

Session 7: The Bride in Matthew 24 and 25

I. The Context of the Three Parables of Matthew 24 and 25

1. The words recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 were taught by Jesus during the last week of His earthly ministry following His first triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

- a. As discussed in the last session, when Jesus returns He will enter Jerusalem as a victorious Bridegroom King riding on a white horse. In great contrast, in Jesus' first triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He came riding on a donkey. The donkey symbolizes Him coming as a suffering servant to give His life for His bride. In addition, the donkey symbolizes Jesus coming in humility inviting His followers to get ready for His second coming.
- b. During the week between His entry into Jerusalem and going to the cross, He taught, confronted, and ministered with an overriding theme of get ready for His second coming. As you glance through Matthew Chapters 21-25, you will notice that upon entering the city, He went to the temple to cleanse it; He performed wonderful works of healing and ministry; He confronted the Jewish leadership for their failure to receive Him; He spoke to His disciples extensively about His second coming; and He called all to make themselves ready for His second coming. Included in His teaching about His second coming were the parables of the Marriage Feast, the Two Servants, the Ten Virgins, and the Talents—all of which are about the bride making herself ready for His second coming.

2. After ministering at the temple, Jesus and His followers departed for the Mount of Olives where some of His disciples asked Him about the end of the age.

- a. Immediately upon entering the city, He went to the temple, cleansing it from the sin that was rampant there. While there, He healed the blind and lame and confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees. The parable of *the Marriage Feast which we analyzed in the last session was spoken there to the Jewish leaders as well as His disciples*. As He left the temple with His disciples, He told them that the temple would be destroyed; in fact, He told them that "not one stone here shall be left upon another" (Mt. 24:2).
- b. He and His disciples then went to the Mount of Olives where He sat overlooking the temple. Knowing that Jesus had just prophesied about the destruction of the temple, several of His disciples asked Him questions recorded as follows, "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Mt. 24:3). Jesus answered their questions in great detail in what is now known as the Olivet Discourse.

3. A predominant theme of Jesus' answer to His disciples' questions was a call to *His followers* to get ready for His second coming.

- a. Jesus did explain some of the signs of His coming to His followers with a detailed description of end-time events, stating that there will be famines, earthquakes, wars, upheavals, offenses, apostasy, persecution, and even the worship of the Antichrist (Mt. 24). However, He also used the teaching

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about the signs of His coming to make His primary point which was to explain the need for His disciples to get ready for His second coming. Note this passage,

For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore *be on the alert*, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at *what time of the night the thief was coming*, he would have been *on the alert* and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason *you also must be ready*; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will (Mt. 24:37-44).

- b. It is interesting that Jesus spoke these words and those which follow on the Mount of Olives—the place from which He would ascend to heaven in a few short days (Acts 1:11-12) and also the place where He will stand upon His return (Zach. 14:4).
- c. Also important to know is that these words were spoken to His followers and, therefore, apply to them—and every believer who has lived, lives, or will live during the church age. Make sure you get this important point: Jesus' words to His followers are also a call to believers throughout every generation to make themselves ready for the judgment seat of Christ and Christ's second coming.
- d. Three important points are repeated in His teachings to His followers during His last week of ministry. These become very important points for us to consider as we dig deeper into the remainder of Chapter 24 and Chapter 25.
 - First, Jesus will return much like a thief at a time that most do not expect.
 - Second, because He will return to the surprise of the majority of the world, we must all stay alert at all times in anticipation of His coming.
 - And, third, His followers must get ready for His coming.
- e. With that introduction, let's review three parables: the Two Servants, the Ten Virgins, and the Talents. We don't have time or space to go in depth into all three; therefore, we will only be able to summarize the Parables of the Two Servants and the Talents; but, we will explore in greater detail the primary text for this session, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, as it is directly related to the bride making herself ready. Let's begin with a brief look at the Parable of the Two Servants.

II. The Parable of the Two Servants

1. The Parable of the Two Servants serves as an introduction and a summary of the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Talents.

