

Kingdom of God - Week #5 “Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids”

May 13, 2020

Dear Church Family,

God is good all the time and all the time God is good! Never forget that! In these days of many worries and cares, we need to be reminded that our loving Heavenly Father is ultimately in control and sovereign over all things! *1 Peter 5:6-7* reminds us, ⁶ *So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.* ⁷ *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.* ^(NLT)

Let me encourage you to keep praying and give all your worries and cares to God! Please continue to include others in your prayers too as this is one of the most effective things we can do to help right now!

We trust that this sermon will help you as you choose to continue to worship the LORD with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength!

Welcome and thank you for choosing to worship with us today! This is the 5th Sunday **after** Easter 2020 and it has been **35 days** since we celebrated **the Resurrection of Jesus Christ** on Easter Sunday. We are marking the days **after** the Resurrection by focusing on Jesus’ teachings on the **Kingdom of God**. We are told in Scripture that for 40 days **after** Jesus’ crucifixion and **before** He ascended to be with the Heavenly Father again, Jesus specifically taught about the **Kingdom of God**.

Acts 1:3, records this for us.

³ *During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about **the Kingdom of God**.* ^(NLT)

Since teaching about the **Kingdom of God** was Jesus’ primary focus after His resurrection, we too should give careful attention to what Jesus told us concerning this subject.

Let’s pause for prayer, as we continue, and ask the LORD to help us understand more about **His Kingdom** and how we can live in it now and for eternity too.

Prayer

“Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing much about Your Kingdom through the life and teachings of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We want to understand and to live out the Kingdom principles He is teaching us today. LORD give us ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to respond in obedience to You! We ask these things in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.”

I want you to know the teachings of Jesus we have been looking at in this sermon series are **only a sampling** of all that Jesus spoke concerning the **Kingdom of God**. In the **Gospel of Matthew** alone there are 32 references to the Kingdom of Heaven. So, please know that I have not covered this topic in its entirety. I am trying to highlight some of the major teachings that Jesus has given us on the **Kingdom of God**, but there are many more that I would encourage you to look into during your personal study of the Scripture.

Let me remind you of Jesus’ teachings about **the Kingdom of God** that we have already looked at. The **first** week we heard Jesus teach us about **the Seed** of the Kingdom that has been planted in our hearts. The **Second** week, we heard Jesus explain the **intended growth**, development, and harvest of this Kingdom seed in our lives. The **third** week, we heard Jesus teach us **the value** of the Kingdom of God. Last week, we heard the Disciples ask and Jesus’ response to the question, “Who’s **the greatest** in the Kingdom of God?” This week we are going to hear Jesus speak to us about anticipating and preparing for the coming of the **Kingdom of God** when He returns.

We will find this teaching from Jesus in the **Gospel of Matthew chapter 25** beginning in **verse 1**.

I would ask you, once again, to listen with **AFTER Easter ears**. Imagine that the Resurrected Jesus is speaking this message to you today concerning what He wants you to know about **the Kingdom of God**. These lessons that Jesus teaches **aren't** just to take up space in the Bible or in your head. These lessons from Jesus are meant to **reveal the reality of God's Kingdom** to us and prepare us to live in this Kingdom both now and for eternity.

Listen today to what Jesus is saying to us about the **Kingdom of Heaven**.

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, ⁴ but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. ⁵ When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

*⁷ "All the bridesmaids got up and **prepared** their lamps. ⁸ Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'*

⁹ "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

*¹⁰ "But while they were gone to buy oil, **the bridegroom came**. Then **those who were ready** went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. ¹¹ Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'*

¹² "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

¹³ "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return. ^(NLT)

My friends, Jesus is using this parable to teach us that **He is going to return**, and **we must be ready** when He does.

In this parable, **Jesus is the Bridegroom**, who we, the Bridesmaids, are waiting the arrival of.

It is interesting that Jesus ends this teaching by saying: ¹³ **"So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.**

It's interesting because at the time Jesus first makes this statement, He hasn't been crucified or raised from the dead. He hasn't even been arrested yet, but still He is already speaking of **His Return**.

When Jesus speaks of **His Return**, He **isn't** speaking about His Resurrection. He is speaking about when **He Returns** at the End of Time to be reunited with His Church, which He refers to as His Bride. That's why this parable about the Bridegroom coming and the bridesmaids waiting is so meaningful.

