

August 26, 2018

## ***"He who has ears, let him hear..."***

***"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*** Luke 12:40

***"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps out to meet the bridegroom...Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."***

Matthew 25:1-13

An old spiritual asks, "Are you ready for that judgment day?" That's a pretty important question. The Apostle Peter writes about that day, ***"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be."*** (II Peter 3:9-13)

I am a planner. I do not like to do anything 'on the fly'. I need to know how things are going to work out before they happen and I don't like to leave anything to the last minute. I am not a spontaneous kind of guy.

There are those, maybe some of you, who like spontaneity. You don't mind leaving everything until the last possible minute. While it is often possible to get away with managing everything 'on the fly', there are some things that simply cannot be done that way. Salvation is one of those things.

Several times our Lord addresses this concept through parables and one of the most wellknown of these is the parable of the ten virgins found in Matthew 25. In this parable Jesus appeals to the common practice in those days of celebrating a wedding. Most grooms in Jesus' day were at least 30 while most brides were 16 or 17 years old and most marriages were arranged. So, a man and his wife would arrange for the marriage of one of their daughters with a local eligible bachelor. A dowry price might be paid by the bride's family and once the agreement was arranged the two would become betrothed.

Once a young man was betrothed his first task was to build a home for his future bride. Most of the time this meant building a bridal chamber on the side or on the roof of his father's house. Once the bridal chamber was completed and the father of the groom had given it his blessing, the groom and his friends would parade through the community leading out the guests in a parade to the celebration of the wedding feast.

Of course nearly everyone in the community was going to be a guest at the wedding feast and so everyone paid attention to the construction of the bridal chamber and preparations for the feast. A wedding feast was a great celebration for the whole community and could last several days. And it was also a great time for young women of marrying age to find a perspective husband.

So, all of the local unmarried girls planned to attend the celebration and they prepared for the event. In Jesus' parable ten young women are planning to attend the wedding. The word has gone out that the bridal chamber is nearly completed and so they are prepared to join the parade. Of the ten, five planned for a long wait and brought extra oil for their lamps. The other five did not plan ahead and did not bring extra oil.

Of course the bridegroom's appearance was delayed and as time dragged on the unprepared girls needed more oil for their lamps. Off they went to the local oil merchant, and while they were gone the parade passed them by and they missed out on the wedding celebration.

Jesus concludes this parable with, ***"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*** The end of our world either in total or just for us can come at any time. If we are ready to face God in judgment having accepted the grace he pours out for us in Jesus Christ, then that time should not frighten us. In fact we should welcome it. But, if we are not ready for that time because we have procrastinated then when it comes it will be too late. There are some things we can leave until the last minute. Salvation is not one of them. Are you ready for that judgment day?