- a. Even though not all three of these parables discuss directly the bride making herself ready, all three do have a direct application to our understanding of what is involved in our making ourselves ready

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as a bride for Christ. Therefore, we will discuss them in the order they appear in the text. The Parable of the Two Servants reads as follows,

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?

46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47 "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;

50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,

51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 24:45-51).

2. Let's now take a brief look at this parable and its meaning and application.

- a. As you are probably aware, the Parable of the Ten Virgins compares the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins, five of whom are wise and five foolish. Of importance to the parable of the Two Servants, the Greek word for wise in the Parable of the Ten Virgins is the same word as "sensible" in the Parable of the Two Servants. In fact, most major translations read somewhat like this, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?" (Mt. 24:45, NKJV). In addition, you know that the Parable of the Talents is about being "faithful" with what is entrusted to you, and the ones who were faithful were entrusted to be in charge of the master's possessions.
- b. Moving to verse 46, it tells us that the wise and faithful servant will be the one who the master, that is, the Lord when He returns, finds "so doing". In other words, those things spoken of in the Parable of the Ten Virgins and Parable of Talents address issues that the believer in order to be ready must be found "so doing" when the Lord returns. The verse also tells us that those found "so doing" will be put in charge of the master's possessions. In other words, they will be rewarded greatly for their faithfulness and perseverance and receive a greater responsibility in the ages to come.
- c. In verse 48, we see another parallel between this parable and the next two. The phrase "not coming for a long time" is actually one word in the Greek and, in fact, is the same word that is translated "delaying" in the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The point made in this verse is that even if the master delays, believers must not drift away from what the Lord has spoken in both the other parables, but must continue to be "so doing" the points made in the other two parables.
- d. Verse 50 makes the point that Jesus spoke about earlier and is also suggested in the two following parables. Jesus will return like a thief at a time when people are not expecting it. Therefore, it is imperative that believers remain alert and be on the journey of making themselves ready.

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- e. Verse 51 concludes the parable by telling us that those who are not wise or faithful and are not “so doing” will be excluded from the place where the wise and faithful will be and that in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You will recall from the last session that this phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is not a specific place as much as it is attitudes of the heart. It is an emotional state of great loss and anger expressed when one discovers what has been lost.
- f. Therefore, the Parable of the Two Servants is connected and directly applicable to the following two parables which we will look at in a moment. The primary point of this parable is that no matter how long it takes before the Lord returns, the wise and faithful servant must be doing what is described in the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Talents.
- g. Now, let’s look more extensively at the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

III. The Parable of the Ten Virgins

1. Let’s begin our discussion of the Parable of the Ten Virgins with an overview of the parable.
 - a. The Parable of the Ten Virgins compares the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five were wise and five were foolish. All ten had an initial supply of oil to fuel their lamps, but the foolish did not take any extra oil in their flasks. While the bridegroom delayed, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. At midnight, when the shout came that the bridegroom was coming, all ten virgins rose up to meet him. But the foolish virgins did not have enough oil to keep their lamps burning. So, when they asked the wise for some of their oil, the wise answered, “No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves” (Matt. 25:9).
 - b. Unfortunately, while the foolish virgins went to make the purchase, the bridegroom came and those who were ready—that is, those who had enough oil to keep their lamps lit—went into the wedding feast and the door was shut. Later, when the foolish virgins wanted to come into the wedding feast, the bridegroom said to them, “Truly I say to you, I do not know you” (Mt. 25:12). Jesus concluded the parable with this challenge: “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour” (Mt. 25:13).
2. Let’s next review the text of the parable in order to gain a deeper understanding of what it is saying.
 - a. The Parable of the Ten Virgins is recorded in Matthew 25:1-13. I have included the verse references so as to help with our analysis of the text. It reads as follows,
 - 1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
 - 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent [*wise*].
 - 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,

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4 but the prudent [*wise*] took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

6 But at midnight there was a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."

7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

8 The foolish said to the prudent [*wise*], "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out."

9 But the prudent answered, "No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves."

10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, "Lord, lord, open up for us."

