

@thenameofJesus

"OUR BRIDEGROOM" MATTHEW 25:1-13

This Week's Core Competency

Eternity – I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom. John 14:1-4 *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.*

Jesus Christ will return. The dead will be raised. All will stand before the Lord their judge. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. Evangelical Christians agree that the future holds these things in store, but they disagree on the details related to them. Take the first one, for example. In his Olivet Discourse (Mt 24:1-25:46) Jesus made it clear that he is going to return "with power and great glory" to establish his messianic kingdom. "Immediately after the distress of those days," he told his disciples,

"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
The stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

'At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the

clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."

The coming of the Son of Man (the title Jesus most often used to refer to himself) described in Matthew 24:29-30 closely parallels the coming of "a son of man" in Daniel 7:13-14. According to Daniel, his son of man "approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." The similarity between these two descriptions identifies the coming described in Matthew with the coming described in Daniel—a coming to establish a kingdom that "will never be destroyed" (Da 7:14).

Jesus also made it clear that he would return for his own. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn 14:1-3). Paul describes Jesus' coming for the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call

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Maranatha, Come, O Lord!

- the cry of the church

of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up [snatched up] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

Clearly these two descriptions of the return of Christ are very different, but do they describe different events? Perhaps, the best answer is a qualified "yes." (On this evangelicals disagree.) Better stated, they describe two stages in the Lord's return. In other words, the Lord comes first to take his church to be with him, in the way described in John 14 and 1 Thessalonians 4, and then comes later with his church to establish his messianic kingdom, in the way described in Matthew 24. That being the case, the Lord's return unfolds in two phases, first his rapture of the church followed by his return in glory.

For Discussion

If someone wanted to do three things to prepare for the Lord's return what would you tell him to do?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 25:1-13

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

9 "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!'

12 "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

"At that time the Kingdom of heaven will be like this. Once there were ten young women who took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and the other five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them, 4 while the wise ones took containers full of oil for their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was late in coming, so they began to nod and fall asleep.

6 "It was already midnight when the cry rang out, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come and meet him!' 7 The ten young women woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 Then the foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Let us have some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' 9 'No, indeed,' the wise ones answered, 'there is not enough for you and for us. Go to the store and buy some for yourselves.' 10 So the foolish ones went off to buy some oil; and while they were gone, the bridegroom arrived. The five who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was closed.

11 "Later the others arrived. 'Sir, sir! Let us in!' they cried out. 12 'Certainly not! I don't know you,' the bridegroom answered."

13 And Jesus concluded, "Watch out, then, because you do not know the day or the hour. (GNB)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "at that time" indicating *chronology* in v. 1.
- * Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 1.
- * Bracket "the kingdom of heaven" in v. 1.
- * Circle "virgins" in v. 1.
- * Circle "bridegroom" in v. 1.
- * Underline "foolish" in vv. 2, 3, 8.
- * Double underline "wise" in vv. 2, 4, 8.

- * Highlight v. 5.
- * Circle "midnight" in v. 6.
- * Bracket "who were ready" in v. 10.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 10, 12.
- * Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- * Highlight "keep watch" in v. 13.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 13.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. The parable opens, "At that time." At what time?
2. What makes the "foolish virgins" *foolish* and the "wise virgins" *wise*?
3. How do we know that "the bridegroom" in the parable is Jesus? (See 24:3, 30, 37, 42).
4. Explain what verses 5 and 6 taken together suggest about his coming?
5. Explain what verses 7-9 taken together suggest about being prepared for his coming?
6. After the wise virgins went in to the banquet, "the door was shut." What makes this detail important?
7. Explain the *contrast* in verse 12.
8. *Being ready* and *keeping watch* for the Lord to come—are they the same, different, or what?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the significance of this passage for contemporary *Christians*.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins, as it's commonly called, is part of The Olivet Discourse (Mt 24:1-25:46), one of five discourses recorded in Matthew's Gospel. The opening verses of chapter 24 set the stage for what Jesus would say in his address. In verse 2 he told his disciples that the temple—with its gargantuan foundation stones, some over 40 feet long weighing 600 tons, that took Herod forty-six years to build—would be destroyed. "Not one stone here will be left on another," he declared, "every one will be thrown down." Then in verse 3 his disciples posed a two-fold question. "When will this happen," they asked, "and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" He answered by describing specific events leading up to the return of the Son of Man (24:4-31), namely his return, and by revealing that only the Father knows "about that day or hour." After that Jesus gave his disciples some very practical advice, "Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (v. 42), warning them, "you must be ready" (v. 44). All the talk about keeping watch and being ready, especially if he stayed away for a long time (v. 48), led Jesus to tell his disciples three parables about faithful waiting, the second of which has to do with ten bridesmaids (25:1-13).

