

## **Session 12: Cultivating the Oil of Intimacy (Mt. 25:1-13)**

### **I. THE CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS (MT. 25:1-13)**

- A. In Matthew 24-25, Jesus taught on the end times (Mt. 24:3-44), then applied it in three parables to those called to leadership (Mt. 24:45- 25:30) before describing His final judgment (Mt. 25:31-46). These two chapters are one teaching that is focused on preparing leaders for the end times.
1. Parable 1: ***Jesus' delay is shorter than expected*** (Jesus came sooner than expected). The parable of the wise and evil servants in Matthew 24:45-51 describes 2 types of leaders in the kingdom. The wicked leaders worked with ***wrong motives*** and abused their authority.
  2. Parable 2: ***Jesus' delay is longer than expected*** (Jesus came later than expected). The parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 emphasizes connecting with the Spirit as we cultivate intimacy with Jesus as the Bridegroom God. Those responding wrongly worked with the ***wrong spirit*** and neglected to maintain their intimacy with God.
  3. Parable 3: ***Jesus' delay is harder than expected***. The parable of the faithful steward in Matthew 25:14-30 focuses on being faithful in our assignment in the times it seems small and hard (Mt. 25:21, 24). The majority have a small ministry assignment. Those responding wrongly worked with the ***wrong evaluation*** and neglected their assignment.
- B. In the end times, the Spirit will emphasize three aspects of Jesus' personality and ministry in being Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Mt. 24-25, Rev. 19; Isa. 61-63; Ps. 45; etc.). As Bridegroom, we encounter His desire for us; as King, His power; and as Judge, His zeal in removing everything that hinders love. Jesus highlights these aspects in His ministry (Mt. 24-25).
- C. In Matthew 24-25, Jesus was preparing the Church to walk in great victory during the Tribulation. The Church is raptured at the end of the Great Tribulation. We are not absent for the Tribulation, but partner with Jesus to release His glory through the Great Tribulation.
- <sup>29</sup> Immediately after the Tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light ... <sup>31</sup> He will send His angels ... and they will gather together [Rapture] His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Mt. 24:29-31)***
- D. Jesus' main exhortation to be prepared for the end times is by ***watching***, or developing a heart connection with the Spirit. (Mt. 24:36, 42-44, 50; 25:13; Mk. 13:33-38; Lk 21:36; Rev. 16:15).
- <sup>42</sup> Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Mt. 24:42)***
- <sup>13</sup> Watch ... for you know neither the day nor hour ... the Son of Man is coming. (Mt. 25:13)***
- E. In the first parable (Mt. 24:45-51), Jesus spoke of leaders who rule and feed His people. He categorized them into ***faithful and wise leaders***, in contrast to ***evil ones***. In the next two parables, Jesus spoke specifically of what is involved in being wise (25:1-13) and faithful (25:14-30).

## II. KINGDOM LEADERSHIP AT THE END OF THE AGE: DEFINING WISE LEADERSHIP

<sup>1</sup> *Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom.* <sup>2</sup> *Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* (Mt. 25:1-2)

A. **Virgins:** all believers are as virgins before God because of Jesus' righteousness (2 Cor. 5:17).

<sup>2</sup> *I betrothed you to one husband ... I present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* (2 Cor. 11:2)

B. **Lamp:** each of these virgins had a lamp which spoke of a ministry that brought God's light to others (Mt. 5:15-16; Rev. 1:20; 2:5; 11:3-6; Zech. 4:2; Isa. 62:1; John 5:35).

C. **Bridegroom:** all these ministries had revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom God. These are ministries who went out to meet, or who encountered, Jesus as the Bridegroom God.

<sup>17</sup> *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"* (Rev. 22:17)

D. **Then:** we ask, "When is then?" The word "then" points back to the end of the age theme just seen in Matthew 24. This is when the kingdom functions like virgins meeting the Bridegroom.

## III. FIVE WISE VIRGINS: ACQUIRED OIL AS THEIR MINISTRY LAMPS SHINED

<sup>2</sup> *Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* <sup>3</sup> *Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,* <sup>4</sup> *but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* (Mt. 25:2-4)

A. The "oil" speaks of the presence of the Spirit and our heart connection with Him as we cultivate our secret life in God (2 Cor 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Oil was used as fuel for lamps, as a food, and as a medicine to heal sickness. The oil of the Holy Spirit touches our hearts in different ways.

1. *It tenderizes our heart*, enabling us to feel more of God's desire for us.

2. *It enlarges our desire* for Him by encountering His desire for us.

3. *It illuminates our understanding* with revelation of God's beauty.