12 But he answered, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you."

13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour (Mt. 25:1-13).

- b. Beginning with verse 1, let's now walk through the parable in an attempt to understand its meaning.

Verse 1

3. The parable makes it clear that there will be a wedding between Christ and His bride.

- a. In verse 1, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven will be compared to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Like we said in Session 6, the kingdom is compared to different things. It is like a seed sown in a field, leaven that spreads imperceptibly, hidden treasure that must be discovered, a pearl of great price that is purchased, and a king who came to settle accounts. Central to the theme of this session, it is here compared to ten virgins who go out to meet the bridegroom.
- b. Each of these comparisons highlight important principles about how the kingdom of heaven operates. As such, when Jesus compares the kingdom to a wedding procession in which young virgins go out to meet the bridegroom to celebrate a wedding feast, He is making the point that there really will be a wedding and a marriage feast given for the Son and that those who are wise will prepare for it.

4. The parable can be titled the Parable of the Ten Christians.

- a. Remaining at verse 1, the question we want to answer now is who are the ten virgins? Are the foolish virgins unbelievers? Are they all Christians? Some scholars interpret the five foolish virgins as

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individuals who profess Christ as their Savior but are not really converted to the faith. Others interpret the foolish virgins as the Jews who rejected Jesus at His first coming. Few scholars from earlier generations have viewed the foolish virgins as true believers.

- b. Our view is that all ten virgins are true believers who are waiting for the Bridegroom to return. Most definitely, we are not alone in believing this way. As the Holy Spirit unveils the mystery of the bride of Christ in our day, many leaders now view the foolish virgins as true believers. Even though many church leaders have the same view we have, our view on this important point is not based on the opinions of others. To support our view, the following is some biblical evidence that supports the belief that all ten virgins are true believers.
- c. First, Paul called believers “pure virgin[s]” betrothed to one husband, Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). When we are born again, we become like a virgin in the site of God. In addition, in this verse Paul connects the idea of a believer as a virgin to the bridal paradigm with the believer who is betrothed to Christ as His bride being referred to as a virgin. So, it would be biblically consistent for Jesus to use this same symbolism in this parable.
- d. Second, both the wise and the foolish had an initial supply of oil. Of course, oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Notice what Matthew 25:8 says: “The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’” The word for “going out” in the Greek means “to extinguish, quench, to put out.” You can only extinguish a fire that is burning. You can’t extinguish something that has never burned. Therefore, this Greek word shows us that the foolish virgins’ lamps were being extinguished, meaning they once had light in them. And since you can’t have light without oil, all ten virgins had an initial supply of oil in their lamps.
- e. Third, all ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom when He came (Mt. 25:6-7). Unbelievers would not be interested or eager to meet Him. Only truly born-again believers would be waiting for His coming.
- f. Fourth, the number of virgins—ten—supports the idea that the virgins represent all believers. Biblically speaking, ten represents the totality of an issue or circumstance being discussed. For example, the totality of God’s Law was summarized with ten commandments. The totality of God’s judgments upon Egypt was released through ten plagues. The totality of testing for some believers in the church of Smyrna was carried out in ten days (Rev. 3:10). So, when Jesus said that ten virgins went out to meet Him, He was saying that the totality of the church—that is, every born-again believer—will go out to meet Him when He returns.
- g. In summary, our position is that all ten virgins are true born-again believers. Therefore, we refer to this parable as the Parable of the Ten Christians.

5. The light from the virgins’ lamps is symbolic of the external fruit of a believer’s inward personal walk with the Lord.

- a. Still in verse 1, they all went out to meet the bridegroom. This phrase highlights the context of the parable as being a wedding processional which as we discussed in Session 2 describes the bride being escorted to the wedding feast by young unmarried maidens of a similar age. Of importance to

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this parable is that most of these processions took place at night; therefore, there was a need for the young ladies to take lamps or torches with them to light the way.

