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## “Ready or Not, Here I Come”

Resurrection Sunday 2026

Matthew 25:1-13 ESV

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Matthew 25:1 ESV

*“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”*

We’re talking about every man's favorite subject - a Jewish wedding. This is the parable Jesus told of the ten bridesmaids. He would often talk about the Kingdom of heaven, but, because it's hard to describe to people when it's an infinite concept, Jesus had to do it in story form. When he talked about this Jewish wedding to first-century Jewish people, everybody understood what he was saying. Now, we're having to backtrack, get a little context, and learn about a Jewish wedding because it doesn't register with us - it's not at all like ours today.

Jesus said, *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”* Now, there's a whole background on this, but the big idea is that Jesus Christ is coming again - he's coming back. Now, we're in the Church Age, or the “last days,” which started on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out and the Church as we know it began. It was birthed among the disciples as they received the Holy Spirit, and, if that's true, then we're now in the *last of the last days*.

Jesus himself said that not even the Son of Man knows the day or the hour of his return. Why is that? Because only the Father knows, and one day the Father is going to say to Jesus the Groom, *“Go get your girl.”* What does that mean? He's talking about the “Bride of Christ,” which is the Church of Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus tells this story about a bride and a groom and a Jewish wedding.

In the Old Testament, there were over three hundred biblical prophecies of Jesus' birth - his first coming - which were all fulfilled and also led up to his death. But there are over 2400 biblical prophecies of Jesus' second coming. This is an important thing, when things are going to change for all of us. Out of 260 chapters in the New Testament, over three hundred are references to Christ's return. One out of every twenty five verses in the New Testament of the 7,957 verses in the New Testament mentions Jesus' Second Coming. One out of twenty five says that he is coming back.

So, we get the idea that this might be important, and it's interesting because we as churches rarely talk about Jesus' return. There's a lot of fear surrounding that because there's going to be a seven-year tribulation with all the bad stuff we've heard about. But here's the *good news* if we're ready - if there's oil in our lamp and we know Jesus - we're going to be airlifted out of here before it happens. So, if it comes, it's just going to come, but right now, what's going to be interesting is the piles of clothes laying around while we're getting ejected out of here. It's like, "*Beam me up, Scotty. Come on, let's go, Lord. We're ready to go.!*"

The question is, when Jesus returns, will we be found ready? In the 1970's, there were all these movies showing all the bad things that are going to happen, even though everything we read about in terms of Jesus coming again was all *good*. Jesus brought the *good* news of the Kingdom of Heaven, and he did it in a form like this amazing parable using a Jewish wedding. It's possible to look like we're ready and not *be* ready - like somebody who's not a cowboy but dresses like one on Main Street in Fredericksburg. It's possible to *look* the part but still not *be* the part.

Here's what's going on with these bridesmaids - some were ready, and some were not. The difference wasn't what showed - as we read the Scripture, they *all* looked ready. But, just because we look like it on the outside doesn't mean we're that on the inside. Remember "*What would Jesus do?*" - the WWJD bracelets, the t-shirts, and all the stuff? We were all *wearing* What Would Jesus do, but we were supposed to *ask the question*, "*WWJD?*" What would Jesus do before we make major decisions? We looked the part - like we were in the club and in the family. We can all clean up and look good. But the question is this - are we *ready*? We can look the part, but *are* we the part?

In a Jewish wedding, the father of a son was responsible to pick the bride for the son. Families would grow up together in the same community, and they would know this was coming. When it came time for a marriage proposal, the father would go and exchange information between the two families and the son would issue a formal invitation or proposal. He would go and talk to the family and then he would approach the bride and he would invite her to be married. And they would sit down and have a private moment, drink a glass of wine together, and that would seal the marriage covenant.

Then the betrothal period would begin and last up to a year. It was sealed and legally binding, and, for all practical intents and purposes, they were *married*. So when Joseph was betrothed to Mary, and Mary turned up "with child," that would have been *scandalous* for them, because they understood marriage in terms of *covenants* - not contracts like we do now. Next, there was a waiting period, and during this time the bride would pick her bridesmaids, and the son would pick his groomsmen, and he had an assignment for the next year. Also the father would add on a room that was to be the bridal chamber for his son and his bride.

