

Keep Your Lamp Burning

"Be Faithful. Be Filled. Be Ready."

Text: Matthew 25:1–13 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever missed something important because you weren't ready? Maybe you showed up at the airport only to find out your passport had expired.

In **Matthew 25**, Jesus tells a story about ten virgins waiting for a bridegroom. Five were ready, and five were not. When the moment came, only the prepared ones went in. The others were left behind.

Don't wait until it's too late.

Don't let "later" steal what could happen now.

Because when the moment comes, you won't have time to prepare – you'll only have time to act.

Text: Matthew 25:1–13 (ESV)

*1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like **ten virgins who took their lamps**... 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... 7 Then **all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps**.8 And the **foolish** said to the wise, 'Give us*

some of your oil... 9 But the wise answered, saying, ...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... 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. "

Jesus starts by saying, “*This is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.*” Right away, He brings us into the setting of a **Jewish wedding** as the Bible often describes the **church as the Bride of Christ**.

All ten virgins **represent the church** – not unbelievers, not the world. These are people who know Jesus, called and handpicked who have been made pure (like virgins) through His blood.

That’s why this parable matters for **you and me**.

Jesus directly refers to Himself as the Bridegroom, showing His intimate relationship with His followers. Read *Matt. 9:15; John 3:29*

Both the wise and the foolish slumbered.

There was only one difference - **the amount of oil they had.**

The wise had oil in their lamps and to spare, the foolish had their lamps but took no oil with them.

How can this relate to us?

- The lamp represents the **Word**.
- The oil represents the **Holy Spirit**.
- We need both to be ready.

Oil symbolises the **Holy Spirit** and the **lamp** symbolises the **word of God**.

- **God's Word as a lamp.** Read *Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; Ps. 119:30*
- **Holy Spirit as the oil.** Read *1 Sam. 16:13; 1 Sam. 10:1&6; Lev. 8:12; James 5:14*

Oil is important ***for a lamp to keep burning*** because it is the fuel that feeds the flame.

No one wants to be a bad bridesmaid, no one wants to be unprepared. But only five of them were truly ready - they did what it took.

The Bible is not just a book, it's a **living book!**

To truly **understand** this living Word - and be **transformed** by it, we need more than just reading or study. We need the **Holy Spirit**.

It's the Holy Spirit who takes the Word from head knowledge to heart change.

Without Him, the Word remains on the page.

With Him, the Word comes alive **in us**.

Word Without Spirit → Dryness

Spirit Without Word → Blow Up

Word and the Spirit → Grow Up

The **Word** provides truth. The **Spirit** provides power.

Together, they produce **growth and transformation**.

The **Holy Spirit** *comforts, teaches, guides, convicts, empowers, produces fruit, gives gifts, intercedes, assures, and transforms us* – making God's presence real in our daily walk.

*The key to not missing out is to do what the wise virgins did – **BRING OIL IN FOR YOUR LAMP!***

Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit!

Paul warns us in *Eph. 5:18* not to live recklessly or out of control; we need to keep being filled with the Holy Spirit!

Christian life is the same.

- God gives each of us an “initial charge” – He gives us His grace and the initial infilling of the Holy Spirit for us to get started.
- But to live effectively, we must stay connected to the power source, continually recharged.

Ex. Mobile phones & electronic gadgets.

Jesus our greatest example.

Even Jesus lived in continual dependence on the Holy Spirit and did not begin His ministry without the Holy Spirit. Read *Luke 4:1, 2-13, 14*

9 But the wise answered... go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves. ’

Salvation and spiritual readiness are **personal** – no one else’s faith or prayer life can make up for yours.

In our Christian experience, at first, the Holy Spirit is received as a **gift** (*Acts 2:38*). But in this parable, the wise told the foolish: “*Go and buy oil.*”

The oil was no longer freely given. It had to be bought. This is a powerful lesson about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is initially a gift from God, freely given to us. If we want to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in His power, there's a **price to pay**. But it's not money or effort to earn God's love – the "**price**" is our **daily walk with God**. It means making a daily choice to **put Him first**, to **spend time with Him**, and to live in a way that **honours Him**.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit isn't a one-time event – it's a **daily relationship**.

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

*When Jesus said that He wasn't talking about **head knowledge**. In Greek, the Bible uses several words for "know", each with different levels of meaning. So when Jesus says, "I do not know you", He's saying: "**We don't have a deep, intimate and personal relationship. You never pursued intimate, ongoing, growing knowledge of Me.**"*

*That kind of knowing comes only through the **Holy Spirit** - as we spend time with Him, walk with Him, and let His Word transform us.*