

Matthew 25:1–13

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At a Bible study on Wednesday, Dec. 1, I began a series covering Matthew 25. The first study was about Matthew 25:1-13. Following are some of the ideas mentioned in that Bible study.

This section of Scripture is called the parable of the 10 virgins. The main characters in the story are 10 virgins and the groom. The main props are a lamp and oil to burn in the lamp.

First 10 verses

Here are brief comments about the first 10 verses.

- Verse 1: All 10 were awaiting the wedding.
- Verse 2: Five were wise and five were foolish.
- Verses 3-4: The foolish had no oil for their lamps, but the wise did have oil for their lamps.
- Verse 5: Before the groom arrived, they all slept.
- Verses 6-7: When the groom came at midnight, all the virgins arose and attempted to trim their lamps.
- Verses 8-9: The foolish virgins asked to receive oil from the wise, but the wise were not able to provide any.
- Verse 10: While the foolish virgins went out to buy oil, the groom came and shut the door.

Significance of the oil

It is realistic for Bible students to question the identity of the oil mentioned throughout the parable.

A common theory among religious people is that the oil pictures God’s Spirit. That makes sense.

But I recommend that you view the oil in broader terms. Consider how the oil pictures preparation and expectations. Consider how the oil pictures obedience and repentance. I like some of the general principles found in Revelation 14:4-5.

Revelation 14:4-5—"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Good to help others

As we consider the discussion between the foolish and wise virgins in verses 8-9, I want to remind you that a parable usually has a specific meaning that does not eliminate other lessons.

At many places in the Bible, we see that it is good for people to ask others for help, and it is good for people to provide help.

Luke 10:33-34—"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Acts 9:39—"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them."

James 1:27—"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

Personal responsibility

But verses 8-9 in the parable are stressing the importance of personal responsibility. That is the specific lesson in those specific verses.

Romans 14:12—"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

1 Corinthians 3:14-15—"If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

2 Corinthians 5:10—"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Doesn't Christ know everybody?

When the foolish virgins wanted to enter the wedding (verse 12), the groom said: "I do not know you."

That sounds like what the Son of God said in Matthew 7:23: "I never knew you."

Psalms 139:7—"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"

Matthew 10:30—"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Working through firstfruits

Matthew 20:15-16—"Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

John 12:47-48—"And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

1 Corinthians 15:23—"But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."

James 4:17—"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."

Revelation 20:5—"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

People will be surprised

Matthew 8:10-12—"When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

The Lord knows who are His now

2 Timothy 2:19—"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' "

Keep watching

Matthew 25:13—"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."