

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

**Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

**(John 11:25-26)**

[www.sermonaudio.com/crc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/crc)

[www.unholycharade.com](http://www.unholycharade.com) (blog)

[www.lightfordarktimes.com](http://www.lightfordarktimes.com) (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

***The Parable of the Ten Virgins -  
The Condition of the Visible  
Church in the Last Days***

***July 27, 2025***

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 25:1-13

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 24:32-51

Last time, with some help from our old friend John Bunyan, we considered the Scriptures he wrote upon concerning this subject:

The Strait Gate

-or-

“The great difficulty of going to Heaven: Plainly proving by the Scriptures that not only the rude and profane, but many great professors, will come short of that kingdom; with directions how and why every one should strive to enter in.”

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The text he specifically focused upon was this:

Luke 13:24 “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

This morning I want us to continue hearing our Lord’s teaching and warnings in still another parable – that of the Ten Virgins – 5 wise and 5 foolish. That good Puritan preacher Thomas Shepard (early 1600’s). He came to America in 1635 and preached at Cambridge (Massachusetts) until he died. His sermon series is over 600 pages.

Follow along as I read these words of our Lord:

Matthew 25:1-13 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. (2) Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

(3) For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with

them, (4) but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

(5) As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. (6) But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ (7) Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

(8) And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ (9) But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’

(10) And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

(11) Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ (12) But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ (13) Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Now, the context of this parable is the Lord giving answer to two very important questions posed to Him:

1. Concerning the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem (which He answers in 24:4-23)
2. Concerning the signs of His coming and of the end of the world. (which He answers from 24:23 to the end of our chapter 25)

These two chapters, 24 & 25, are given the title of The Olivet Discourse and are the largest section of Jesus' teaching on eschatology – the last days.

Listen to this summary statement from Shepard:

“The Lord acquaints us with some things which shall be before His coming, that is, *subtle and strong delusions, mixed with sore tribulations and oppressions*, especially in the time of Antichrist's reign. As also great confusions in all hearts and

*churches*, if not throughout all the world. And after ‘the tribulation of those days’ then shall appear the sign of the Son of man, and he shall be seen coming in power and great glory.”

It is in this setting then that the Lord begins the parable:

Matthew 25:1 “**Then** the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Now, all of the church age, from the first coming of Christ into this world (His incarnation) until He returns again, the Bible calls *The last days*. However, we have good reason to conclude that this parable is specifically and especially a description of the state of the visible church *in the last of the last days*. Why? Because the parable opens with this word – “***then***”. THEN the kingdom of heaven will be like.... THEN – when there are strong delusions and sore tribulations and Antichrist.

### **The Kingdom of Heaven**

Consider this term. *The kingdom of heaven will be like....* What is this kingdom?

This title, *the kingdom of heaven*, can have different shades of meaning in scripture. It can mean that kingdom of glory – heaven itself. Also it can mean the gospel in the sense of it being the Word which, like a net draws fish in, or also the kingdom which is in the heart of every true Christian. We know it cannot be these meanings here in this parable *because there is no place in those meanings of the kingdom of heaven for the presence of foolish virgins.*

So, listen to Shepard once again:

“Therefore, I conceive, it is clear that by the kingdom of heaven here, is meant the external kingdom of Christ in this world; that is, the visible church, or the state of the visible church, which is frequently called in Scripture ‘the kingdom of heaven.’ (see Matthew 8:12 and 21:43). So that in the visible church some are wise and

some are foolish; all *profess* Christ and look for the coming of Christ, look for salvation from Christ. But the condition of the church will be like 10 virgins.

And therefore we have this doctrine here: *That the visible church of God on earth, especially in the times of the gospel, is the kingdom of heaven upon earth.* The same King who reigns in heaven, reigns here. The same laws of heaven are the laws we have here. The subjects of the King are here in this world, strangers for a time here upon earth with but a thin paper wall of our bodies lying between us and heaven. Heaven has come down into this world to us.”

NOTE: Do not despise this great privilege. Christ’s church, His bride, HERE in this world. ‘See what the Lord has done! Brought the glory of His kingdom down to us, where you have the heirs of heaven to be your companions, and the angels of heaven as your guards. That heaven should come down to you in this world and bring we who were once enemies of this kingdom without hope and without

God, and make us new people seated at the King's table! *See that you do not despise these things. See that you do not refuse His invitation. What a great privilege this kingdom of heaven is!*

He concludes therefore:

***“The state of the members of some churches, about the time of Christ's coming, shall be this – that they shall not be openly profane, corrupt, and scandalous, but virgin professors, awakened for some season out of carnal security, stirring and lively Christians, waiting for Christ, but also others of them, and a great part of them too, shall be found foolish at the coming of the Lord Jesus.”***

What we have then in this parable is, as we have seen, a description of the visible church especially in the last of the last days. Wise, yet mixed with the foolish. Do not be so foolish as to despise the fellowship of God's people, as Esau who despised his birthright and was lost forever.

Let's repeat it once more:

*“In those days of Christ's coming, wherein the churches of Christ and professors of the gospel shall grow virgin churches – all visible saints – when all seem to be joined to Christ – yet there will be found desperate folly in some, and in time a great security will fall upon all. But take heed that the Lord will not find many of you foolish and that over time you be one who grows more secure in a delusion. Beware this sleeping sickness which leads to hell.”*

Alright then, we have the context and general scope of the parable. Let's take a closer look now at the text:

*“...ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”*

This parable is of course set in the wedding culture of that day. Let's call on William Hendriksen to help us here:

“The parable emphasizes the need for being prepared at all times for the glorious return of our Lord.”

