

Session 4 Cultivating the Oil of Intimacy with Jesus (Matthew 25:1-13)

THE CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

One of the parables that people often teach is to love Jesus with all of their heart. This really is a “first commandment” parable. Let’s pray: “Father, I ask You for the spirit of impartation. Oh, that we could love Your Son, Father, with the same love that You love Your Son (Jn. 17:24-26). I pray that we could love Him with the same love that You love Him. You would impart that to us. We ask You for that type of love in these days, weeks, and months ahead in Jesus name. Amen.” We are going to turn in our Bibles to Matthew 25. The theme is to cultivate oil, or to not neglect to cultivate the oil of intimacy with Jesus. Let’s look at the context of this parable. The context is very important.

JESUS CONNECTED PREPARATION FOR THE END TIMES TO INTIMACY WITH GOD

Paragraph A. Jesus is connecting the preparation for the end-time Church with cultivating intimacy with God. When you read Matthew 24-25, you must realize that it is one passage; it is one teaching. Matthew 24, most of you know, is the famous chapter on the end times.

Matthew 25 is the parable that we are looking at; but you cannot separate it from Matthew 24. You have to bring these two chapters together because they are one teaching that Jesus gave to the apostles in a private setting. It is leadership training. So, if you are called to be a leader, or you are called to train leaders, then Matthew 24-25 is leadership training 101 for you. This is what Jesus said when He spoke to His leaders. It was His final sermon before He went to the upper room for the Last Supper and then to the cross.

THE GREATEST REVIVAL AND PRESSURE IN THE GENERATION OF JESUS’ RETURN

Paragraph B. The greatest revival and the greatest pressure will both happen simultaneously in the generation of the Lord’s return. Somebody asks, “Is it going to get better, or is it going to get worse the closer we get to the coming of the Lord?” The answer from the Bible is, “both.”

The light will become lighter. The darkness will become darker. Jesus said that the wheat—that is good, and the tares—that is bad—will grow together. They would mature together at the end of the age. So, the answer is a great revival and a great falling away will occur simultaneously. A great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a great outpouring of darkness will happen simultaneously across the globe.

Now, it is my personal opinion and conviction, and it is a strong opinion. I do not know this by revelation, but I believe it from the observation of what the Bible says that we are in the early days of the generation of the Lord’s return. I believe there are people alive today on the earth right now who will actually see the Lord with their eyes. I mean they will actually see the Lord come in the sky at the time of the rapture. It may be the two-year olds. It may be the twenty-year olds. I do not know. I do not know that I will see Him in my time. I do not really care one-way or the other. I trust His leadership. He is really smart, and He really likes me, so I am going with it however it works.

THERE ARE PEOPLE ALIVE TODAY WHO WILL SEE THE RETURN OF THE LORD

But, I believe there are people alive today who will see Jesus return to the earth. I may see it with my eyes. I may not. We are in that hour where it might be two, three, four, or five decades away, but we do not know the exact time. It may be sooner. It may be a little farther, or further down the road. The Church must begin to think about the things Jesus said concerning the uniqueness of that hour of His return. We are going to find in a

moment that one of the unique issues Jesus emphasizes is the need to cultivate intimacy with Jesus as the Bridegroom God in the midst of that hour.

Now, for most of the Church worldwide, that is not on their mind right now, but it will be their focus before the Lord returns. The Holy Spirit, even in these days, is beginning to emphasize the revelation of Jesus as a Bridegroom God. It is an old idea from the biblical point of view, but it is a new emphasis in terms of history. Over the last few generations, the Holy Spirit has not emphasized it.

However, I say in the last ten years or so, you can see the emphasis growing rapidly. There is new insight of the person of Jesus. He is not only a King; He is a Bridegroom King. He does not only have power, but He has desire for His people as well. Well, the parable that Jesus taught that we are going to focus on is the need to get more intimacy— intimacy with God. The closer we get to the Lord's return, the more essential this will be. I mean it will be an issue of life and death. It will be a matter of survival, or spiritual survival.

JESUS SAID HE IS COMING QUICKLY

Paragraph C. We will not look at the whole handout. Again, we will skip parts of it, but I want to encourage you to study some of these notes, so they are a part of your understanding, especially this paragraph. There are three different parables that Jesus gives in these two chapters. Remember, it is one teaching. It is not three teachings. He is addressing one setting—one leadership training time. He is talking about the end times, and then He gives three parables talking about leadership because He said you have to be faithful. The overall theme of these parables is: "I am coming. You must be faithful during the delay." That is the overall idea.

PARABLE NUMBER ONE: JESUS' DELAY IS SHORTER THAN EXPECTED

It is as if Jesus is saying, "I am coming back physically. You must be faithful to Me. You must stay connected to Me during the delay." So, the first parable number one, when Jesus' delay is shorter than we expected. He warns them: "Do not work with wrong motives. My delay may be shorter than you think it is." The parable of the good and evil servants in Matthew 24:45-51 contrasts two types of leaders in the kingdom. The wicked leaders worked with wrong motives, and they abused their God-given blessings and authority. The good servants are leaders who are wise and faithful as they feed God's people.