- b. Therefore, let's look at the lamps they took with them. The Greek word for lamps is *lampa* which actually refers to a torch fed with oil like a lamp.¹ Like we said, most marriage processions such as being described here took place at night, and, as a result, the lamps shined brightly against the darkness of the night. Their lamps symbolize the virgins' external life in God as it shines forth the light of their relationship with Jesus. Observe what Jesus said:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Mt. 5:14-16).

- c. Therefore, the symbolism of the parable is that the light that shined from the ten virgins was their godly character and their good works. It was the fire of their passion for Jesus, the brilliance of their obedience to Jesus and of their Holy Spirit led ministry and service. *In summary, the light put out by the lamps held by the virgins represents the external fruit of a believer's inward personal walk with the Lord.*

Verse 2

6. Five of the virgins were lukewarm in getting ready and five were prudent.

- a. Moving on to verse 2, we see that of the ten virgins, five were foolish and five were prudent or wise. The Greek word translated "foolish" is *moros*. The basic meaning of this word is dull, sluggish, or thoughtless.² Thayer's Greek Lexicon adds: imprudent, without forethought or wisdom.³ Kittle's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament adds this explanation of the word,

The point in the parable of the virgins is readiness. The fault of the foolish virgins is a lukewarmness that takes participation for granted and thus brings down judgment on itself.⁴

- b. From these definitions, we see that the foolish virgins were not evil people; instead, they were dull, sluggish, or ignorant of truth, and, therefore, lukewarm in their walk with God. *As Kittle wrote, they were lukewarm in the pursuit of readiness.* Rather than pursuing a deep inward life in Christ with fervor and passion, the foolish virgins paid little attention to developing their inward life in God. Though they were truly born again, they were entangled in the busyness of life and were weighed down by the cares of the world. Because they took their position as the bride of Christ for granted, they grew lukewarm.
- c. The Greek word translated "wise" is *phronimos*. The word means: wise, sensible, prudent.⁵ Definitions of the English word prudent are: marked by wisdom, wise or judicious in practical affairs, careful and avoiding risks. As you will note, the New American Standard Translation translates *phronimos* as prudent. *Therefore, we see that of the ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom, five were sluggish, dull or lukewarm in their preparation for this event whereas five were wise and prudent in making themselves ready.*

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Verses 3 and 4

The oil hidden within the virgins' lamps symbolizes the believer's internal relationship with Christ.

Moving now to verses 3 and 4, verse 3 states that the foolish "took no oil with them" whereas the wise "took oil in flasks along with their lamps". Let's next look at the oil. The light that came from the torches was fueled by the oil hidden inside the lamp. The part of the lamp that held the oil was made of either pottery or iron and was constructed in such a way that the oil from the container fed a linen wick that burned the oil. As we stated earlier, oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Just as the oil was hidden inside the lamps of the virgins, the Holy Spirit is hidden within a believer and empowers them to produce the fruit that lights the world. Therefore, in this parable the oil represents our private life in God that produces a bright light in a dark world. Just like the virgins needed a constant supply of oil to keep their lamps burning, each of us needs a constant supply of oil to keep our lights burning brightly. *This type of oil is produced or "purchased" from God by our hidden life in God as we meet with our Bridegroom in the secret place; as we enjoy Him in our alone time with God in His presence; as we abide in Him daily throughout our life; as we overcome issues in our inner man; as we lay down our self-life to obey God; and live in the reality of issues like these.* As we regularly purchase more oil for our lamps, we will develop a passionate love relationship with the Lord that will result in deep intimacy and maturity. Then, we will be known by our Bridegroom, experience the joy of the wedding feast, and partner with our Bridegroom king for all eternity.

