

Summary

This sermon draws from Matthew 25 to explore what faithful, active waiting looks like for followers of Jesus as they anticipate His return. Using three vivid pictures from the chapter, Pastor Chris highlights the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the separation of the sheep and goats, weaving them together under the theme of responsibility. Each picture challenges believers to examine whether they are spiritually prepared, faithfully stewarding what God has entrusted to them, and actively serving those in need around them. The sermon emphasizes that waiting for Jesus is not meant to be passive. Believers are called to keep their spiritual lamps full, to use their God-given gifts and resources with courage rather than fear, and to see the face of Jesus in the vulnerable and marginalized people they encounter every day. Drawing on the example of Dolly Parton's quiet generosity and the story of a newly trained firefighter who immediately put his training to use, Pastor Chris encourages the congregation to let their faith be expressed through action, kindness, and service, especially toward those they might not naturally connect with.

Key Verses

- Matthew 25:1-13
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Matthew 25:31-46
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- Mark 13:33

Questions

- The sermon opens with the image of a firefighter who used his training just hours after completing it. In what ways do you think spiritual preparation works similarly to that kind of practical training?
- In the parable of the ten virgins, all ten fell asleep while waiting. What does it look like in your daily life to stay spiritually prepared even during long seasons of waiting for God to move?
- Pastor Chris asked whether we are keeping the oil burning in our lamps. What spiritual habits or practices help you stay connected to God, and are there any you feel you have

been neglecting?

- In the parable of the talents, each servant received a different amount according to their ability. How does it encourage or challenge you to know that God entrusts you with gifts and opportunities based on what He knows you can handle?
- The servant who buried his talent did so out of fear. Can you think of a time when fear kept you from using a gift or opportunity God placed in front of you? What helped you move forward, or what do you wish you had done differently?
- In the parable of the sheep and goats, neither group realized they were serving or rejecting Jesus through their actions toward others. How does that idea change the way you think about your everyday interactions with people around you?
- Pastor Chris mentioned that Jesus identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the imprisoned. Who are the "least of these" in your own community, and what is one practical way your group could serve them?
- Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) calls us to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together." How does being part of a faith community help you stay faithful and prepared while you wait for Jesus to return?

Life Application

This week, intentionally connect with someone you would not normally spend time with. It could be a neighbor, a coworker, a stranger at the store, or someone on the margins of your social circle. Offer them a simple, genuine act of kindness, whether that is a warm greeting, a listening ear, a small gift, or a word of encouragement. As you do, reflect on the truth that in serving others, you are serving Jesus Himself. Come back to your group next time ready to share what happened.

Key Takeaways

- Be spiritually prepared: Like the five wise virgins, followers of Jesus are called to stay ready through consistent prayer, time in God's Word, and active participation in Christian community, because we do not know the day or hour of His return.
- Steward your gifts faithfully: God entrusts each person with gifts, resources, and opportunities according to their ability. He simply asks us to try, to put what He has given us to work rather than hiding it out of fear or indifference.

- See Jesus in the vulnerable: When we serve those who are hungry, lonely, sick, or in need, we are serving Jesus Himself. This truth should reshape how we look at every person we encounter.
- Waiting is not passive: Jesus calls His followers to be active, engaged, and purposeful while they wait for His return. Serving others, using our gifts, and encouraging one another are all ways we live out our faith in the meantime.
- Community matters: Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) reminds us that gathering together and spurring one another on is not optional. As the day of Christ's return draws nearer, our commitment to one another becomes even more important.