PARABLE NUMBER TWO: JESUS' DELAY IS LONGER THAN EXPECTED

Parable number two, which is the one we are looking at today basically says, "My delay may be longer than you think it is. There are godly leaders who do not work with a wrong spirit." Working with a wrong spirit means that you might have good motives, but you are working outside of cultivating intimacy with Jesus.

Some wise leaders with good motives end up working with a wrong spirit by neglecting to maintain their intimacy with God. They get focused on the mandate, and they lose sight of connecting with His heart. He says, "Do not do that." You really do not want to do that ever throughout history, but particularly, throughout that hour of history.

PARABLE NUMBER THREE: THE DELAY IS HARDER THAN EXPECTED

Parable number three: the delay is harder than some people expect. Jesus warns them that some people can have a wrong evaluation of their ministry labors. Because they evaluate it wrong, they draw back and quit. So, Jesus says, "My delay may be shorter, it may be longer, and it may be harder." Three principles. Three parables. I

want to urge you leaders to take these three parables very, very seriously and train people in them. We are going to look at the middle one, the middle parable, which is Matthew 25.

BRIDEGROOM, KING, AND JUDGE WILL BE EMPHASIZED IN THE END TIMES

Paragraph D. In this passage, Matthew 24-25, Jesus emphasizes three aspects of His personality and in His ministry. The Holy Spirit will emphasize these three aspects worldwide. They will be emphasized together. The closer we get to the Lord's return, the more these three facets of His personality and of His ministry will come together.

In this very passage, Jesus shows Himself as Bridegroom, King, and Judge. Jesus is the Bridegroom God. He has burning desire for His people. Jesus is the King. He has power. Jesus is the Judge. He is going to remove everything that hinders love. His judgments do not contradict His passion and love as a Bridegroom. When Jesus shows His judgments that is not a different side of Himself. In His judgments, He is showing love. He is removing the things that hinder love from the planet.

Some people think, "Well, the Judge, I am not really into that. I am into the Bridegroom."

I respond, "The Bridegroom is the one doing the judging."

They say, "Oh." When they think of Judge, they think, "mean Jesus." When they think of the Bridegroom, they think "nice Jesus." When they think of the King, they think "powerful Jesus." But it is one Jesus—He is really powerful, really nice, and loving.

THESE ARE THREE ASPECTS TO ONE UNIFIED PERSONALITY

Jesus is going to intervene to remove everything that hinders love—Bridegroom, King, and Judge. We cannot separate those three. The closer we get to the Lord's return, the more that the Holy Spirit will emphasize those three together. But, He is telling the leaders here 2,000 years ago, "Understand the face I am going to show to the globe in that time." There are a number of passages in the Bible that bring these three facets of Jesus together. That is how the book of Revelation ends in the last four chapters. It brings Bridegroom, King, and Judge together as one picture of Jesus.

JESUS PREPARES HIS PEOPLE TO WALK IN POWER AND VICTORY IN THE TRIBULATION

Paragraph E. Matthew 24-25 is the final teaching Jesus gives before He goes to the upper room. He is giving it only to leaders. It is leadership training where He is preparing His people to walk in victory. He is preparing His people to walk in victory in the most dynamic hour of history during the Great Tribulation.

Now, there is a popular teaching that has been around for a while that the Church will not be here during the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation will be the Church's finest hour of history. The Great Tribulation is not an exalted Antichrist and a defeated Church. It is a victorious Church and a defeated Antichrist.

It is a Church in unity with Jesus releasing the power of God against the great oppressor in the end times. It will be the context of the greatest revival, the greatest power, as well as the greatest pressure. It all comes together. Beloved, it is our finest hour. I realize that many have grown up in different church backgrounds and have said, "Don't worry. We will not be here." I want to say this humbly, but straightforward, "Do not get your end-time theology from your denominational headquarters. Get it from the Bible and from the teachings of Jesus." I do

not say that to be mean. I have so much respect for so many people who teach those doctrines. I think we are still some decades out. But the closer we get to that hour, the more essential it is to prepare.

WE ARE PREPARING TO WALK IN VICTORY

We are preparing to walk in victory, not to escape. Not to escape the conflict, but to be victorious in it as well. Well, that is what Matthew 24-25 was all about. Top of page two. This is really interesting—Paragraph F. I find this so interesting. It seems simplistic. That is why it is amazing to me.

Jesus gives a great exhortation as he talks about the end of the age and the generation of His return. By the way, the end of the age is not the same thing as the end of the world. We are going to talk a little about this in the next session. People talk to me because I talk a lot about the end times. But, it is a time of victory. It is our greatest hour. It will surpass the book of Acts in power.