To make sure we are clear, both the foolish and the wise carried lamps that were lit and contained oil. However, in addition to the oil in their lamps, the wise each took a flask which contained extra oil. The foolish did not take any extra oil, and, therefore, did not have sufficient oil for the journey. *Thus, the foolish did not have a sufficient internal relationship with Christ to make themselves ready for Christ's return.*

Verses 5, 6, and 7

7. A wise virgin will pursue an active relationship with Christ throughout their life whereas the foolish do not.

- a. Summarizing verses 5, 6, and 7, the bridegroom delayed longer than they were expecting. Both the wise and the foolish became drowsy during the delay and fell asleep. Remember from Session 2, that neither the bride nor the attendants knew exactly when the bridegroom would come. The decision to go and take the bride was a decision made by the father of the bridegroom. So, all of the young ladies were waiting not knowing when the bridegroom would actually come for his bride. But at midnight, the shout came, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." When they heard the shout, all ten woke up and arose to meet the bridegroom. As we connect the Parable of the Two Servants to the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the attitude of the evil slave in the Two Servants illustrates the mindset of the foolish virgins during the delay. Note these verses from that parable, "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards (Mt. 24:48-49). During the delay, the evil slave drifted far from being either faithful or wise. He drifted into lukewarmness, compromise, sin, even serious sin. As a result, he was assigned a place where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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- b. Because the bridegroom delayed, the lamps of all ten had grown dim requiring them all to trim their lamps. The Greek word translated “trim” means: to put in order, arrange, make ready, or prepare.⁶ To prepare their lamps, the young ladies had to attend to the linen wick and put more oil from their flask into the lamp. But as we will see in the next verse, the foolish virgins did not have enough oil to refresh the flame in their lamps. When the shout of the bridegroom’s return was declared, it was a call to make sure their inward life was in order and that they were ready for the bridegroom’s coming.

Verses 8 and 9

8. The oil of one’s relationship with Christ cannot come from another person but must be the result of a personal relationship with Christ.

- a. Next to verse 8 and 9. When the foolish virgins realized the bridegroom was coming, they also realized that they did not have enough oil to keep their lamps lit. They knew at that point without any doubt that they had not properly prepared for the bridegroom’s coming. The foolish virgins asked the wise virgins if they could have some of their oil. The wise said they did not have enough to give the foolish any and told them to go buy some from the dealers. It became obvious to the foolish virgins at this point that they could not depend on anyone else for oil. The foolish virgins had to go to the dealers—that is, those who produced the oil—to purchase the necessary oil. In desperate need of oil at this point, the foolish virgins went to purchase more oil for themselves.
- b. As Jesus so clearly tells us in this parable, we cannot borrow oil from anyone else—we have to purchase it for ourselves from God. Just like we can’t depend on another’s faith for our salvation, we can’t depend on anyone else for an intimate relationship with Jesus. We must go to the dealers ourselves (Mt. 25:9), and we must go often to keep our oil supplies replenished. Purchasing oil will cost us time, money, and even friends. The wise virgins knew the expensive cost of oil, but they considered being eternally prepared for Jesus worth any price. Yet the small price that we pay cannot even compare to the rewards we will experience at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Verse 10

9. When the Bridegroom comes, only those who have purchased sufficient oil throughout their life will be allowed to enter the marriage feast of the Lamb.

- a. Now to verse ten. While the foolish virgins were at the dealers buying the necessary oil to keep their lamps burning, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready, that is, those who had made themselves ready during their lives, went into the wedding feast; and the door was shut so as to exclude the foolish virgins.
- b. Remember that the context of this parable is Jesus’ Olivet Discourse in which He answered the disciples questions about the end times. Much like today, the disciples wanted to know details of when He would return. However, His answer to their questions was: “Get ready”. Jesus had exhorted His disciples earlier in His Olivet discourse to get ready for His coming. Here we see that the wise virgins did make themselves ready but the foolish did not and were excluded from the marriage and the marriage feast.

