. The parable of the sheep and goats (25:31-46) stresses the importance of serving others in need. No parable by itself *completely* describes our preparation. Instead, each parable paints one part of the whole picture.

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When Jesus returns to take his people to heaven, we must be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. Our relationship with God must be our own.

The master divided the money among his servants according to their abilities. No one received more or less than he could handle. If he failed in his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed.

Failure would indicate only laziness or hatred toward the master.

The bags of silver represent any kind of resource we are given.

God gives us time, gifts, and other resources according to our abilities, and he expects us to invest them wisely until he returns. We are responsible to use well what God has given us. The issue is not how much we have but how well we use what we have.

Jesus is coming back—we know this is true. Does this mean we must quit our jobs in order to serve God? No, it means we are to use our time, talents, and treasures diligently in order to serve God completely in

whatever we do. For a few people, this may mean changing professions. For most of us, it means doing our daily work out of love for God.

This last man was thinking only of himself. He hoped to play it safe and protect himself from his hard master, but he was judged for his self-centeredness.

We must not make excuses to avoid doing what God calls us to do. If God truly is our Master, we must obey willingly.

Our time, abilities, and money aren't ours in the first place—we are caretakers, not owners.

When we ignore, squander, or abuse what we are given, we are rebellious and deserve to be punished.

This parable describes the consequences of two attitudes toward Christ's return. The person who diligently prepares for it by investing his or her time and talents to serve God will be rewarded.

The person who has no heart for the work of the Kingdom will be punished. God rewards faithfulness. Those who bear no fruit for God's Kingdom cannot expect to be treated the same as those who are faithful.

This is a parable of the sheep and goats.

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

A reward to the faithful.

[34] Then shall the 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:

[35] For I was hungry, 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 hungry, 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.

[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:

[42] For I was hungry, 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 hungry, 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. [46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We are care takers, not owners.

We must not make excuses to avoid doing what God calls us to do. If God truly is our Master, we must obey willingly. Our time, abilities, and money aren't ours in the first place—we are caretakers, not owners. When we ignore, squander, or abuse what we are given, we are rebellious and deserve to be punished.

Two attitudes of Christ's return.

This parable describes the consequences of two attitudes toward Christ's return. The person who diligently prepares for it by investing his or her time and talents to serve God will be rewarded.

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God will separate his obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers. The real evidence of our belief is the way we act. To treat all persons we encounter as if they were Jesus is no easy task. What we do for others demonstrates what we really think about Jesus' words to us: Feed the hungry, give the homeless a place to stay, look after the sick. How well do your actions separate you from pretenders and unbelievers?

Jesus used sheep and goats to picture the division between believers and unbelievers. Sheep and goats often grazed together but were separated when it came time to shear the sheep. Ezekiel 34:17-24 also refers to the separation of sheep and goats.

This parable describes acts of mercy we all can do every day. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; they are simple acts freely given and freely received. We have no excuse to neglect those who have deep needs, and we cannot hand over this responsibility to the church or government. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for others' needs (Isaiah 58:7).

There has been much discussion about the identity of the "brothers and sisters." Some have said they are the Jews; others say they are all Christians; still others say they are suffering people everywhere. Such a debate is much like the lawyer's earlier question to Jesus,

Who is my neighbor?

"Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). The point of this parable is not *who*, but the *what*— the importance of serving where service is needed. The focus of this parable is that we should love every person and serve anyone we can. Such love for others glorifies God by reflecting our love for him.

An understanding of hell.

(1) **Sheol**, or "the grave," was used in the Hebrew Old Testament to mean the place of the dead, generally thought to be under the earth. (In the Hebrew, this word occurs in Job 24:19; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 38:10.)

(2) **Hades** is the Greek word for the underworld, the realm of the dead. It is the word used in the New Testament for Sheol. (In the Greek, this word occurs in Matthew 16:18; Revelation 1:18; 20:13, 14.)

(3) **Gehenna** was named after the valley of Ben-Hinnom near Jerusalem, where children were sacrificed by fire to the pagan gods (see 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3).

This is the place of eternal fire (Matthew 5:22; 10:28; Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5; James 3:6; Revelation 19:20) prepared for the devil, his angels, and all those who do not believe in God (25:46; Revelation 20:9, 10).

This is the final and eternal state of the wicked after the resurrection and the Last Judgment.

When Jesus warns against unbelief, he is trying to save us from agonizing, separation from God.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print