

Matthew 25.1–13

Flame Out or Fritter Away

Monday, April 11 – The Big Day came! Global Church, Global World in HK  
300 Church Leaders gathered from All over the World – incl Dozen from BICF  
So exciting even had own WeChat Group of BICF Delegates

Our Phones all PINGED as the Emoticons Sailed Out – All the Way to Airport  
Check IN – Customs Checking – Immigration Desk – Boarding the Plane

Even though it was 6 in the Morning we were a Happy Crew

All on Board – Baggage Stowed – Preparing for Take Off – But Wait!!

One Pastor & his Wife NOT ON PLANE ---- Not even at AIRPORT Yet!

What happened? All the Emoticons SWITCHED to TEARFUL FACES

DOOR Closed – TAXIED Out – Flew to Hong Kong without DEAR FRIENDS!

(Please don't CRY! They got a LATER FLIGHT and it was ALL GOOD!!)

Our NEAR CALAMITY Brought this Text to LIFE to Me Early that Monday

But our TEXT Not just “No Big Deal I will Catch A Later Flight” Situation

This is the LAST FLIGHT Out of SAIGON before Uncle Ho takes Over!

Getting AHEAD of Myself.... Starts OUT as Quite a HAPPY STORY...!

LOVE STORY! A Wedding BANQUET...Lots of Friends Come to Celebrate!!

10 LOVELY Maidens come to ESCORT Groom to his BELOVED Bride

## 1. Looking the Part

Reality of Christian Life – Only 2 People know if you're Truly a Christian

1. God and 2. You – Not Parents, Pastor, or Life Partner

Known Pastors walked away from Ministry – “Never did Believe that Stuff!”

Known Spouses walked out of Marriages – “I Never really was a Believer!”

Salvation is an INSIDE Job – Only God & You see into Sacred Courts of Heart

STORY is about 10 Good Looking Women at a Very Special Celebration

a. Invited - *All had been invited to the banquet*

v. 1 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins...”

All 10 Women received Invitation and were Eagerly Anticipating a Banquet

While on Earth Jesus extended INVITATIONS to All People –

### FISHERMEN

And he said to them – Simon Peter and Andrew - “*Follow me*, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4.19

### YOUNG MAN WORRIED ABOUT HIS FAMILY

And Jesus said to him, “*Follow me*, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.” Matthew 8.22

### WEALTHY TAX COLLECTOR

Jesus...saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. Matthew 9.9

### THOSE WEARY FROM RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28

OUR STORY is About People who Have Heard the Gospel Invitation

They're Not the Unreached who have Never Heard of Christ

b. Interested *All had responded positively to the wedding invitation.*

v. 1 "...ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew 22 – VINEYARD Workers SCORNED Invitation of Kind Landowner  
NOT SO these Women – INVITED and they're EXCITED, EAGER to Come

Wedding DAY had 2 Parts –

1<sup>st</sup> Bridegroom & Friends Go from His House to Bride's Parents to Claim Bride

2<sup>nd</sup> Bride & Groom would RETURN to His House – 7 Day's Wedding FEAST

Jewish Villages > Waiting Time was DAY of Dancing – Bride and her Maidens

End of Day > Bridesmaids leave Bride, Go out to Meet Groom with Torches

Escort Him to the Bride > All together Travel w/ Torch to Groom's Home

So... they're PUMPED UP! Let the Dancing and FEASTING Begin...!

c. Included - *All were part of what we would call the visible church*

They had joined the fellowship of those who were waiting for the Lord

This is 5<sup>th</sup> and FINAL Sermon in Gospel of Matthew

Jesus Sermons in Matthew	Sermon Theme	Ending Verse of the Sermon
5.1 – 7.29	Kingdom has Come	7.28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching
10.1 – 42	Kingdom Mission	11:1 When Jesus had finished instructing his 12 disciples, he went on from there to teach & preach in their cities.
13.1 – 52	Kingdom Parables	13.53 And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there
18.1 – 35	Kingdom & Church	19.1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea
24.3 – 25.46	Kingdom Judgment	26.1 When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said... Passover is coming...Son of Man will be... crucified"

Crowds GREW – MARVELED at His AUTHORITY and COMPASSION

Many found His YOKE EASY and His BURDEN LIGHT  
 Our Story NOT just about CROWDS BUT the COMMITTED  
 SET UP TEAM – USHERS – SS Teachers – Musicians – Preachers

d. Intimate *All had some affection and even love for the bridegroom.*

They were Not Indifferent Participants > Happy Occasion excited for Couple  
 Their Affection for Bridegroom is where the Story Begins:

v. 1 “Ten virgins ... took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom”

Joyful PROCESSION wound thru the Streets After NIGHTFALL

Likely TORCHES – Burned Rags needed Frequent Dowsing with Oil to stay LIT

Bridegrooms were OFTEN LATE > Comings Repeatedly Pronounced!

