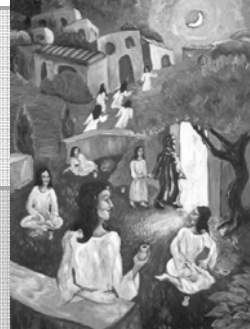


# Ready Or Not, Here He Comes

## The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids



### Matthew 25: 1-13

- 1 Τότε ὁμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν δέκα παρθένοις, αἵτινες λαβοῦσαι τὰς λαμπάδας αὐτῶν ἐξῆλθον εἰς ὑπάντησιν τοῦ νυμφίου.  
Then the kingdom of heaven of will be like ten maidens/virgins, who having taken their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom.
- 2 πέντε δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἦσαν μωραὶ καὶ πέντε φρόνιμοι.  
Five of them were foolish and five wise (practical, sensible)
- 3 αἱ γὰρ μωραὶ λαβοῦσαι τὰς λαμπάδας αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔλαβον μεθ' αὐτῶν ἔλαιον.  
For the fools took their lamps and did not take oil
- 4 αἱ δὲ φρόνιμοι ἔλαβον ἔλαιον ἐν τοῖς ἀγγείοις μετὰ τῶν λαμπάδων αὐτῶν.  
But the wise took oil with them in containers with the lamps.
- 5 χρονίζοντος δὲ τοῦ νυμφίου ἐνύσταξαν πᾶσαι καὶ ἐκάθευδον.  
But the bridegroom was delayed and they (virgins) all dozed and were sleeping.

- 6 μέσης δὲ νυκτὸς κραυγὴ γέγονεν, Ἴδου ὁ νυμφίος, ἐξέρχεσθε εἰς ὑπάντησιν [αὐτοῦ].  
But in the middle of the night the shout had come, Look, the bridegroom, come out to meet him.
- 7 τότε ἠγέρθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ παρθένοι ἐκεῖναι καὶ ἐκόσμησαν τὰς λαμπάδας αὐτῶν.  
Then all the virgins were raised up and arranged their lamps
- 8 αἱ δὲ μωραὶ ταῖς φρόνιμοις εἶπαν, Δότε ἡμῖν ἐκ τοῦ ἔλαιου ὑμῶν, ὅτι αἱ λαμπάδες ἡμῶν σβέννυνται.  
But the fools said to the wise give to us out of your oil because our lamps are empty.
- 9 ἀπεκρίθησαν δὲ αἱ φρόνιμοι λέγουσαι, Μήποτε οὐ μὴ ἀρκέσῃ ἡμῖν καὶ ὑμῖν· πορεύεσθε μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ ἀγοράσατε ἑαυταῖς.  
But the wise answered saying, No, lest it might not be enough for us; go to the oil sellers and buy yourselves some.

- 10 ἀπερχομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἀγοράσασι ἦλθεν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ αἱ ἑτοιμαὶ εἰσῆλθον μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς γάμους καὶ ἐκλείσθη ἡ θύρα.  
They went off to buy but the bridegroom came and the wise ones went with him into the wedding and the door was closed.
- 11 ὕστερον δὲ ἔρχονται καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ παρθένοι λέγουσαι, Κύριε κύριε, ἀνοῖσον ἡμῖν.  
Later the remaining virgins came also saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
- 12 ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς.  
But he answered saying, Truly I tell you, I do not know you.
- 13 Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν.  
Keep awake then, for you know not the day nor the hour.

## How does this parable function as an allegory?

- Bridegroom = Son of Man
- Maidens = Christians
- Wedding Feast = Heaven
- Closed Door = Judgement
- Oil = several interpretations

## And the cross-stitch is....

*Be Prepared,  
For We Know Not When  
The Son Of Man  
Is Coming!!*

## Things that make us go HMMM....

What are some things in this parable that intrigue us or confuse us?

- What's up with the oil? Why didn't the wise maidens share theirs?
- The maidens are going out at MIDNIGHT to buy more oil?
- If they all fell asleep, why are only 5 of the maidens excluded?
- Does sound like a "good" ending? Is it comfortable?
- What else comes to mind?

## Oh, Dear, What Can the Oil Be?

- The Holy Spirit

How can you run out of the Holy Spirit? Even if they did, once the foolish maidens were "refilled" why weren't they let in?

- Faith/Good Works

Be prepared, store up your good works.

- Worldly Goods/ "Things to DO"

Hmmm...what do you think?



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before the wedding, the couple is engaged for a year during which time, the groom is off preparing a place for his bride and himself to live. Typically, the bride and groom do not see each other during this time. When all was ready, the bridegroom would fetch his bride and take her to the wedding place. The bride, for her part, often had girls (presumably sisters and friends) who came to wait with her as the time for the wedding drew near. Of course, they never knew exactly when that would be.

"In wedding processions of the Greeks, Jews and Romans, the bride was conducted from her father's house to the bridegroom's house or his father's house. The processions usually took place during the evening hours and included the bride and bridegroom, their friends and relatives, and interested townspeople. In Jewish processions the bridegroom and his party came to take the bride from her father's house at evening. Dance, music, and symbolic displays could turn the procession into a festive parade. Rabbinic sources tell of processions accompanied by dancing, drums and other instruments, and singing...A wedding party at the bridegroom's house or his father's house followed the procession."

- Susan Praeder

- Rev. John Shearman (jls@sympatico.ca) of the United Church of Canada. MATTHEW 25:1-13 Not too much should be made of details of this parable. It tells a simple story drawn from the village life of Galilee. The wise and foolish virgins waiting for the return of the bridegroom presents the challenge that everyone must be prepared for the return of Christ.

Do you agree or disagree?

- Friar Sydney Mascarenhas, O.F.M., Ph.D.

I always wondered why this parable speaks about wise and foolish virgins. Could it not speak about wise and foolish men?

Why would it speak about wise and foolish men when it could speak about women? Seriously, the use of women highlights the attention that Jesus paid to the "outsiders" that is, the "least, little, last, lost."

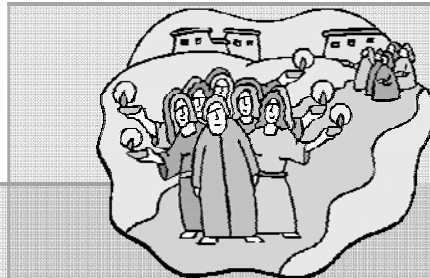
- Written by George Hartwell, 'Creative Closings'

CHARGE: Be prepared! Be ready! Only you can insure that you will be ready for the bridegroom's return

RESPONSE REQUIRED: That I take responsibility for my own preparation, for my own readiness for the wedding feast.

What do you think of this?

I would like to suggest that the problem is not that the maidens didn't bring enough oil and weren't prepared but rather, when the call came to go with the bridegroom, the foolish maidens chose to give precedence to the oil they were missing rather than just going to the wedding as they were.



### An Alternate Ending:

The maidens were all sleeping when the call rang out: "Behold, the bridegroom is coming!" The maidens arose and began to tend to their lamps. When the foolish maidens realized that their lamps were going out, they became worried and asked to borrow some oil from the wise maidens. The wise maiden said, "No, if we give you our oil, we might not have enough for our lamps. Besides, the bridegroom doesn't care if we all have lamps. He and his bride just want us all to be at the feast! Don't worry about the oil, just come to party!"

And so, all ten maidens went to the wedding and the feast was perfect!

