

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 8

The Ten Virgins

AIM: to teach my pupils the importance of being ready for the coming of Christ.

POINT OF CONTACT: Take to class a lamp that is without oil. If you do not have a lamp, try a flashlight without a battery. The idea is to show that the outside may look as good as a working flashlight or lamp, but something on the inside is necessary in order for the lamp or flashlight to shine. This parable represents the fact that we may look like Christians but not actually be ready when Jesus comes again.

INTRODUCTION: The five foolish virgins represent unconverted, professing Christians. The five wise virgins represent real born-again people. Let us notice the teaching of this parable, as recorded in Matthew 25:1-13.

I. THE SIMILARITIES OF THE TWO GROUPS.

1. They all had lamps. In other words, they all looked like Christians on the outside.
2. They all went forth to meet the bridegroom. In other words, they all were expecting the bridegroom to come. Shall we say, they were premillennial. They studied about the coming of the Bridegroom. This would represent a group of people, some saved and some unsaved, who study together about the coming of Christ, seemingly rejoice together about the coming of Christ, and who even outwardly appear to look for the coming of Christ.
3. There were the same number of them. Five is the number of grace in the Bible. There were five of each one. Ten is the number of testing in the Bible. So these who looked alike and even had the same number were to be tested. The same is true with all people—even professing Christians, even church members must be tested for real, genuine conversion (and they will be tested some day).
4. They all heard the cry, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh,” as we read in Matthew 25:6.
5. They all trimmed their lamps. See Matthew 25:7. The trimming of a lamp in the Bible seems to symbolize separation. All of them were separated. Once again, this does not make a person a Christian. There are many people who have separated themselves from the world but who have really not been born again.

II. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS.

1. The wise took oil, and the unwise did not. Oil in the Scripture symbolizes the Holy Spirit. A person may look like he is saved, but only those who have the Holy Spirit in them are saved. When a person receives Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit comes in him to live. This is a great difference. This is very interesting. The coming of the bridegroom pictures the coming of Christ, the first resurrection and the rapture. Jesus was resurrected only because He had the Holy Spirit in Him. Read Romans 8:11. This verse teaches that only those who have the Holy Spirit in them can be raptured or resurrected. This is why unconverted people will not be resurrected when Jesus comes again.
2. The wise had oil, but the foolish asked the wrong person for the oil. They asked the other virgins. This teaches that salvation cannot come from man. Salvation comes only from the Lord. A person who is saved cannot save another. He can lead him to Christ, but Christ must do the saving.
3. The wise got oil in time; the foolish wanted oil too late. (Stop and teach here the fact that when Jesus comes, no one who has ever heard the Gospel can be saved thereafter.) We have only until we hear the cry of the Bridegroom—it is too late after that. No doubt, many people at that time will cry to the Lord, but it will be too late. We must be saved before Jesus comes again.
4. The five wise were ready; the five foolish were not. (Ask the class very soberly how many are ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.)
5. The five wise went in with the bridegroom; the five foolish were left out! The door was shut!
6. The five wise were rejoicing on the inside; the five foolish were crying for mercy on the outside. See Matthew 25:11. (Act this out right here. Have five wise and five foolish. Have someone beat on the door begging to get in—but it is too late.)
7. The five wise knew the Lord; the five foolish did not. Notice in Matthew 25:12 the words, “I know you not.” Salvation is an experience with Christ. It is not learning the catechism, memorizing some

Scripture, accepting the dogma of a church, etc. It is a personal experience of knowing Jesus Christ. The five foolish, no doubt, knew about Him, believed He was coming, looked like they were Christians, and even ran around with the five wise, but they did not know the bridegroom. (Ask the class members how many know Jesus Christ.)

8. The five wise were expecting the bridegroom immediately; the five foolish were expecting him someday. Here is another difference in them. Read Matthew 25:13. The five wise were watching imminently. The story is told of a gardener who was left by his master to care for a garden. The master promised that he would return someday but did not promise when. The gardener kept the garden so beautifully that it was manicured beyond description. One day a stranger came by and asked why the gardener cared so well for the garden. The gardener answered, "My master has left and is returning. I do not know when he is returning, so I want to keep the garden beautiful for him when he does return." The stranger replied, "The way you keep it, you must be expecting him to come back tomorrow." "No," replied the gardener, "I am expecting him to return today."

III. OTHER PICTURES OF THE SAME TRUTH.

1. Matthew 24:40. Have two pupils come up and act like they are working in the field. Have one of them step outside the room and the other one left. Explain to the class this pictures the coming of Jesus Christ. Two will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other, left.
2. Matthew 24:41. Have two in your class act like they are grinding at the mill. Silently lead one out the door, and leave the other grinding. Show the class how this pictures the coming of Christ. Two shall be grinding at the mill; one shall be taken, and the other, left.
3. Possible situations. You might want to use your class in other circumstances. You might have two of them play like they are at school or two of them playing ball. You might have two of them walking to school together. You might have two of them studying together. You can think of other circumstances to compare with this.

IV. THE THREE COMINGS OF CHRIST. You might teach your pupils the little outline we use concerning the three comings of Christ.

1. He came in Bethlehem **TO** His own.
2. He is coming in the air at any moment **FOR** His own.
3. He is coming back seven years later **WITH** His own.

Though this parable has some dispensational teaching, and in a deeper sense, has something to do with the Jews, the kingdom, etc., for all practical purposes, it is best to apply it in the lesson to the coming of Christ for His own.

CONCLUSION: Have the class bow their heads. Ask them how many of them know that they are ready for the coming of Jesus. Lead those to Christ who are not ready, bring them to the service, sit with them, and go forward with them during the invitation.