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- c. Four important points we can glean from this verse.
- d. First, it takes a long time to purchase the necessary oil of an intimate relationship with the Lord in order to be ready when the Lord comes for us—whether at the end of the age or the end of our life. No one has the time to get sufficient oil when we hear the shout of the Bridegroom’s coming.
- e. Second, oil must be purchased regularly. The lamps themselves and the flasks that held extra oil were small and had to be replenished frequently. Likewise, we must be regularly going to Christ to purchase oil. We can’t encounter Him once and then go back to a lukewarm lifestyle. We must regularly be about the task of making ourselves ready.
- f. Third, no one can purchase oil for you. Everyone must go to the dealers themselves to purchase the oil. No spouse, pastor, or teacher can purchase your oil for you. Yes, we can draw from each of these but the purchase itself must come solely from us.
- g. Fourth, the verse tells us that those who have purchased sufficient oil throughout their life will enter the marriage supper of the Lamb whereas those who don’t will be excluded. When the passage tells us that the door was shut, we must be aware that the shutting of the door is a permanent exclusion of those who don’t make themselves ready by purchasing sufficient oil. The door to the marriage supper will not be opened later to those who did not prepare. Those who are born again will spend eternity in heaven but will not experience the great blessing of the marriage supper of the Lamb and become the eternal wife of Christ.

Verses 11 and 12

10. In saying He did not know the foolish virgins, the Bridegroom is saying He does not know them in an intimate, personal relationship

- a. Verses 11 and 12 tell us that the foolish virgins came to the door asking the Lord to let them in to the wedding feast. As we stated a moment ago, the Lord would not let them in as confirmed by him uttering these words, “truly I say to you, I do not know you.” Note that the bridegroom said that he did not know the foolish virgins.
- b. Many commentators state that those who the bridegroom said he didn’t know refers to those who are not born again. J. C. Ryle’s commentary on Matthew presents a good example of this view. He wrote,

We see in this parable that when Christ returns, true Christians will receive a rich reward for all they have suffered for their Master’s sake. We are told that when the bridegroom came, “the virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.” Only true Christians will be found ready at the second coming. Washed in the blood of atonement, clothed in Christ’s righteousness, renewed by the Spirit, they will meet the Lord with boldness and sit down at the wedding banquet of the lamb, to go out no more.⁷
- c. The above quote by Ryle is typical of the view of many commentators. In his description, he states that his view is that every truly born again believer will receive entry into the marriage supper of the Lamb and only non-believers will be excluded. In essence, Ryle is stating that when the bridegroom

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says that He doesn't know the foolish virgins, He is saying He does not know them in terms of salvation. Our view of the meaning of verse 12 is much different than that expressed above. Certainly, those who are not Christians would be excluded from the wedding feast. But those invited into the feast are a smaller group than everyone who is truly born again.

- d. To support our view, let's look into the idea of the Bridegroom not knowing the foolish virgins. There are primarily two Greek words translated "know" in the New Testament, *ginosko* and *oida*. The word in this passage is *oida*. Kittle's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament states that these two Greek words are "more or less synonymous".⁸ However, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words offers some important distinctions to the meaning and use of the two words. Vine's presents this definition of *oida*,
- Oida* comes from the same root as *eidon*, which means "to see," and is a perfect tense with a present meaning, signifying, primarily, to have seen or perceived; hence, to know, to have knowledge of, to know absolutely, as in divine knowledge.⁹
- e. Biblehub.com adds an important point to our understanding of *oida* stating that it is to properly see with true perception.¹⁰
- f. Throughout the Bible, the word "know" often suggests knowing someone fully or intimately. In fact, the Hebrew word for "know" is sometimes used to describe physical intimacy between a husband and wife (Gen. 4:1, NKJV). Furthermore, Jesus was not saying He did not know who they were, for He is omniscient. He was saying that He did not know them intimately.
- g. Summarizing the various definitions of *oida*, we explain it to mean "to have divine knowledge that knows something absolutely with accurate perception".
- h. Now that we have an understanding of the meaning of the word translated "know" in verse 12, let's look briefly at the meaning of the word "truly". Thayer's Greek Lexicon states this about the word translated "truly". It is used as an adverb by which something is asserted or confirmed as true. In other words, it confirms that what follows is without a doubt true.
- i. Based on these definitions of "know" and "truly", our interpretation is that verse 12 means that the Bridegroom has seen deeply into the hearts of the foolish virgins with accurate perception and confirms with absolute certainty that He does not know them in terms of a truly deep personal relationship.
- j. Let's summarize what the idea of "I do not know you" means. Realizing they did not have sufficient oil, the foolish virgins went to the dealers to purchase more oil. As we stated earlier, the oil is symbolic of a believer's personal, even intimate, relationship with Christ. The foolish virgins went to the bridegroom to purchase the oil of relationship from Him. Jesus was not saying He did not know who they were, for He is omniscient. He was saying that He did not know them intimately. The context in which the foolish virgins came to the bridegroom was to purchase a deeper level of intimacy with Him. When they came to the door of the banquet hall, the bridegroom was saying that it was too late because He did not know them in terms of an intimate relationship with them. So, to be clear, the Lord is not saying He does not know the foolish virgins in terms of their salvation and entry into heaven. He is saying that He does not know them in the context of being the bride made ready and entrance into the marriage supper of the Lamb. Because they did not make intimacy with