They say, “Wow.”

I will talk to somebody, and they will say, “Now, do you believe the end of the world?” On TV programs, they interview some of the guys on the talk shows and ask, “Well, when do you think will be the end of the world?”

The guy says, “Yes, it could be anytime.” There is no such thing as the end of the world. The world does not end. The age ends. The end of the age is not the end of the world. They are very, very different concepts. The end of the age means or involves the idea of how the world is governed.

In this evil age, there is demonic influence in the government of the nations. The Devil is going to be thrown into prison, the age will change, and the earth will be governed without any demonic influence. That is the age to come. The world does not end. The age ends. It is a very big difference.

THE CHURCH WILL FULLY PARTNER WITH JESUS

But, what I find very unusual here in paragraph E and surprising is how seemingly simplistic is Jesus’ exhortation. Dynamic power is going to break out. There will be great conflict and opposition. There will be an increase of evil, darkness, perversion, and murder.

The Antichrist, the oppressor, and the Church walk in victory and power. “What should we do, Jesus, the great pastor? You are very smart. You are a great pastor. What would You tell us to do in that hour? Store guns?” “No.” “Store food?” That is not what the Bible says. I am not making an opinion.

Some people might be told to store stuff. Joseph was told to. If the Holy Spirit tells someone to, that is between them and God, but Jesus never said to store stuff. Many respond in fear and say, “I know—I will get a house in a cave. I will buy some chains so nobody can get in. I will get double thick doors.” “No.” “Jesus, what should we do?” His answer is so simplistic; it is almost offensive.

JESUS COMMANDS US TO WATCH AND PRAY

Jesus says, “Watch.”

People ask, “What?”

He says, “Watch.” “Well, that is cool, but what should we do?” He says it every time. He says watch ten times. When the end times are the subject matter, ten times the answer is, “Watch.”

“That is it?”

“No, that is not it, but if you watch and if you get a heart connect, all the wisdom that you will need in that hour will come to you if you are in a place of heart connection.” If you get connected and are not moving by fear, you will know what to do. You will see the Scripture clearly. You will receive direction clearly, but you have to be connected. That is what it means to watch and pray. You have to stay connected.

Someone might ask, “Jesus, isn’t there anything else you want to add to it?”

He answers, “Watch.” If you do that, you will be in the place of connectedness to all the insight that you need. You will connect with the courage you need as well as the power. This is the answer He gives in these parables. He says, “Watch, therefore.” In light of everything I just said, Jesus has one response: “Therefore, watch. Stay connected.” Everybody knows we need to be connected, but Jesus is not saying it is one of ten things. This is the primary point of preparation. It is not the only one. It is the primary one.

ACQUIRING OIL IS TO ACTIVELY CONNECT WITH GOD

I have in paragraph G: we must be attentive to what the Holy Spirit is speaking to our lives and not only that, but what He is doing in society. He wants us to be anointed observers to what He is doing in the nations. There are many biblical signs of the times. I have quite a few documents on the website. You can go to the website to get the notes. Again, you know you can get all of the teaching I have done, and it is free. It is yours and you can run with it. Our copyright is the right to copy.

I do not have all my teaching on the website on this, but there is quite a bit in the signs of the times. You might be surprised how many signs the Bible indicate that we are now in the generation of His return. Those signs are increasing rapidly on a global level in a staggering way, if we choose to watch. Watching does not just mean having a prayer life. It means watching what the Word says, watching what the Holy Spirit is doing with a heart of faith and with a heart of discernment. So, watch what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. Watch what He is doing in society, and respond in obedience and faith. That is what watching is about.

WE WATCH TO POSITION OURSELVES TO RECEIVE STRENGTH FROM THE SPIRIT

Paragraph I. We watch to receive strength from the Holy Spirit. When we watch, we get connected. We get strength to love God and to love people. We get strength to be bold. It is the place where we are empowered. We are empowered to obey. We are empowered to love.

It is presumptuous to think we can walk in love to God or to people without being connected to the Holy Spirit. I do not just mean connected in the sense that we were born again years ago, so we are connected by faith. I mean without a dynamic connection to God, how are we going to have the power to walk in love especially as times become more difficult? I talk to believers all the time who say, “I want to be out doing this and doing that. I do not have time to sit before the Lord. I got things to do. I mean I live in a practical world.”

I respond, “There is nothing more practical than being connected with the great Lover of the human race, as if you are connected to Him, you can love God and love people.” The analogy that I use is a guy pushing his car. You come along and say, “Why are you pushing your car?”

The guy responds, “Well, I really do not have time to stop and get gas. I have got so much going on that I am going to push my car.” When people say, “I do not really have time. You do not know how much I have on my plate to put gas in my car, so it is wiser to push it. If you only knew what I had before me.” What they are really doing is exerting significant more energy and getting less done. I am talking about whether they are raising their children, functioning in the church, or functioning in the marketplace. You can achieve far more when your heart is connected in a greater way because you do not have near as much emotional traffic of fear, confusion, unbelief, and self-promotion. You are not as occupied with failure and condemnation. That emotional traffic is like pushing your car in your own strength.