So the bride has her ten bridesmaids, and they're getting things prepared. They're getting her dress and all the different elements put together, including lamps that they would make themselves. And these lamps, or lanterns, actually held oil, which, in Scripture was always a representation of the anointing presence and power of God. They were to fill those lamps with oil, because they didn't know when the father was going to tell the son to go get his bride. It could happen any time day or night and the lamps would light the way for the procession when they went to the wedding feast.

But the prerequisite was that the son had to finish building the room and prepare it, and then the father would come in and do an inspection. The son never knew when, but one day the father would come to the bridal chamber to look it over. He would check everything out and then he'd say, "*Go get your bride,*" and that started a whole litany of things happening, like tipping over the first domino. So, he first built the wedding chamber.

In John chapter 14 at the last supper, Jesus said to his disciples, "*In my father's house are many mansions - and - I'm going to prepare a place for you...*" Reading that, we all think we're going to get a massive mansion to live in. But the word isn't even "mansion," it's actually "bridal chamber" - "My father's house has many *chambers.*" He's actually alluding to this very thing, saying, "*I'm building one.*" And then there's going to be a day, when the Father's going to say to the Son, Jesus, after all these rooms are prepared, "*Go get your bride.*"

Now, who's the bride? It's the Church - the Body of Christ - the Bride of Christ - it's us. That's why he's using this story, and they all understood this. So there's this big delay, and no one knows the time when the son will arrive. At one point the Father will say, "*Go get your bride.*" He gets his boys together - all the groomsmen - and they go into the village in the midnight hour and they announce that the groom is coming to get his bride. All of those bridesmaids had to be on call 24/7 for that whole year. They were just waiting. Their lamps were ready and their oil was ready. Also, they couldn't get into the room for the wedding feast unless they had oil in their lamp. That was a part of the process.

The groomsmen would actually lead the way into town. It's excitement as they're waking the village up making a big ruckus which alerts the bridesmaids that he's coming. It's time. And it *could* it be that the Father's going to lean over to Jesus at any moment, and say, "*Go get your bride - go get your girl.*" Could it be we're there? Could it be we're at the last hour? Could it be that we are at the last of the last days and he's about to say, "*Go get her. It's time.*" And he'll come into this world with a shout and a trumpet blast that will mark that day for the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Jesus is coming back, and he's going to come back in grand design. It's going to be epic. When the arrival happens and they go inside for the wedding feast, they'll close the door and it's locked. Once they're in, nobody else can get in. That turns into a seven-day celebration. And if we're not prepared, we will be waiting on the outside, and it will be scandalous. So the call will be, *"Get ready, be ready, and stay ready."* If Jesus came back today - and he could, because the table has been set - and if the Father says, *"Go get your girl,"* are we ready for his return?

Matthew 25:1-5 NLT

*"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep."*

The oil is what lights the lamp - it's the fuel - and they had to wait and be prepared for the whole year. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. All ten had lamps and were waiting. All ten looked the same and they all fell asleep. We can look the part, but that doesn't mean we're ready. The question for us today is, *"Am I ready? If the Father tells the Son to go get the bride, am I ready today? Am I ready right now?"* We shouldn't think like these foolish bridesmaids, *"Well, it didn't happen a century ago, so why would it happen now?"* Prophetically, things are lining up for it to happen. God is working.

We're seeing the largest harvest of souls that the planet earth has ever seen. There's four million persecuted Christians all over the world, but in spite of that, more people are coming to Christ in Iran and Iraq and the Middle East, and there are more Jewish people who have said Yes to Jesus as Messiah, than in all of history. There are more Christians who are Jewish now than there ever has been. The table is set. The midnight hour is drawing near and there will be a cry. And if we are not ready, the door will be locked and we'll be on the outside.