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Jesus their number one priority, Jesus spoke these sobering words to them: “Truly I say to you, I do not know you” (Matt. 25:12).

- k. The wise virgins, on the other hand, live differently. They pay the price to purchase the oil that keep their lights burning brightly. They remain awake and alert (Mt. 25:13). They go to the secret place on a regular basis to meet with their Bridegroom and they abide with Him with a deep love connection throughout their life. As a result, they develop an intimate relationship with Jesus. When the Bridegroom returns, the wise virgins will have plenty of oil, their lamps will burn brightly, and Jesus will know them intimately. Because the wise virgins take their personal relationship with God seriously, they are ready for the Bridegroom’s coming and are welcomed at the wedding feast (Mt. 25:10).

Verse 13

11. Wise virgins must remain watchful and active throughout their lives in their personal relationship with Christ.

- a. The parable closes with these words, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour” (Mt. 25:1-13). Jesus’ challenge to His followers was to stay alert because no one knows when the bridegroom will return, and only those who have made themselves ready will be allowed to enter the marriage feast and be the bride made ready.
- b. As we notice in the above passage, Jesus connects being on the alert to being ready. In essence, He is saying that in order to be ready for His coming, we must remain alert throughout our life and, as the Parable of the Two Servants tells, be found “so doing”. because we do not know when He will come. Therefore, the idea of being alert is of utmost importance to being made ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let’s explore it in more detail.
- c. The Greek word translated “alert” means to keep awake and also to watch.¹¹ Thayer’s Greek Lexicon presents these words: to watch, that is, to give strict attention to, be cautious, active and to take heed lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity should suddenly overtake one; lest one be led to forsake Christ; lest one fall into sin; or be corrupted by errors.¹²
- d. So, what do we learn about being alert? It doesn’t mean just looking to the sky for Jesus second coming, discussing the rapture with your friends, or debating the different views of the second coming. It means to do as the Parable of the Two Servants tells us: “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes” (Mt. 24:46). Taking the idea of “being so doing when Christ returns” to the Parable of the Ten Virgins, being on the alert means to be actively and regularly getting oil for our lamps. Remembering that oil represents an inward life in Christ of intimacy and obedience in the secret place of our heart, the wise virgins and those who are alert are those who season after season devote their life to Christ and develop a growing personal relationship with Christ.

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IV. The Parable of the Talents

1. The Parable of the Talents is closely connected with the Parables of the Ten Virgins and the Two Servants and presents another dimension of the bride making herself ready.

- a. Because of time and space limitations, we will not be able to deal deeply with the Parable of the Talents; however, we do want to connect this familiar parable to the previous two parables and highlight the points it makes in light of the Parable of the Ten Virgins.
- b. As we noted earlier, the first verse of the Parable of the Two Servants connects this parable to the other two. You will recall, this parable reads, “Who then is the faithful and sensible [wise] slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions” (Mt. 24:45-47). These words describe the theme of the Parable of the Talents, especially the two statements: in saying “who is the faithful slave” and “put him in charge of all his possessions”.
- c. In addition, the Parable of the Talents is also in the context of a banquet. In our discussion on “outer darkness” in Session 6, we presented this explanation of the Parable of the Talents being in the context of a banquet,

Although not specifically referenced as such, the Parable of the Talents is also set in the context of a banquet or feast. The man in this parable who went on a long journey was wealthy enough to have servants to whom he could entrust large sums of money. Those familiar with Jewish traditions say that most likely when a man of this stature returned home from his journey, there would be a banquet given for the man at his return. This suggests that this parable too is in the context of a banquet. Therefore, all three places where the phrase “outer darkness” appears are or very possibly could be in the context of a banquet.

