



# FAITH AND GRACE CHURCH

## LEARNING FROM THE MASTER (JESUS CHRIST- OUR CHIEF CORNERSTONE)

### **STUDY 21-65 – THE PARABLES OF JESUS - Parable No. 40- THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS**

**TEXT: Matt. 25:1-13**

#### **LAST WEEK: Parable of The Wedding Feast (MATT.22:1-14)**

LESSONS: - The kingdom of heaven was opened up to anyone who will set aside his own righteousness and by faith accept the righteousness God provides in Christ. Those who spurn the gift of salvation and cling instead to their own "good" works will spend eternity in hell.

#### **THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (Matt. 25:1-13)**

##### INTRODUCTION

Matthew 24 ended with a parable meant to emphasize the idea of readiness for the coming of Jesus. Matthew 25 begins with the parable of the ten virgins upon the same principle of readiness.

**There were three stages to a Jewish wedding** in that day.

The first was engagement – a formal agreement made by the fathers.

The second was betrothal – the ceremony where mutual promises are made.

The third was marriage – approximately one year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time for his bride.

When the bridegroom came, the bride-maids, who were attending the bride, went forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps lighted, to conduct him and his companions into the house, and to her who was to be the bride.

In this parable, the first two stages have already taken place. Now the wedding party; the ten virgins wait for the coming of the bridegroom for the bride.

Some in the wedding party were wise and prepared for the coming of the bridegroom, while some were foolish and unprepared.

In this parable all ten of the maidens slept because the bridegroom was delayed, but the wise ones were prepared to act immediately when they were unexpectedly awakened. The foolish maidens were not prepared.

They are waiting to escort the bridegroom in festal procession, probably in the last stage of the ceremonies as he brings his bride home for the wedding feast.

The five foolish virgins appeared to be ready for the bridegroom, because they had their lamps in hand. But they really were not ready, because they took no oil with them.

#### **Oil in their vessels:**

The wise maidens had an extra supply of oil. At an unexpected hour the bridegroom came for the wedding, all those virgins immediately began to prepare their lamps for lighting.

The foolish virgins were unprepared because they lacked oil for their lamps. In many Biblical passages, oil is an emblem of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-7). Without oil the wedding party was not ready for the bridegroom. Without the Holy Spirit, no one is ready for the return of Jesus.

No one can be a true Christian without the indwelling Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9

The bridegroom is Jesus Christ, and this parable describes His return. In the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:4-6; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:19), God pictures Himself as the "husband" of Israel, and in the New Testament (John 3:27-30; Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:19-20), Christ is pictured as the bridegroom of the Church. The Church is described in Scripture as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-32).

In this parable Jesus did not intend a separation between "Spirit-filled" and "Non-Spirit-filled" Christians; but the distinction is between true Christians and false believers. A key to Christian readiness is to be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual lives can be explained if we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The penalty was severe for the foolish maidens. They were not allowed to come to the wedding, and the door was shut against them in the strongest terms. The girls' appeal and the bridegroom's response recall the chilling words of Matthew 7:22-23; here, as there, I do not know you is a decisive formula of rejection, rather than a mere statement of fact.

"When that door is once shut, it will never be opened. There are some who dote and dream about an opening of that door, after death, for those who have died impenitent; but there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant such an expectation. Any 'larger hope' than that revealed in the Word of God is a delusion and a snare." (Spurgeon)

### **The lesson:**

The point of this parable is simple – be ready. The price for failing to be ready is too high. It is a warning addressed specifically to those inside the professing church who are not to assume that their future is unconditionally assured; all ten are expecting to be at the feast, and until the moment comes there is no apparent difference between them – it is the crisis which will divide the ready from the unready.