LIGHTING and RE-LIGHTING with Lots of FALSE ALARMS

e. Insiders - *All confessed Jesus as their Lord*

v. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘*Lord, lord, open to us.*’

ESV gets it Right - the word *kyrios*, means “Lord” – as it is in vv. 37, 44

*All believed in and in some sense were waiting for Jesus’ second coming.*

“Oh, to be one of Shepard’s foolish virgins!” Thomas Shepard, 1660

PURITAN Author Commended – NOBLE VIRTUES – SINCERE People

Most Pastors Thrilled to Serve Church Filled with Such People

BETTER than Many People who ARE Church Members ---- Somewhere Else..!

Heard Gospel Invitation, Responded, Professed Love for Christ, Joined Church,

Acknowledged Jesus as Lord, and Were Now Waiting for Christ’s Return

Invitation to be BRIDESMAID was GREAT HONOR, to be Insultingly  
Unprepared by getting Shut Out of Feast was Total NIGHTMARE for All!

Foolish MISSED Critical Moment of Jewish Wedding,

when Bride is brought to Groom under the Wedding Canopy

HELL is hearing the words “Too Late” after Opportunity has PASSED

Fools Had ALL the FORM of Religion but NONE of the TRUE POWER

They Cried “Lord, Lord” but He replied “I Never Knew You!”

But the one who endures to the end will be saved. Matthew 24.13

GRIM PARABLE, Not just 1 Young Lady – HALF the Team FOREVER LOST!

## 2. Lacking in Preparation

NOTICED Jesus been PLUCKING One String of his GUITAR these 2 Chapters

Keep Watch, & Be Ready! MIGHT Say “Yeah, MESSAGE Received!” Ch 24

But Matt 25 - Jesus continues Teaching on Mt of Olives – 3 More Parables

Each makes its Own Points > Together Intensify & Broaden Jesus’ Warnings

Jesus speaking of People who Look Like Believers - Think they’re Ready HIM

### **Three Points in Common in Three Stories of Matthew 25**

*1. In each case the return of the Lord is sudden and unexpected.*

*2. In each the Lord’s return results in an Unchangeable Separation – 2 Groups*

Most Striking Feature of These Stories

*3. In each case the people who are lost are utterly surprised at their rejection.*

Hearing Something OVER and OVER does Not Always Get our ATTENTION

Announcements – Sm Gps, TT, Seminars > Don’t Go! MISS it > Life Goes ON

Watch TV pounded by Commercials > Too Clever to BUY > SAVE Money!

Bit JADED to CLAIMS of PRODUCT Sellers & PREACHERS of Salvation

Some of you IGNORING God like IGNORE Commercials > Doin' Just Fine!

Jesus > More WARNINGS > Could it JUST BE that He's REALLY TRUE!!

Are you SURE its NOT True > RISK FOREVER on HUNCH that its FALSE?

Today Groom ALREADY Claimed his BRIDE > Now Bringing her HOME

CHURCH known for 2000 yrs Jesus RETURNING > Some Lethargic and LAZY

### **The WISE = those PREPARED for a LONG DELAY**

a. Don't Miss the Point!

Danger of OVER-Interpreting a Parable > Look for 1 MAIN Point of Parable

Do NOT try to Dissect the DETAILS of a PARABLE

“Once the object of the parable is understood there is no reason to labour over minute details which are quite beside Christ's intention. There is great ingenuity over the lanterns, the vessels, the oil: the plain and natural answer is that keen enthusiasm for a short term is not enough...” John Calvin

Bride Not Mentioned – Dispensationalists: Applies to different Age

NOT Clear what is MEANING of OIL or SLEEP – BOTH Groups Sleep

In PALESTINIAN Weddings – Bridegroom Often DELAYED

Everyone knows Men TAKE LONGER to Get Ready than WOMEN!

OIL Reminds of Tabernacle Exodus - Symbolized HOLY SPIRIT

LIGHT like Word of God

NO Oil, No LIGHT / No SPIRIT, No WORD > TRUE, Not what Jesus SAYS

We MUST Seek to be ALWAYS Filled with the SPIRIT!

NOTHING in Bible says True Christian will RUN OUT of Holy Spirit!

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” Hebrews 13.5,6

b. What is the Point?

POINT is PREPAREDNESS > WISE are PREPARED, Foolish are NOT

In a real sense it is the bridegroom’s delay that distinguishes the wise from the foolish virgins. Don Carson

POINT – Be PREPARED for a LONG DELAY

v. 1 “Then...” Continues TEACHING about RETURN of the Son of Man

v. 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

A great change has to be wrought in you, far beyond any power of yours to accomplish, ere you can go in with Christ to the marriage. You must, first of all, be renewed in your nature, or you will not be ready. You must be washed from your sins, or you will not be ready. You must be justified in Christ’s righteousness, and you must put on his wedding dress, or else you will not be ready. You must be reconciled to God, you must be made like to God, or you will not be ready...you must have a lamp, and that lamp must be fed with heavenly oil, and it must continue to burn brightly, or else you will not be ready. No child of darkness can go into that place of light. You must be brought out of nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous light, or else you will never be ready to go in with Christ to the marriage, and to be forever with him. Charles H. Spurgeon

If you ARE Prepared – Already SECURE in Christ, how do you...??

### 3. Living Panic-free

a. Gift of Salvation – Beginning to End, Jesus is Author & Finisher of our Faith  
Setting of Matthew 24 & 25 - Time Leading up to Christ’s Return > TROUBLES

Will Always Be People in Church > Hear Gospel, Admire Jesus, Not Saved

SALVATION is Gift – Not Bi-Lateral Treaty – NOT a Cooperative Project

Do NOT Add little Mud from our Good Works to Masterpiece of His MERCY

God who can TEAR Down Mighty Temple > RAISE Crucified SON from Dead

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”  
Matthew 1.21

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.  
Titus 3.3-7

I do not ask, Have you responded to a gospel invitation? Raised Hand? Walked?

NOT Have you Joined a church? Or do you Believe in Jesus’ Second Coming?

**I ask**, Have you been Born Again? Made ALIVE by FAITH in Jesus Christ?

Have you believed on Jesus as your Savior from sin?

Are you truly ready, or are you among those who only seem to be prepared?

Days before Wedding Night > 5 Fools Fooled Everyone > Asked to Lead Parade

Suddenly Bridegroom Came > Their Empty Tanks were Painfully OBVIOUS

Vague Image > Lacking OIL > Some IDOL YOU Refuse to TEAR DOWN

False MASTER Steals the Rule of Jesus Christ as your True God & Savior

Different People > Different Things > YOU KNOW if you are HIS

vs. 8,9 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 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.’



***Being prepared is not transferable.***

Nobody Gets By on Another's Faith > Cannot be saved Life of X in Someone E

...he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1.12,13

Our GOOD WORKS Can NOT OUTWEIGH BAD > Must be Born of God

NO MERIT BEFORE GOD FROM FASTING, RITUALS, WORSHIP

NOT NATURAL DESCENT God has No Grandchildren

IF YOUR PARENTS LOVE GOD, PRAISE GOD– Follow their Example

CANNOT CLAIM THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD

The only thing we contribute to the plan of salvation is the sin to make it necessary.  
Eric Alexander

NOT HUMAN DECISION Jesus "you did not choose me, I chose you"

NOT HUSBANDS WILL Some People have Many Connections Here

"Do you know who my husband is?" / "My husband can get me in"!!

God says, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy'  
Romans 9.15-18

Where do *you* stand? Are *you* alive in Christ? Are *you* ready?

**b. God our Security**

*The Lord will come without warning. / The coming of the Lord may be delayed.*

v. 13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour"

Jesus Will Come without Warning > End of Time or on Day of Your Death

He is coming to JUDGE – But if you know X – the Judge is YO' DADDY!

FACE of the Judge will be FAMILIAR to You – Savior, Beloved, Bridegroom

GOD the Bridegroom > THRU the WHOLE Bible

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. Isaiah 54.5

“And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,...And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. Hosea 2.16-20

And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” Matthew 9.15

Jesus clearly APPLIES this to HIMSELF – HE is the COMING BRIDEGROOM

If you KNOW Christ this Day of JUDGEMENT will be a Day of JOY

Heaven and Earth will PASS Away but THESE Very Words will STAND

He is EMMANUEL – God with US ALWAYS – thru All TIME & ETERNITY

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. Psalm 46.1-5

INTENSE Cries of Foolish NOT HEARD – TOO LATE!!

But PLEASE Clearly UNDERSTAND....You CAN COME Now...

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. John 6.37

PROMISE you Can Take to the BANK > Really WANNA Come? Welcome!

***Lost opportunities cannot be regained.***

Foolish Women went to Buy Oil, Bridegroom Came when were in line ATM

When Christ Returns – Those who are Ready will enter the Marriage Feast

When I think about Judgment – Remember my High School Homey Jim Kuch  
Became Believer in 2<sup>nd</sup> to Last Year of HS – Several Months, Playing both Sides

Friday & Saturday with Long Term Friends – Drinking and Carousing  
Sunday > New Friends at Church > HOPED my Worlds would NOT COLLIDE  
DRUNK Got BAD CASE of the GUILTIES > Started Sharing the GOSPEL

Jim asked “If Jesus is really TRUE - Why are you DRUNK?”

Jim was Son of Mormon Bishop – First of my Classmates to Die of AIDS

If JIM went to HEAVEN it was NOT Because of ME!

Today may be the last time you will hear the gospel. And even if it is not—even if you do hear it again and again—it will be no easier for you to turn to God later. In fact, the opposite is the case. The fact that you have rejected the free offer of God’s grace now will harden you so that you will find it much more difficult to repent later.

James Boice

“Now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” 2 Corinthians 6.2

### c. Growing through Struggles

Great CALAMITY of Christ’s Return will REVEAL His TRUE Daughters

God USING All Calamities of LIFE to Reveal & Refine Daughters & Sons Now

Paul & Barnabas on 1<sup>st</sup> M Journey > Messages to NEWLY Planted churches...

they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples...  
strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith,  
and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 14.21,22

TRIBULATIONS Different Situations and Stories

WORSHIP Ancestors / PAY Bribes / Stand for Socially UNPOPULAR Truth

Talk about Jesus: Parents, or Political Party, or Man who Pays Salary says No!

People in North Carolina – Men & Women should USE their Own Bathrooms!

NAME Calling, Vicious Attacks – Economic WARFARE – Lies & Exaggeration

City of God will ENDURE for Ever / City of MAN will Crumble in Ruins

But – Like Satan – It will DIE HARD > DYING Rage will be Most Dangerous

Nothing will more correctly reveal what is in a man than the coming upon him of some crushing and unlooked-for crisis. Let it be temporal ruin by the failure of his calculations or the disappointment of all his hopes; let it be the entrance of the death-angel into his home and the removal from it of his nearest and dearest earthly friend; let it be his own prostration by some serious illness which puts him face to face with his dissolution, and forthwith the extent of his resources is unfolded, and it is at once discovered both by others and by himself whether he is animated by unfailing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, or whether he has been deceiving himself, all the while relying on some other support.

Charles Spurgeon

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

1 Peter 4.12-13

A man has only as much religion as he can command in trial. Andrew Fuller

Let us therefore look back upon the past and analyze our experiences at such testing times... We have all had them... in some form or other, this midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh"; for in every such surprise... Jesus was coming to us. How did we meet him then? Did our lamps go out? Or were we able to trim them and keep them burning brightly all through? Oh, if by any such event we discovered our utter resourcelessness, let us betake ourselves now to Christ that he may thoroughly renew us by his Holy Spirit and so prepare us for that last and solemnest crisis when over the graves of the slumbering dead the archangel shall cry out, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," and all shall arise to stand before his great white throne.

William Taylor

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 2 Peter 1.10

OUR Job – Until Jesus Comes Again – Extend FREE OFFER of Gospel to ALL

Read this Week this Beautiful Expression of God’s Love and Call to All People...

It is not one or two, or some few are called, not the great only, nor the small only, not the holy only, nor the profane only, but ye are all bidden; the call comes to all and every one of you in particular, poor and rich, high and low, holy and profane.

We make this offer to all of you, to you who are Atheists, to you that are Graceless, to you that are Ignorant, to you that are Hypocrites, to you that are Lazy and Lukewarm, to the civil and to the profane, we pray, we beseech, we obtest you all to come to the wedding; Call (saith the Lord) the blind, the maimed, the halt, and bid them all come, yea, compel them to come in. Grace do more and greater wonders than to call such; it can not only make the offer of marriage to them, but it can make up the match effectually betwixt Christ and them.

We will not, we dare not say, that all of you will get Christ for a Husband; but we do most really offer him to you all, and it shall be your own fault if ye want him and go without him. And therefore, before we proceed any further, we do solemnly protest, and before God and Son Jesus Christ, believe on Him this day, that this offer is made to you and that it is told to you in his name, that the Lord Jesus is willing to match with you, even the profanest and most graceless of you, if ye be willing to match to him, and he earnestly invites you to come to the wedding.

James Durham

“The Unsearchable Riches of Christ and of Grace and Glory through Him” 1764

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MATTHEW 25.1 “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.