The Scripture does not give us the detailed explanation of these customs and that would indicate that they are not of primary importance. Hendriksen suggests the following scenario however:

“The guests, the bride, and the ten girls – call them bridesmaids if you wish – have all gathered at the home of the groom. Everything is ready – except that the groom has not yet arrived. Why there were exactly ten girls we do not know. We are however told that these young ladies have taken their lamps, probably meaning devices equipped oil receptacles and wicks and in characteristic processions held aloft by means of wooden poles.

All intended to meet the bridegroom and to escort him to the place where the festivities are to be held. All have lamps. All are expecting the bridegroom to come, but none of them knows at what

hour he is coming. All are looking forward to taking part in the marriage feast. [Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary, Baker].

But now the similarities end:

Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

Here then, as we have heard from Shepard, there is this stark division. Foolish. Wise. Five will enter in. Five will be shut out. You have the same warning from our Lord over and over again:

Matthew 22:2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son....

22:10-14 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. (11) “But when the king came in to look at the guests, **he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.** (12) And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’



And he was speechless. (13) Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (14) For many are called, but few are chosen."

On that day MANY will seek to enter, but will not be able. The way is narrow that leads to life and few are they who find it.

In this parable then we are faced with an obvious and searching question of more weight than anything a human being can consider-

***Which am I? Wise or foolish? Will I enter in when Jesus comes, or will I find the door closed to me forever?***

Well then, of what does this wisdom consist? And what is this foolishness?

Matthew 25:3-4 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, (4) but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

The foolishness is easily seen: *it consists of being totally unprepared to meet the bridegroom when He comes. They had taken no oil.*

### **Unpreparedness is the Utmost Foolishness**

This parable ends with the Lord giving a sober warning:

Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

The Lord Jesus could come within this very hour – *are you prepared? Are you wise, or are you foolish? Do you imagine that there will be time to get oil once you hear that trumpet? Or once you pass out of this life to stand before Him? Are you deluding yourself into believing that there will be time for amends and change then? Jesus' entire point here is that the answer is NO! The finality of the thing! When He comes, it is done. What you are in this moment is what you will be then.*

Notice that in this parable the Lord's emphasis is weighed more toward the condition of the fools than the wise. We aren't told what the wise ones experienced inside that door, but we are allowed to "listen in" to the outside. Therefore, let's all heed Jesus' warning seriously.

*"Lord, lord, open to us." But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'*

End of story. Take heed lest YOU end up outside, hearing Him say "I do not know you."

### **What is this oil**

Matthew 25:3-4 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, (4) but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

For all of their appearances externally, the two groups are not the same at all. The wise are prepared. The foolish are not. This is the most important point of the parable – *be prepared now because you do not know when the Lord is*

*coming*. And there will not be time then to get ready.

However, it is not too far fetched to assume that by this "oil" is meant *the things which demonstrate that a professing Christian is indeed ready to meet the Lord*. And therefore we also see then that:

***"No one can provide this oil for us. Each person has only enough for themselves. We must obtain it ourselves. Whatever this oil is, it is indispensable. Without it, no one will enter the kingdom of God. Preparedness is not transferable from one person to another."***

Matthew 25:8-9 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' (9) But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'

Psalms 49:7 Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life,



Proverbs 9:12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

The oil could very likely represent the Holy Spirit apart from which we still would walk in darkness. It can be in still other terms, being born again. Being then a true child of God. Apart from these things, no one is prepared to meet Christ.

Consider the folly of these fools – just how great it was. They had lamps with them, but no oil to fuel them. The lamps in other words were worthless. The thing should be obvious – except to a fool. Flashlights without batteries. Lightbulbs with no electricity. It is like this:

2 Timothy 3:5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

***Being unprepared for the Lord's return is the height of foolishness. And in particular, being religious without Christ is utter nonsense. It***

***should be obvious. But there are many fools in the churches. Many who claim to be of Christ, but have no oil.***

“Whether or not the oil in this parable has a symbolic meaning is not certain. If it does, it would point to the Holy Spirit, through whose transforming and enabling power men are prepared to welcome the Bridegroom.” [Hendriksen]

We see support for this in Zechariah -

Zechariah 4:1-6 And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. (2) And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.

(3) And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” (4) And

I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”

(5) Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” (6) Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

Acts 8:18-20 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, (19) saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” (20) But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

It is interesting as well that the wise virgins told the foolish, ...”*go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.*” Here, again, we must not be dogmatic in reading into this more than Jesus intended. However, is it possible that this is a description of the nature of the “religion” of the 5 fools? By that, I mean –

This is, of course, what Rome does. It sells oil which is false oil. Let no one be deceived.

What shall we say to end? –

***No one shall enjoy Christ in the world to come except those who are prepared to meet Him now.***

***The false professor invariably has a religion of works. And such of this kind come into the church for means of getting what others have – a ticket to heaven. But the oil they get is oil purchased by themselves from hucksters who sell it. They are like this man:***

Which are you? Wise or foolish? Do you have oil? Have you been born again? Apply the tests we have in Scripture. Examine yourself to see if you are born again or not.