TO WATCH IS TO RECEIVE FROM GOD SO WE CAN BETTER LOVE GOD AND PEOPLE

I talk to moms and dads and say, “You really want to be good mom and dad? You want to be the best mom you can be? Take some time away from your kids and get connected to God. You will raise your kids without the same fear that you are raising them now. You will see much more clearly. You will have a whole different posture when you are imparting love to them.” Everybody has time to watch and wait. It is like saying, “I do not have time to breathe. I am too busy. I cannot do the prayer thing.” You have to. There is no option.

The only other way is to live on burning fumes and hope you will do well in your ministry. There are so many people who have burned out in their marriages, their family, their marketplace assignment, and their church. They are just burned out because they think they are too busy to slow down and stay connected. They think they can love without being connected. Now, if you ask them, they say, “Of course, I cannot.” But, the last five years of their life proves that they think that they can. Everybody would admit that they cannot, but their schedule testifies that they think they can. Let’s go to the parable itself.

KINGDOM LEADERSHIP AT THE END OF THE AGE: DEFINING WISE LEADERSHIP

Roman numeral II. Let’s look at Matthew 25:1-2: “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” This is the second parable of the three. This is the only one we are going to look at today. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins who took their lamps. They went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of these were wise virgins and five were foolish.

All ten of them were virgins before God. What I mean by virgins is in the spiritual sense. The day you were born again no matter what you did, we are pure before God as a free gift. Now, all ten of them were born again believers who were clean before God through the righteousness of Christ. Every single one of them was pure. Now, what we do after we are saved, we can still remain clean day by day as we come to Him and receive it. We can live with that confidence that the Lord receives us even as He has given us the gift of righteousness as a free gift.

He is talking to ten different leaders here. These are three parables talking to leaders. Now, they apply to non-leaders, but so many of you have leadership gifting on you. You may not lead on a stage with a microphone, but you may be leading five and ten people. Maybe it is a home group, or maybe it is in the marketplace. Maybe it is with the children. Maybe it is in your neighborhood that you are influencing other people. It does not have to

be in a leadership role that is on the church org chart in order to qualify as a leader. A lot of leadership happens, and nobody calls it leadership, but it is still leadership. It is a place of influence.

LAMPS SPEAKS OF MINISTRIES THAT BRING GOD’S LIGHT TO OTHERS

Paragraph B. All ten of them had lamps. They had ministries. Lamps speak of ministries. They are bringing the light to other people. They all had functioning ministries. So, they are born again, and they had functioning ministries. This is the most remarkable, paragraph C.

ALL THE MINISTRIES HAD REVELATION OF JESUS AS THEIR BRIDEGROOM

They all went out to meet the bridegroom, it says in Matthew 25:1: “They went out to meet the bridegroom.” This means all ten of them had a connection with the Messiah as the Bridegroom God. These were not guys and gals who did not care about intimacy with God. They all had prior connection with God as the Bridegroom God. They understood the intimacy message. When the bridegroom conference was on, they were teaching the seminars in the bridegroom conference.

These were all ministries who encountered Jesus in intimacy earlier in their ministry. That is the part that makes this parable really sober. These were not people who were unaware. These were people who had a history of connecting with God at the heart level.

“THEN” MEANS THAT WE ARE AT THE END OF THE AGE (MATTHEW 24)

Paragraph D. “Then” is the final word that I want to look at in verse 1. Jesus said, “Then, the kingdom shall be likened to ten virgins. When is then? Well, He is in the middle of a sermon. Matthew 25:1: throw away the chapter division. It is one message. Matthew 24 is all about the end times. He is talking about the end times.

It is as if Jesus says, “Then, my ministries will be virgins who go out to encounter the bridegroom.” In the generation of the Lord’s returns, the Holy Spirit will universally emphasize the need for intimacy with God. There will be an emphasis about the heart-connect with the Bridegroom God. Jesus as the Bridegroom speaks of His desire.

As we said in the opening session of the conference, women are sons of God, and men are the Bride of Christ. It has nothing to do with gender. As sons of God, we have access to His power and His throne. Men and women: we all have access to His throne and His power. As the Bride of Christ, we have access to His heart and His desire. So, power and desire—throne, heart—this is all part of our identity as the sons of God with the Bride of Christ identity. It has nothing to do with a woman and a man in the gender specific role.