We can be around the things of God without being right with God. We can *look* the part. We can even speak *"Christian-ees."* We can sound spiritual and rattle off spiritual terms. We can worship looking spiritual. We can play the part. It's easy to fake it - people do it all the time. But, if the rapture came, if the cry went out and those who are in Christ who were ready with oil in their lamps were to jettison and airlift out through this ceiling, who would be left? We're all in church together, but going to church doesn't make us any more a Christian than going to McDonald's makes us a Big Mac. No, we have to be *ready*. We have to make our *own* decision.

Church attendance doesn't equal a *relationship* with Jesus, and we don't get to enter the kingdom of heaven unless we're walking in a relationship with him. Christian culture doesn't equal new life in Christ or make us a Christian. If we don't have oil and have him inside, it's not going to matter. Jesus isn't coming back for fans, he's coming back for followers. He's coming back with a message of truth that says we need to get our heart in alignment with him and have a relationship with him or the door will close and the wedding feast will go on without us.

In Luke 6:46, Jesus says, "*Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?*" What we carry on the inside is what counts. Are we carrying the oil? Are we carrying his presence? Do we have him in our life and in our heart? Have we said Yes to Jesus?

Matthew 25:6 NLT

*"At midnight, they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming. Come out and meet him.'"*

That's the midnight cry that went out. All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. They trimmed their wicks. They lit their lamps and were ready to go. Then the five foolish ones asked the others, "*Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.*" Somebody else's "oil," somebody else's relationship with Jesus will not get us any closer to God if we don't have a relationship with Jesus. We can't just *coast* on the coattails of our great-grandfather who was a pastor. We can't get in the draft of our pastor if he's our friend. That doesn't get us in. We have to know Jesus ourself. We need oil in our own lamp. Are we ready?

Matthew 25:9 NLT

*"But the others replied, the ones who had oil and were prepared, we don't have enough for all of us. go to a shop and buy some for yourselves."*

They're like, "*Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out. Hey, if you're good Christian people, you'll share their oil, right?*" But they said, "*We can't help you. Sorry. You knew you should have prepared, but you didn't.*" The only difference had to do with their oil here. They still *looked* like it, but they didn't have it. The "oil" is the Holy Spirit. It's a real personal relationship with God, with Jesus. It's our inner life - our inner spirit-person. The wise didn't just have lamps, they had oil in reserve. They were *ready* and they were prepared. Are we ready? Are we prepared? What are we doing to prepare? They had form but no fire - they looked the part but they had no oil. They had appearance but no substance.

2 Timothy 3:5 NRSV

*"Holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them!"*

2 Timothy 3:5 NLT

*"They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!"*

We've all been taught that Jesus is just super nice, but at the end of the day, there are things that he expects of us to live into and to live up to. And here's the truth, if it's not real in private, it won't be there in public. If we've made the step and said Yes to Jesus, where does this flesh out? In very simple terms, it's about our private prayer and worship life. It's an ongoing dependence on the oil that's within us - the Holy Spirit, - where he leads and guides us, orders our steps, and walks with us.

There are moments we can't prepare for at the last minute. There will come a day when the door will shut and, if we're not already inside, we won't be able to get in. There won't be another chance. We've been invited to the wedding feast, but we have to prepare, and follow the protocol he asked us to do - honest things like admitting we're a sinner, and then repenting of that sin, and turning the other way - turning towards Jesus. That's how we get ready.

Matthew 25:10-13 NLT

*"But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return."*

There will be a day when the door closes. Jesus is the groom and he's waiting for his Father to tell him to go get his bride. This is going to come at a time we don't expect, but it is going to happen, and before it's too late, we need to get ready. We need to know his will and his ways by getting to know his Word. We need to keep watch and be vigilant, for we don't know what day our Lord is coming. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 says, *"So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded."* We can't build a relationship with Jesus at the last second. What are we waiting for? We're one day closer to that midnight cry ...we're almost there!

## **Prayer**

*Father, in Jesus name, Lord, we commission everyone here to go out of this place and leak out the life that they are full of - to leak out the life of Christ on every waiter, waitress, every restaurant, every friend, every family member, their co-workers, Lord, that they will go out and leak life this week. We honor you in it all. Thank you for this Resurrection Day. Lord, we love you and we honor You. In Jesus' name. Amen*