Jesus opened the parable by telling his disciples what it will be like when he returns to rule over Israel and the nations. The situation at that time will resemble the familiar circumstances surrounding a Jewish wedding. One author provides this helpful description of a typical first-century wedding. "It was preceded by a betrothal that was much more binding than is an engagement in modern societies. It was really the first stage of marriage, and it took divorce proceedings to dissolve it. At the end of the betrothal period the marriage took place, on a Wednesday if the bride was a virgin and on a Thursday if she was a widow (*Ketub.* 1:1). The bridegroom and his party made their way to the home of the bride [where nuptial ceremonies took place], or to some other place; there is a record of a wedding in which two parties, one of the bridegroom and his friends and the other of the bride and her people, went out to meet each other at an unspecified place (1 Macc. 9:37-39). When the two groups came together, the wedding took place. After this there was a procession, generally to the home of the bridegroom,

where feasting took place that might go on for days. The processions often took place at night, when torches made for a spectacular display. *Clearly this is presupposed in Jesus' parable.* The ten girls were involved in going out to meet the bridegroom, which makes it appear that they belonged to the bride's party. They would then have had their place in the procession to the bridegroom's home for the feast" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 621 italics added; see also Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 805; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 173-75).

The point of the parable is found in the *contrast* between two groups of girls waiting to meet the bridegroom and then go with him to the wedding banquet. On one hand, five were "foolish." They went out with their torches but *didn't* take oil to replenish them (v. 3). On the other hand, five were "wise." They went out with their torches, and *did* take oil to replenish them (v. 4). The ten girls had to wait a long time for the bridegroom (v. 5; cf., 24:48), so long in fact, that they all dozed off. In the middle of the night, the bridegroom was spotted, and all ten awoke to the cry announcing his appearance (v. 6). That's when the "stupid" girls realized that they were not prepared for his arrival. They had no oil to replenish their torches and proceed with him to the banquet (v. 8). Fearing there wasn't enough to go around, the "sensible" girls refused to share their oil. "Go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves," they told their frantic companions (v. 9). They did, but when they returned, they discovered the wedding party had gone into the banquet without them, and "the door was shut" (v. 10). When they begged to get in, they were turned away—the bridegroom himself declaring in no uncertain terms, "I don't know you" (v. 12). Lest his hearers miss the point, Jesus concluded his story this way: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (v. 13).

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, is going to return "with power and great glory" (24:30) to establish his kingdom. Since no one knows when he will return (v. 36), everyone must be ready to meet him (v. 42; 25:13). When Jesus says to "keep watch," he means more than just "look up." Keeping watch entails being ready or being prepared to meet him. This

must be the case seeing that all ten of the girls in his parable "became drowsy and fell asleep" waiting for the bridegroom; none were "looking up" when he appeared. Nevertheless, those who were prepared to meet him were granted entrance into his kingdom; those who weren't prepared were denied entrance. What's more, every person

has to prepare for himself and that preparation must be made before the Lord returns. Christians need to know that Jesus will rapture the church (1Th 4:14-18) before he comes to rule over Israel and the nations; nevertheless, we, too, must be ready for his coming (1Th 5:6-8).