I tell some of the young ladies: they hear the word, “Bridegroom God,” and they kind of get this idea, “Oh, Jesus is my Bridegroom God.” They have date night with Jesus and light the candles. I say, “Candles are cool, but Jesus is not your boyfriend.” Let’s get that really clear: it is not about dating Jesus. He is not our boyfriend replacement. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about the heart of God being made known to human beings—just like the sons of God. It is not about wearing army fatigues and getting Boy Scout uniforms on. I mean that is cool if you want to wear those, but that is not the point. It is that we have access to His power.

So, you do not need the candles, and you do not need the military fatigues; but if you like candles and fatigues, go ahead. But do not get confused as to what is really happening. OK, the Bride is going to wear army boots in that day. OK, we need to light candles.

IN THIS PARABLE, JESUS IS WARNING THE WISE TO NOT BECOME FOOLISH

Paragraph E. In this parable, oil is very important. Here is the warning: “The wise can become foolish.”

Anointed, intimacy-based ministries can lose their way in the pressures that mount up. That is the point of the parable.

Now, the pressure does not mean the pressure against the Antichrist. That is not the pressure I am talking about. The pressure that mounts up is actually the pressure of the Holy Spirit in the increase of the revival and the greater workload on the saints. In the explosion of the end time revival, we can get so busy that we overestimate the importance of intimacy, and we underestimate our weakness. We get a Messiah complex, “If I do not go, who will?”

The Lord says, “You know, I love your heart to serve, but remember, you are a really weak little guy with no gas in your car unless we put gas in it.” It is a warning not to buy into the Messiah complex that “I am needed for everyone to make it, and I have undue strength.”

Beloved, we have no strength. We have to get connected to receive strength regularly in our walk with God in our connection with the Holy Spirit.

FIVE WISE VIRGINS: THEY ACQUIRED OIL AND THEIR MINISTRY LAMPS SHINED

Roman numeral III. Top of page three. Matthew 25:2-4: “Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” Five of these leaders were wise, and five of them were foolish. Those that were foolish took their lamps, but they took no oil. Those that were wise, took oil, and they took their lamps. They took both. They took oil in their lamps.

OIL SPEAKS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

First of all, paragraph A, the oil speaks of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the connection, the heart connect with God. I have several little points there about oil, but in essence, it is the heart connection with God.

THE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS WITH NO OIL

Now, notice, paragraph B, you can see in verse three that the foolish took lamps. That is their ministry. They did not take time for oil. The foolish said, “My lamp is my first priority. Getting oil . . . that is not so important because I am shining my lamp. My ministry is my main focus. My heart, we will get around to that later. My ministry is growing. The revival is happening. Everybody wants me. Doors are opening. I gotta go. I gotta go. I have to go.”

Now, we do have to go. That is the truth. We have to go to our neighbors. We have to go to those in the marketplace. We have to travel sometimes. We have to go, but within the boundaries of the will of God. We cannot have any false Messiah complex. But, look at Matthew 25:4: it is exactly opposite. Even the wording indicates that—the wise took the oil. See, the foolish took their lamps without any oil. The wise, oil is mentioned first. That was their first priority. Their lamps were second.

Now, what is remarkable: this is almost like the simplicity of the word “watch” when Jesus says “watch.” We say, “What? Just ‘watch?’ That’s it? You are not going to break it down more?”

“No, you do that. You will be in good shape if you get connected.”

Here, it is so simple. Jesus takes these ten ministries who are all virgins and have the gift of righteousness. They all have ministry lamps. They all have the bridegroom revelation, but in the process of ministry and time, five of them became foolish. The definition from Jesus’ point of view of foolish and wise is so simple; we can just miss it.

THE FOOLISH PUT INTIMACY WITH GOD IN SECOND PLACE

The foolish make ministry number one. Their connection with God is number two. Jesus looks at them and said, “You are foolish. Wise, heart connection with God must be number one. Ministry must be number two. That is what I call wise.”

We say, “That is it? I mean isn’t wisdom more than that?”

Jesus answers, “Yes, but if you get that right, a whole lot of other things will come into line.”

So, God tells the great man of God who is too busy in His global-expanding ministry, or in his neighbor ministry, or whatever ministry you have, God says, “You are too busy to connect with Me. I love you. I know you love Me, but you are foolish. You will miss out on things I have for you.”

He tells the other guy, “If you take time to connect with Me, your ministry will be far more effective over the months and years because the burnout factor will be very different.” Again, I said this the other day: people do not burn out because of hard work. They burn out because they work with a wrong spirit.

WORKING FROM LOVE INSTEAD OF FOR LOVE

We do not burn out because we work hard. We burn out because of the way we work. We are working for success so that we can get bigger or better recognition, instead of working from success—the fact that He loves us. His eyes are on us. We are already successful because He loves us, and we love Him.

It is a very different spirit in the way we do the work. Jesus reduces wisdom and foolishness to this simple definition. “The wise ones take time to connect, and then do their ministry. They do not throw their ministry away; they just have it in order. The foolish ones, they love Me, but they have more confidence in their own strength than they should. They think that their strength is effervescent and ever replenishing. That it is them. They have no strength if I am not helping them. Now, they know that doctrinally, but their schedules prove that they do not really believe this at the heart level.

THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY IN THE END TIMES: THE THREEFOLD CRY

Roman numeral IV. Paragraph D. I did this yesterday, but I have got to do this again. Paragraph D. Our relationship to Jesus must be the most important dream of our heart. I mentioned yesterday the idea that God spoke audibly twenty-seven years ago and said, “Do 24/7 prayer.”

We put the sign on the wall for many years. Finally, after sixteen years of waiting, we started 24/7 prayer. Ten years have gone by, and lots of good things are happening. My friends from twenty and twenty-five years ago, they come and visit and they say, “Wow! Your dream has come true.”

I say, “IHOP–KC is not my dream. My heart with God, the anointing to love God and be loved by God—that is the dream of my heart. IHOP–KC is my assignment.” My life dream is not helped when IHOP–KC gets big, and my heart’s dream is not hurt when IHOP–KC gets small. That is my assignment. My dream is in a totally different place than my ministry. We must make our connection with God, who we are in His eyes, and who He is to us, the dream of our heart. Then, out of that, we can do ministry.

WE MUST PURSUE INTIMACY AND ACQUIRING OIL FIRST

If I had to do IHOP–KC with the idea that this was my big dream, that this was my big time in life, this would wear me out beyond measure. I mean, I would be so stressed out about everything saying, “Well, this is my dream. My dream is in peril. We have got to do it differently.”

I say, “Hey, I want to do things better, but this is Your deal. My dream is alive. You are my dream, Lord. I ask for the anointing to love You and to increase in that. That is what I dream about in my private life.” I do not mean just to dream at night. I am just talking about daydreaming about Jesus, “I want to be closer. I want to feel You more. I want to be more faithful. I want Your heart to be fully pleased with what I am doing. Oh! And help IHOP–KC, Lord. I like IHOP–KC. You like IHOP–KC. Help us, but oh Lord, my dream is to be close to You alone. Back to my dream.” That is the way you can do ministry without ministry destroying us.

I have heard for thirty years of ministry stories of how people say, “I came from this church, and I am burned out. I got burned out and bruised.” Typically, what it means is they have been relating to ministry and the Body of Christ without being deeply connected to God. So, everybody who treated them wrong got to them. So, they come, and tell me how they are burned out and beat up. They are normally accusing their church—how bad it is is—but really what that means is that they have been living outside of a vibrant connection with God.

So, the people who do not do what they think they should do, it gets to them and takes them out of the game. It takes them out of the race. It is a far bigger statement about how they have been living before God than how mean the Body of Christ is where they are.

Let’s go to Roman numeral IV. I love them. If I have time after talking to them, I say, “Bro, I love it. I see your pain. You are your biggest enemy—not that mean church. I promise you. That same old mean church, if you were connected, would feel way differently on the inside. Get connected. Your biggest enemy is you—not them. Slow down. Turn some entertainment off. Sell some stuff. Give it away. Reduce your lifestyle. Get connected. I love you.”

Then, they say, “That Mike Bickle, that is just legalism. He has no compassion.”

I answer, “No, I love you so much, I will tell you the truth again.”

Anyway, let’s go to Matthew 25:5-7: “While the Bridegroom delayed, they all slept. At midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, go out to meet Him.’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.” Now here is the point of all three parables: “When the bridegroom delayed”—that is the issue. Remember parable one? The delay is shorter than they thought. Parable two, the delay is longer. Parable three, the delay is harder.

The whole issue is, “How do we respond in the delay?” That is the key. When they heard the midnight cry, then, all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. They went out to meet him. Well, there are several points here.

AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR OF HISTORY, FORERUNNERS WILL CRY OUT WITH A MESSAGE

Paragraph A. At the midnight hour of human history, God is going to raise up these nameless, faceless voices who will cry out. I call these the forerunners, and there are millions of them across the earth. It is those who are connected to God’s heart, and what He is doing.

They are crying out, and look at their message. It is a very simple three-point message. Jesus is coming. “He is coming. He is coming.” There are so many implications to His coming—the victory, the manifest power, all the unique dynamics of that hour. “It is happening. He is coming and breaking in with power.”

So, there is a revival victory note: “He is coming.” When He comes, that means He is intervening. That means things change dynamically in the way they happen in the natural realm down here.

JESUS COMES AS A BRIDEGROOM GOD WITH A DEEP DESIRE FOR RELATIONSHIP

Paragraph C. There is a second message. He is not just coming; He is a God with desire. He is coming as the God of desire. He is coming with tenderness. He is coming with an abandonment of love to us and requiring abandonment back to Him. He wants abandonment. He is the God of desire. He is not just a God of power with an agenda. He is a God of desire with deep emotions, and He wants to engage us at the heart level.

GO OUT TO MEET HIM

Paragraph D. The third message: go out to meet Him. Make the effort necessary to encounter Him. Make the effort necessary to position yourself to encounter Him. That is really what I am doing right now. I am giving this message of Matthew 25:6. I am telling you I am focusing on the third part: “Go out to meet Him.” That is what I am preaching right now in this teaching.

“Go out to meet Him. Change your lifestyle. Get your life in this position where you have time to encounter Him.” It is the call to prayer, and I do not mean just prayer as us getting together in a room to pray for revival. I like that. I do that. I am really into that. I am talking about you and Him connecting, meeting, and Him connecting at the heart level. Get up, out of bed, go out, and meet Him. Make the effort. Make the effort to engage with His heart. “Well, when I get there, the Bible is boring, and I feel dead. Everyone is mad at me. I do not have any money anyway. My body hurts.”

I answer, “OK. I get that. I do all that. But take some effort. Put some things aside. Turn some things off. Take some time.”

People say, “Well, I do not feel much.” Stay with it. Put the effort in. It will connect. Just stay with it. He is coming in waves. His end-time purpose will crash in waves of the Holy Spirit that have been building these last couple decades. But, I do not want to go into that. But the Holy Spirit is moving in the Western world and in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the islands. He is moving in different ways. There are strategic waves of the Holy Spirit. He imparts something. He imparts truth, and then the waves ebb and flow. He lifts His hand for a moment, and then another wave comes through. Those waves are building and building in intensity until the coming of the Lord. There are different dimensions of the Holy Spirit’s activity.

He does not just kind of do things business as usual, and then suddenly He comes one day. No, there are waves. There is purpose in the Holy Spirit. The move of God is building in intensity and strategically leading up to the second coming of the Lord. We do not necessarily identify them all perfectly, but we understand the Spirit's ways in this.

JESUS EMPHASIZED THE GREAT NEED TO CULTIVATE OIL IN THE END TIMES

Roman numeral V. Top of page four. Now, remember, all ten of these guys had burning ministries. In Matthew 25:1, they had ministries. A lot of people were enjoying their ministry. They had a connection with the Bridegroom God. Their intimacy with God was going and growing strong.

It is in the rigor of the work that they lost their way. That is what this parable is about. It is a warning that the wise can become foolish. They all started off wise, but five of them became foolish. But, they can recover. Are you a former wise one who is now living in foolish ways? Or were you never a wise one, and you have been foolish the whole time? This is like saying, "I love Jesus, and He loves me, but I never got around to connect with Him in a personal way, in a day-by-day way. That has kind of never really been on my mind." You are sincere. You love Him. Your love is real. He loves you, but you still are foolish. There is no way to massage the Bible verses around to somehow make that anything but foolish. If you do, you are denying the teaching of Jesus.

When I am foolish, because I have stumbled into that sometimes, I call it foolish and say, "I am being foolish. Deliver me. I repent. I do not have enough confidence in my own strength. I am changing things now."

The Lord says, "That is good." That will save your life spiritually if you stay in that attitude.

I say, "Lord, I lost it again." I have had the connection, and then I get busy and things are going. Typically, it is when the ministry increases. That is when the peril comes actually. I have lost my way a few times for some weeks, or months at a time.

Then, I say, "Uh, I did it again, Lord."

He says, "That is OK. You can recover. Just repent. Call what you are doing foolish."

I say, "I am sincere. I love you. You love me. But it is foolish. I am lining back up again."

The foolish said to the wise in Matthew 25:8: "Give us your relationship with Jesus." It does not work that way. "Give us your connection with God." I cannot lay hands on you, and give you my connection with God. You cannot lay hands on me, and give me your connection. You can lay hands on people, and God can impart something in a catalytic way to kind of help them get started. It is like a jumpstart. I cannot give you my dialogue with God, and you cannot give me yours. It is not transferable. It is personal.

They said, "Our lamps are going out. Our ministries are going out."

MANY WISE MINISTRIES WILL BECOME FOOLISH AND WILL NOT SURVIVE

Beloved, I am going to say this. Matthew 25:8-9: “The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 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.’”

Many, many ministries that are thriving today will go out tomorrow because they will not have the spiritual vitality to meet the need of that hour. We are going in history with a deeper expression of power in the Holy Spirit, a deeper hunger in the Church for intimacy with God, greater pressures in sin and society, and the Christian self-help kind of Christian pop candy—I call it cotton candy Christianity, or self-help Christianity where many fill mega-churches today.

But, nobody will care about that kind of presentation of the gospel when the needs are real, and the nations are filled with power and crisis. It cannot be the kind of man pleasing, flattering that says, “Hey, if you do this, you will get more money and more honor. You are going to be happier. Everything is going to work.”

Those ministries, or those lamps will go out. Nobody will pay attention to him or her. They will have no relevance in that hour. They said, “Our ministries are going out.” That is going to happen globally, and a whole lot of other ministries are going to start up. The wise in Matthew 25:9 said, “No, we cannot give you our oil. It does not work that way. I cannot talk to God for myself, and then jump over and talk to God for you and then you get the benefit of it. It does not work that way. I cannot make that happen. Go do it yourself.”

Then, Jesus says in Matthew 25:9: “Go buy for yourself.” Now, this is the very word.

THE GREATEST NEED IS TO CULTIVATE OIL IN THE END TIMES

Paragraph D. In Revelation 3, Jesus emphasized what He focuses on in Matthew 25, the passage we are on. But, in Revelation 3, He used the very same words when He appeared to John in the book of Revelation. He said, “Tell them to go buy gold.” He does not mean earn it. He means to go according to the God-ordained process. Invest yourself in a costly way, and get that which is valuable and priceless. It does not mean earn it. Buying does not mean earn it. It means engage in the God-ordained process, in a way that is costly because you see that it as valuable to you.

So, these wise leaders told the foolish leaders, as they are all leaders, the wise leaders said, “We cannot give it to you, but go get it. Invest yourself.”

The foolish answered, “Yes, but if I take time for that, I cannot network as much. If I take time for that; I am going to lose some of my hours where I could make some more money. I got this boat that I have been dreaming about.” Beloved, you may have to reduce, simplify, and draw back some. “Go buy. Go invest yourself, and get oil.” The wise leaders said you have to. There is no other way.

BEING PREPARED FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is no prayer line that is going to give you a history in God. Matthew 25:10-12: “While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ He answered, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”

BEING PREPARED FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Roman numeral VI. We will just do this quickly, and then you can just read the notes on your own. In Matthew 25:10, they went away to buy. They engaged in the process. The foolish ones said, “OK.” Beloved, you can recover from this. I have recovered from it a few times. I am not prophesying against myself, but I will probably lose my way a few more times. I do not want to, but I say, “Holy Spirit, help me. Help me capture the sense of it quickly when I lose my way.” I mean for a few weeks, or months

I get so involved in the work and the increase that I say, “Wait. Wait. I am too weak. I am too frail to have an increasing ministry without a deeper heart-connect. I will get off.” Well, they went to buy oil. They engaged in the process. Then, suddenly, the bridegroom came. Now, some will read this as the second coming. I do not believe it is the second coming. That is the whole point of it right here.

THE JEWISH CUSTOM INVOLVED CELEBRATING A WEDDING FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS

The Bridegroom came because in the Jewish context—He is talking to the Jewish leaders here—when a couple got married they would ideally have a feast for seven nights.

Some of you think, “Man, our wedding, just having that one reception just about broke the bank.” Can you imagine a feast seven nights in a row? Those who were closest to the bride or the couple came the first night. A small number were invited for the first night. Then, the second night, they enlarged the list of the people who were invited. On the third night of the wedding, even more came. Now, the people who went the first night went all seven nights. It was quite an event. Night by night, they had another celebration.

“I DO NOT KNOW YOU”

The Holy Spirit is building in purpose and intensity in wave after wave of the Holy Spirit. If you missed the first night, it does not mean you are out of the game. It does not mean that you are out of the race. When Jesus tells them, “I never knew you,” He is not warning them that they have lost their salvation. They lost their place of usefulness in that hour in that first night in that first wave.

When He says, “I do not know you,” He is not saying, “I never knew you” like He said in Matthew 7. He is not calling them wicked, lazy, and cursed like He does a few verses later. He is saying, “I do not have intimacy with you. I do not know you as the Bridegroom and Bride. You are a servant, but we do not connect at this level, and this is why I am pouring my Holy Spirit out, to establish this truth. We do not know each other along these truths. Go connect with Me, and then I will anoint you to use you in maybe the next wave.”

So, there are many people to whom the Lord says, “I want to establish the intimacy with God message.”

They say, “I want to be used.”

The Lord says, “Well, I love you, but we do not know each other that way. Remember, we have not talked much at the level in your personal heart. Do you remember?”

“Yeah, now that I think about it, we do not really talk much about heart to heart stuff.”

The Lord says, “Well, you take some time, and go get oil. Then, maybe in the next wave, I can use you to impart that message to other people.” So, it is an issue about preparedness. We can lose opportunities in God.

JESUS' ADVICE IS TO WATCH, OR DEVELOP INTIMACY WITH THE BRIDEGROOM

But, there is wave after wave that is being built here: I mean that the Holy Spirit is building to the return of the Lord.

Look at paragraph D. In Matthew 25:13: “Watch . . . for you know neither the day nor the hour . . . the Son of Man is coming.” He ends the parable with “Watch.” Go get your heart-connection. That is the moral of the story. Go get your heart connect with God, and you will be ready every single time and in every season. You will have a connection with Him where you will understand the things He is wanting to impart through you. Amen. Let's stand.