John the Baptist uses the "**bridegroom**" reference to refer to Jesus while he is speaking in **John 3:28-30** and explaining the difference between himself and Jesus. **John the Baptist** says, ²⁸ *"You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.'* ²⁹ *It is the **bridegroom** who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. ³⁰ He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. ^(NLT)*

Also in one conversation recorded in the **Gospel of Mark**, **Jesus** uses the term "**groom**" three times in one answer to refer to Himself.

Mark 2:18-20

¹⁸ *Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"*

¹⁹ Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the **groom**? Of course not. They can’t fast while the **groom** is with them. ²⁰ But someday the **groom** will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. (NLT)

Here we have Jesus not only referring to Himself as the “**groom**,” but also speaking of being taken away from them.

Several times in Jesus’ teaching prior to His crucifixion, Jesus prepares the Disciples for what is to come. He openly speaks to them about His **crucifixion** and His **Resurrection** 3 days later, but He also speaks of **Going to the Father** and then **Returning**.

These statements had the Disciples notably concerned, so Jesus speaks about the need to **trust** in God the Father and in Him **to fulfill His Promise of coming back** for His Disciples in **John 14:1-4**

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that **I am going to prepare a place for you**? ³ When everything is ready, **I will come and get you**, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”(NLT)

Brothers and Sisters, let’s think about all that Jesus has told us and what came to pass.

Jesus said He would be arrested, put on trial, crucified, and die. **And He was.**

Jesus said He would be raised to life in 3 days. **And He was.**

Jesus said He would return to the Father and the Disciples would no longer see Him for a while. **And He did.**

That leads us back to Jesus’ parable for today.

Jesus says He will return one day. **And He will!**

You **don’t** have to take **my** word for it.

But you certainly should take Jesus’ word for it, because He has proved that what He said is true over and over again!

Jesus not only said He will Return, but He has revealed to us in the **Book of Revelation** many of the details of His Return.

The first question that everyone wants to know after they find out that Jesus is going away is “**when is He coming back?**”

Jesus has provided an answer for this as well, but I’ll be honest with you it’s NOT the specific answer you are hoping for.

Listen once again to Jesus’ own words about His return. It’s found in the last sentence of the parable we read today.

Matthew 25:13

¹³ “So you, too, must keep watch! For **you do not know the day or hour** of my return. (NLT)

This statement echoes what Jesus had already told His Disciples when He was speaking to them about what would happen in the future and during the time of His Return.

Matthew 24:36, records Jesus saying this about the timing of His Return,

³⁶ “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. **Only the Father knows.** (NLT)

The Return of Jesus is certain, we just don't know the time of His Return.

Jesus uses this parable of the 10 Bridesmaids to once again emphasize that He will be Returning!

So, since Jesus is going to Return, but we don't know when, **what do we need to do?**

The answer to what we should be doing is the other teaching Jesus is giving us in the parable today.

There are **two Kingdom Principles** that Jesus gives us **to live out** as we wait for His Return.

The **First Kingdom Principle** is to be **watchful** for Jesus' Return.

Being **watchful** is putting our faith in Christ's Return into action.

Being **watchful** is **not** a passive thing, it is actively anticipating that which we have been told is coming.

Jesus ends the parable of the 10 Bridesmaids by saying:

Matthew 25:13

¹³ "So you, too, **must keep watch!** For you do not know the day or hour of my return. ^(NLT)

Jesus is echoing what He told His Disciples earlier in other parables concerning His Return. Listen to this statement from Jesus in:

Matthew 24:42

⁴² "So you, too, **must keep watch!** For you don't know what day your Lord is coming. ^(NLT)

In Jesus' parable of the 10 Bridesmaids, all the Bridesmaids started out watchful and put this into action as they "took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom."

They believed that He was going to come, so they grab their lamps and go out to meet Him.

My friends, **how can we remain watchful for Jesus' Return?**

1. You need to know the Scriptures and what Jesus has told us about the signs of His Return.
We don't know the exact time, but we do know many of the events that will lead up to the time of His Return.
You would do well to start by prayerfully reading **Matthew chapters 24 and 25**. After that begin to prayerfully read what has been revealed to us in **the Book of Revelation**.
2. You need to know world events and see them in light of what God is doing in this world.
You won't get this perspective from any "NEWS" source alone. You need to be listening to the Holy Spirit speak to you as you watch or read the News, and listen for His input on what it means in relation to the plan that God has revealed to us.

My friends, it takes work to be watchful for Jesus' Return, but if we don't want to miss it, we need to be **watchful**. His Return will happen!

Being **watchful** alone is **not enough** and this parable makes that clear as well.

The **Second Kingdom Principle** is to be **prepared** for Jesus' Return.

In this parable Jesus tells, the preparedness of the 10 Bridesmaids are broken down into two groups. Listen again to how Jesus distinguishes them:

² *Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.* ³ *The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps,* ⁴ *but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil.*

It's important to note that **as they went out** to watch for the Groom to come, they were already defined as **foolish** or **wise** because of their preparedness. Five of them left the house prepared to meet the Groom. They were prepared because they had taken "**extra oil**" for their lamps. The other five **didn't** become unprepared as they were out watching, they left their houses unprepared. They were **foolish** because they "**didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps.**"

The "Groom" is delayed, and they end up waiting much longer than they expected, but finally what they were waiting and watching for does happen.

⁶ *"At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'*

⁷ *"All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps."^(NLT)*

It is at the Grooms coming that **the preparations** of each one is **brought to light**. (Pun intended)

The time to prepare has long passed. It is time to join in the wedding procession that leads to the wedding feast.

Once again, Jesus is echoing what He told His Disciples earlier in other parables concerning His Return. Listen to this statement from Jesus in:

Matthew 24:44

⁴⁴ *You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.* ^(NLT)

My friends, we **must be prepared** for the time of Jesus' Return. If we wait until that day to start **preparing**, we will miss our chance to go with Him. Jesus stresses to us over and over again, "You Must Be Ready, I am coming back!"

How do we prepare?

We put into practice all the Kingdom Principles Jesus has already given us.

We respond to the seed of the Kingdom planted in our heart.

We allow the seed to grow and mature preparing for the day of harvest.

We begin to value the Kingdom above all else.

We live humble and dependent on God as we live to be the Greatest in the Kingdom.

We put faith into action as we are watchful for Jesus' Return.

The important thing to understand about all the **Kingdom Principles** Jesus gives us is there are consequences, both **positive** and **negative**, for how we live them out. The consequences are a result of how we live out these Kingdom Principles, not for being able to recite them or just knowing that they exist.

What is the **positive consequence** for the 5 Bridesmaids that were watchful and ready to respond to the Groom's arrival?

The end of **verse 10** tells us: "*Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.*"

What is the **negative consequence** for the 5 Bridesmaids that were in the right place to meet the Groom, but they weren't ready for His arrival?

They had to leave to buy some oil, but...

¹¹ *Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'*

¹² *"But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'"*

My brothers and sisters, Jesus **doesn't** hide the fact that **He is Returning**, **nor** does He hide the fact that there are **serious consequences**, both positive and negative, for how we have prepared for His Return.

We have all been given the message that Christ is going to Return and He is going to take with Him those who are prepared to meet Him.

We have all also been given the chance to prepare ahead of time for His Return and be prayerfully watchful and prepared to meet Him when He comes.

My friends, don't wait to prepare until you hear that Christ has Returned. It will be too late and, we won't be able to help you!

NOW IS THE DAY TO PREPARE and BECOME WATCHFUL for We do not know the day or the hour of Christ's Return, but we do know **HE is Returning!**

When He comes you want to be ready to meet Him!

You **don't** want to be locked outside banging on the door saying, *'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'*

Only to hear the heart-breaking reply,
'Believe me, I don't know you!'

Friends, the night may seem dark and the waiting long, but Jesus is Returning and we **MUST** be ready.

Blessings:

May the Lord's blessing rest on you, as you are watchful and prepare for the Return of Christ!

Please remember these other ways we are reaching out as a Church Family in these days of separation.

Church Phone: 724-628-3949

Church E-mail: centralfellowshipchurch@verizon.net

Church Website: www.centralfellowshipchurch.com

Church Facebook page: www.facebook.com/centralfellowshipconnellsville

NEW Church YouTube channel: Search for Central Fellowship Church or
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJ5mrAnoy6Bhe4UwtyICQ8g>

Love and Prayers for you all!

Following Christ,

Pastor Mike Martin