

Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13)

A Small Group Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Christ's Object Lessons (COL)*, pp. 405-421
- The parable of the ten virgins illustrates the "experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming. **The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord.** They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith. By the lamps is represented the word of God [see Psalm 119:105]. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. [see Zechariah 4:1-14]" (COL 406).
- "In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ's second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ's near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. **A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him," many are unready.** They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit" (COL 408).
- "Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. **One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed.** Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan" (COL 408).
- "**The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working....** They do

- not know God. **They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him;** therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live” (COL 411).
- “When startled from their lethargy, [the foolish virgins] discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but **in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency.... Character is not transferable.** No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another.... Ezekiel 14:20” (COL 411)
 - “**It is in a crisis that character is revealed.** When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight ... it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God....**The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied**” (COL 412).
 - “The followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world.... **The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers.** Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (COL 414).
 - The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So **the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history....** [Satan's] working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. **Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (COL 414).
 - “It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth” (COL 415).
 - “Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God [Isa. 40:9, 10].’ **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.** The children of God are to manifest His glory. **In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them**” (COL 415).
 - “In the synagogue at Nazareth [Christ] said, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Luke 4:18, 19. **This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do.** This is the work which the prophet Isaiah describes [in Isaiah 58:7, 8]. **Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn**” (COL 416-417).
 - “Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. **If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy.** The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed” (COL 417).
 - “**There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them.** Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. **Read to them from the word of God.** Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. **Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus.** Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there” (COL 418).

- “In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit” (COL 419).
- “There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts” (COL 419).
- *Read Matt. 25:1-13. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (use only a few). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - What are the similarities and differences between the wise and foolish virgins, as applied to God's church today?
 - Why didn't the wise virgins share their oil with the foolish ones? Were they being selfish?
 - The oil represents the Holy Spirit. Why is the work of the Holy Spirit so vital in the lives of Christians who are preparing to meet Jesus one day?
 - Why do most people think that they have all the time in the world to get ready for Christ's return?
 - What are practical ways that our lamps can shine amid the darkness of this world?
 - The bridesmaids fell asleep because they waited so long. What are the lessons that come with waiting and delay?
 - How can we remain vigilant and ready for Christ's return, in a world where there are so many distractions?
 - The bridegroom said that he did not **know** the virgins who asked for entry into the wedding banquet. What are ways we can now maintain an intimate relationship with the Bridegroom to ensure we are ready to meet Him?
 - How should Christ's Second Coming change the way we live, and relate to those around us?
 - How can we help people prepare for the most important day they will ever face, the Second Coming?
 - What does this parable teach us about God?
 - What does this parable teach us about mankind?
- **Application Questions** (select a few depending on your time. *One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - How are you keeping watch in your spiritual journey toward heaven?
 - Do you believe you have the oil of the Holy Spirit in your life? Why or why not?
 - Who would you like to lovingly warn this week of Christ's imminent return?
 - What is a lesson from this parable that you'd like to apply to your life?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I will pray this week for God to lead me to one person with whom I can share the good news of Christ's return.”

6. Share (Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer