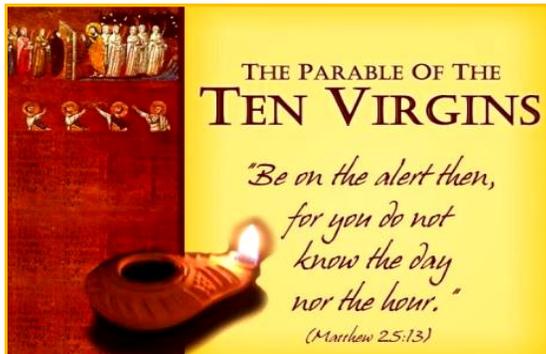


“May I have some of yours?”



“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Romans 10:13

This parable, often referred to as The Parable of the Ten Virgins, has at least two meanings as do most of the parables. The title is confusing to begin with, but the term virgin at that time meant a young unmarried woman so they were probably young women who were going to serve as bridesmaids, or maybe just special guests at the wedding. The meaning is about the fact that they were there but they weren't prepared to wait until the bridegroom appeared. Gender is not important. The term stands for all of us. Just as with other symbols in the Bible God does not judge us on our gender.

They had prepared their lamps and had some oil, but not enough. As the oil in their lamps was almost gone, the announcement came that the bridegroom was almost there. They asked

the other young women to give them some of theirs, but they were afraid they wouldn't have enough themselves and they suggested that they go buy more. While they had gone away to buy more oil, the bridegroom appeared and when the young women returned the door was closed and they were not able to get in. That is the simple story of it.

Commentaries on this parable think it has a far deeper meaning. In this parable Christ was referring to Himself as the Bridegroom. He was there, but they weren't prepared to accept Him. They didn't have time to get prepared or accept Him at a later time. He was there now. John the Baptist had announced that he was coming. Some were prepared and they had accepted His love on faith. Some were still doubting and they didn't have enough faith to accept what was happening. They needed more proof, more time, more oil.

I think the oil represents our faith. It is not something that we can give away or steal or buy. It has to come from within. Until we are ready to accept Christ we don't have enough oil. While the five virgins who were not prepared were doubting, Christ would be taken away and the wedding feast started. People had been waiting for generations. All had been invited, but some had not thought the bridegroom would be so late so they didn't prepare for the wait.

There is a camp song I used to sing as a youth called “Sing Hosanna.” The first verse says:

“Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning

*Give me oil in my lamp, I pray
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning*

Keep me burning 'til the break of day”
It was many years after I learned that song until I realized that the oil in my lamp was my faith. And I was asking for my lamp to always have sufficient oil until the final day when I was called by my Savior to His Heavenly Kingdom.

*“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. . . And the door was shut.”
Matthew 2:5*



Then we have the application to us today. We have the history that Christ died for us, and the promise that He will return, but we don't know when or how. We don't think from our understanding of the Bible that He will come again as a Babe, but we need to be prepared. We don't know when that is going to happen. We know that Christ left this earth, and we have the promise that He is coming again, but we don't know when or how.

We are invited to a great wedding when souls will be reunited with Christ in His Kingdom. But we have to be ready. The five virgins that had enough oil represent those who have accepted Christ and will someday enjoy the great wedding.

The five virgins that weren't prepared represent just that – those who are not prepared, who have not accepted Christ as their personal Savior. They may be waiting, but they are not really prepared. Some commentaries refer to them as those people who attend church, their name is on the roll, they may even attend every Sunday, but they have not yet accepted Christ as their personal Savior. While others may not be in church, they have faith and they will be called on that final day to their Heavenly reward. There is only one judge. All we have to do is be ready, and that means to have enough oil in our lamp to wait for the bridegroom. In Psalm 119:105 we read *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* The lamp cannot burn without oil. We can have the lamp, but it cannot give light without the oil.

We can question why the other women were not willing to share. Shouldn't we share the Good News with others? No one else can make that decision for us. The ultimate choice is ours. We cannot be saved on the faith of our spouse or neighbor. They can share the promises

Dear Lord,
 Sometimes life is so difficult I don't know how I'm going to make it through. But then you come in and shine a light of hope in my heart that helps me to keep pressing forward. I know I can make it through this trial, for you will carry me through. There will be a brighter day, I believe it.

with us but we have to be ready. Christ can't look at you and say “Yes, I know your neighbor; he is a good guy. Come on in.”



The Parable of the Ten Virgins

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’” Matthew 25:1-12 The Message

Prayer: Dear Savior, please give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising. Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting. Give me love in my heart, keep me serving. Let me sing Hosanna to the King of Kings. Amen.

1. How can we keep our lamps trimmed and burning?
2. What is the meaning of this parable to you personally?
3. We know from reading that all ten virgins had been invited. Is everyone invited to this celebration today?
4. Oil was something that was used every day for light at that time. It probably wasn't particularly expensive. Why was it chosen as a symbol?
5. Do you have enough oil in your lamp? Have we called on the name of the Lord?
6. How does calling on the name of the Lord compare to keeping our lamps ready?

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