The Message of the Passage

*No one knows when the Lord will return
so be ready and keep watch for him.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“Our Bridegroom”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 1 **at that time** Namely when the Son of Man returns with power and great glory to rule (cf., vv. 3, 30, 36, 39, 42, 44, 46, 50).
- v. 1 **like** "The Kingdom of God is not compared to the virgins, but to the wedding (see p. 101)" (Jeremias, 174).
- v. 1 **kingdom of heaven** Not "heaven" in the traditional sense. The expression refers to the messianic rule of Christ, David's son, over Israel and the nations following his return (see Mk 14:61; cf., Da 7:13; Ps 110:1). This time is commonly called "the millennium" based on Revelation 20:4.
- v. 1 **virgins** Since there is no particular emphasis on their virginity in this passage, some simply translate "girls" (Morris, 620) or "young women" (GNB). "They would have been virgins; married women were not attendants of the bride in weddings of that time. These girls would have helped in the dressing of the bride and acted as her attendants. When the bridegroom came, they would have formed part of the procession to his home for the feast" (620)—which explains why "bridesmaids" (NLT, NRSV) and "wedding attendants" (NJB) are also possible translations.
- v. 1 **bridegroom** In the story, the appearing of the bridegroom is analogous to the coming of the Son of Man.
- v. 1 **lamps** Probably not the small oil lamps used to give light in a home, these were more likely "outdoor torches," domed-shaped containers with rags (Wilkins, 805) or long sticks with rags (Jeremias, 174). These could burn for several hours, but extra oil had to be taken to replenish the "wicks" if used for longer periods.
- v. 2 **foolish, wise** Or "stupid" and "sensible." "Jesus sets the scene, then with a wedding procession in prospect and a group of girls waiting to take part in it with *torches* for the procession, and the information that some of them were more stupid than the others" (Morris, 621). In the story, the foolish girls are analogous to those who are not ready for the coming of the Son of Man and the wise to those who are.
- v. 6 **midnight** "Several translations say that he arrived 'at midnight' (NIV, NRSV, etc.), but the expression may not be as definite as that: *in the middle of the night* is the sense of it" (622). The bridegroom came when least expected after a long wait (cf., v. 48).
- v. 8 **oil** Some, who wrongly interpret the parable allegorically, try to identify what the oil represents, e.g., "faith" (Luther), "the Holy Spirit," "spiritual piety," "good works." But as one writer explains, "It is better to take the oil not allegorically but parabolically. The main point of the story is that the foolish virgins are not ready when the great moment finally arrives . . . Also dubious is the allegorical interpretation of the sleeping (v. 5) and rising (v. 7) of the virgins as alluding to death and resurrection" (Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation, 284, 85).
- v. 9 **No** "The five young women refuse, since they realize that then all may run out of oil, leaving everyone in the dark (v. 9a) . . . Jesus apparently wants to teach that spiritual preparedness may not be transferred from one individual to another. All people are responsible for themselves" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 370). "And in the sense of being ready for the coming of the Christ being ready is not something that can be shared or passed on. It is an individual matter" (Morris, 624).
- v. 10 **ready** Being ready for the Lord's return involves keeping watch *and* being prepared to meet him.
- v. 11 **Later** "In time the careless ones evidently got their oil (or did they fail to get it and simply turn up, late for the banquet but hopeful?) and arrived at the banqueting hall" (625) only to find "the door to the groom's home is closed and probably locked to keep out any intruders (v. 10)" (Blomberg, 370).
- v. 12 **don't know** In the same way the bridegroom excludes from the wedding banquet those who were unprepared for his arrival, so also does the Son of Man exclude from his kingdom those who are unprepared for his arrival. "If we reason that no bridegroom would say that he did not know some of the invited guests, we miss the sting in the story. Jesus is not telling a story about something that actually happened; he is warning people of the dreadful fate of those who know that they should be watching for the coming of the Son of man but who do not do this. Thereby they exclude themselves from any place among the people of God. The Savior cannot recognize them among the saved. While there was time they shut themselves out. There is no way by which they can now come in" (Morris, 625).
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Family Time

Family time will help you take a break from your busy schedule and spend time connecting with your family.
Tips for your Family Time: Keep it simple! Be flexible! Do it often! HAVE FUN!!

Light jackets in the morning. Leaves falling from the trees. Pumpkins out in every grocery store. It must be Fall! Cool Fall evenings are the perfect time to plan a neighborhood or community get together. Plan a time when you can bring out the fire pit and marshmallows. Make warm apple cider and pumpkin bread. To prepare your kids for this week's lesson, tell them you are planning a fun evening but don't tell them when. In our story this week, ten bridesmaids were responsible for keeping watch for the groom. They were to make preparations for the bride to meet him. They didn't know exactly when he would be coming so they needed to be ready at any moment. Five of the young women were ready when he came. Five were not. When the bridegroom came, only the five who were ready were able to come into the wedding banquet. Jesus teaches that we are to ready for His return. No one knows the day or hour but He will come because He said he would. We can trust Jesus because He always keeps His promises. As you are celebrating your special Fall evening remind your kids that you promised something special was coming and now it is here. In the same way, Jesus promises that He will someday return for us and we can trust that He will do it!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Matthew 25:1-13

1. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. In this parable, who is the bridegroom?
2. In what two ways are the young women described in verse 2?
3. What happened to the wise ones? The foolish ones?

What Do You Think

We can trust that Jesus will come back for us someday because He said He would and Jesus always keeps His promises. Like the five wise bridesmaids, we want to be ready for His return. Have a family discussion about ways your family can live in readiness for Christ's return. List your thoughts and place them where you can all be reminded to be ready.

What R U Going To Do

Special note for parents: In this eight week series we are asking kids to memorize the entire passage of Philippians 2:5-11. We are breaking it down into weekly segments. This beautiful passage teaches us about the powerful name of Jesus. Thank you for helping your child work on this passage throughout our series.

MEMORY TIME

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the Memory Verse throughout the house.

Core Comp

Eternity - I believe in heaven, hell and one day Jesus will come again.

Memory Verse

Philippians 2:11 "and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
 Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.