- d. Based on the above reasoning, we conclude that the Parable of the Talents presents another aspect of the bride making herself ready and illustrates those traits in the bride that would allow her to enter the marriage supper of the Lamb.

2. The Parable of the Talents calls on the bride to use her gifts to serve the Lord.

- a. In this parable, three slaves of a rich man were given different but extremely large amounts of money to put to use while the rich man went on a journey. When the rich man returned, he settled accounts with all three slaves. Two traded with the gift they had been given, but one did not. The one who did not do business with what had been entrusted to Him was cast into the outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. This slave lost his reward when the master came back to settle accounts and was excluded from the feast that was given to honor the master of the house.
- b. The point of this parable, especially in light of the Parable of the Two Servants, is that believers are to be found so doing, that is, using the gifts the Lord has given them to serve the Lord and others. To make this point clear, I am not speaking of doing as much work as one can whether it is initiated

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by God or not. Instead, every believer has spiritual gifts and God given natural talents that God calls them to use to serve Him. Believers are called to be about the business of using their gifts so when the Lord returns, they will have multiplied what has been entrusted to them.

- c. Therefore, as the Parable of the Two Servants states, “blessed is that slave [*faithful*] whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

3. Our conclusion from these parables is that if we are to be a wise virgin and a faithful steward, we must be found so doing the things that Jesus describes in these two parables.

- a. To summarize, the faithful and wise servant must remain spiritually alert and faithfully going about the task of making ourselves ready for Christ’s coming. We must remain alert and not drift into sin or compromise because of the Lord’s delay in coming. We must stay alert and focused on the preparation commanded in the three parables. We must be found so doing. If we do so, we will inherit great rewards. If we do not do so, we will suffer consequences which we will profoundly regret.
- b. More specifically, the faithful and wise servant must also be about the task of developing a growing relationship of intimacy with Christ. The wise virgin must fall deeply in love with Christ and grow in intimacy with Him. The bride’s relationship must be real, deep, and abiding.
- c. The faithful and wise servant must also be using the gifts and talents the Lord has entrusted to them to serve the Lord and others.
- d. The faithful and wise servant must remain steady throughout their life doing these things. Even in the delay of Christ’s return, the bride must not waver being passionate at one moment and lukewarm at another. The bride must remain alert in service and relationship throughout her walk with the Lord.
- e. And, finally, the bride is to be found “so doing” these things when the Lord returns. The betrothed bride who lives this way will enter the joy of her master and celebrate with Him the marriage supper of the Lamb and, as the Parable of the Talents tells us, be put in charge of all His possessions throughout eternity.
- f. Let us all be found so doing!

¹ NT:2985, *lampa*, Abbott-Smith Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament. PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2014 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

² NT: 3474, *moros*, Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2014 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

³ NT: 3474, *moros*, Thayer's Greek Lexicon, PC Study Bible formatted Electronic Database. Copyright © 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

⁴ *Moros*, Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985

⁵ NT:5429, *phronimos*, Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2014 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

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⁶ NT:2885 kosmeoo, kosmoo; Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

⁷ J.C. Ryle, Matthew, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Ill. 1993, p.241.

⁸ Oida, Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p. 673.

⁹ Know, Oida, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

¹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/greek/1492.htm>

¹¹ NT:1127, gregoreuo, Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006, 2010 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.

¹² NT:1127, gregoreuo, Thayer's Greek Lexicon, PC Study Bible formatted Electronic Database. Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)