4. *It imparts zeal for righteousness*, which helps us in our struggle with besetting sins.

B. The foolish took their lamps (ministry), but took no oil. In other words, they pursued ministry as their first priority over getting oil in their relationship with Jesus.

C. The wise ministries took oil in their vessels with their lamps. In other words, they pursued acquiring oil as their first priority before seeking to expand and network their ministry. Our relationship with Jesus is our most important "dream," not our ministry assignment. The two witnesses are "sons of oil" (Zech 4:14).

#### IV. THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY IN THE END TIMES: THE THREE-FOLD CRY

<sup>5</sup> *While the Bridegroom delayed, they all slept.* <sup>6</sup> *At midnight a cry was heard: “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, go out to meet Him.”* <sup>7</sup> *Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (Mt. 25:5-7)*

- A. At the midnight hour of history, forerunners will cry out with a three-fold message to the nations. These verses summarize the three-fold forerunner message.
- B. First, “[Jesus] is coming” refers to His manifest victory and judgment. In the end times, Jesus will first “come to us” by progressively releasing waves of revival that build in power, purpose, and intensity until He finally comes in the sky.
- C. Second, Jesus is coming as a Bridegroom God with deep desire for relationship with us.
- D. Third, we must go out to meet Him, or make the necessary effort to position ourselves in worship, obedience, prayer, and the Word with fasting to encounter Jesus.
- E. We must cultivate oil in the midst of the natural processes of life.

<sup>5</sup> *They all slept ...* <sup>7</sup> *all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (Mt. 25:5-7)*

- F. They all slept and all trimmed their lamps. Sleeping in this parable is not bad. This speaks of living in context to the natural processes of life. We sustain our intimacy with Jesus in the midst of the rigors of the routine and mundane with natural dynamics. The wise and unwise both sleep, or participate in the necessary natural processes of life (Mt. 25:5; Mk. 4:27).

#### V. JESUS EMPHASIZED THE GREAT NEED TO CULTIVATE OIL IN THE END TIMES

- A. The foolish ministries recognized their mistake in neglecting oil.

<sup>8</sup> *The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.”* <sup>9</sup> *The wise answered, “No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” (Mt. 25:8-9)*

- B. The wise understood their limitation and acknowledged that their spiritual history in God and their spiritual preparedness could not be transferred to others.

- C. Jesus exhorts us to “buy oil,” or to engage in the God-ordained process of acquiring intimacy with God. We do not earn it, but we invest ourselves in a costly way to receive it.

<sup>18</sup> *I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich. (Rev. 3:18)*

- D. The most substantial way to acquire oil is by regularly feeding on God’s Word. This positions our heart before God to freely receive. These activities do not earn us God’s favor. (See the appendix “How to Feed on God’s Word” in the longer version of these notes at IHOP.org)

<sup>39</sup> *Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard [encountered] His word. (Lk. 10:39)*

## VI. BEING PREPARED FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

<sup>10</sup> *While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came [progressive seasons of revival], and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door [of opportunity for usefulness] was shut. <sup>11</sup> Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us!” <sup>12</sup> He answered, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” (Mt. 25:10-12)*

- A. This passage is *not* a warning about losing salvation. Jesus did not know or recognize them as those who engaged with Him as the Bridegroom.
- B. Jesus saying “I do not ‘know’ you” describes their lack of intimacy, not their lack of salvation, as when Jesus said, “I never knew you!” (Mt. 7:23). Jesus did not refer to them as evil (Mt. 24:48), wicked and lazy (Mt. 25:26), or cursed (Mt. 25:41).
- C. The ancient Jewish custom of that day involved celebrating a wedding over the course of several nights (ideally seven nights, for a wealthy family). Those who were closest to the couple to be married were invited on the first night and subsequently each of the following nights.
- D. As the Jewish wedding celebration continued over seven days with each evening highlighting something different, so also God is releasing different waves of the Spirit that are building up to the fullness of the end-time revival, which culminates with the second coming. Then comes the grand finale to the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9).
- E. Only those who were ready by being close to the Bridegroom went in to celebrate. In other words, those who were ready went in with Him, or were in a place of usefulness in the end-time revival.
- F. The foolish virgins said, “Lord, open to us,” or “Open a door of opportunity of usefulness for us as you did for the wise virgins.” Many will miss future opportunities to be used in their fullest way.
- G. Jesus’ advice is *to watch*, or to open our heart to develop intimacy with Him as the Bridegroom.  
<sup>13</sup> *Watch ... for you know neither the day nor hour ... the Son of Man is coming. (Mt. 25:13)*