

New Year's Eve – 2024

Tuesday, 12/31 at 4:00



Text: Matthew 25:1-13 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Are YOU ready – *RIGHT NOW* – to meet Jesus?

If you said, “Yes,” you are like the ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom. *They all THOUGHT they were ready.* Let’s see if they **were ready** as we read through Jesus’ parable of the ten virgins.

1. **Ready or Not!** Jesus said these words on Tuesday of Holy Week, *a few days before He completed His work to take away the sin of the world:* <sup>1</sup> “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins [*young unmarried women*], who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> **Five** of them were foolish [*having little sense*], and **five** were prudent [*using their wits effectively*]. <sup>3</sup> For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. // Keep in mind that the Bible uses this symbolism: Jesus is the groom, and the believers are His bride. He will return at an **unexpected time** to take the believers to His Father’s house to

celebrate the wedding feast. In the parable, all ten virgins **thought** they were ✦Christians and ✦ready for Jesus' return.

- a. They All Looked Good: Each one was carrying a lamp. Here at Bethlehem, we have 205 souls on our membership list. It looks good to be on the BLC list, *but it doesn't mean such people are ready!* **Are YOU ready to meet Jesus?**
- b. Only Five were Ready: The five not only had a lamp, *but they also had the oil needed to power the lamp.* What is Christian oil? It's those vital unseen gifts of God, like:
  - i. Faith in Jesus!
  - ii. The forgiveness of sins!
  - iii. The clothing of righteousness!
  - iv. The gift of eternal life!
  - v. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

When those gifts are present on the inside, *they will show in **word and deed!***

2. **Each Person Is Responsible for Being Ready!**<sup>5</sup> “Now while the bridegroom was delaying [see 2 Peter 3:9], they all got drowsy and *began* to sleep.<sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, ‘**Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.**’<sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.<sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’<sup>9</sup> But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.’”

- a. The Foolish were Not Ready: They were lacking oil; in other words, *they were lacking these gifts of God*: ♦faith, ♦forgiveness, ♦righteousness, ♦eternal life, and ♦the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Gifts of God are Free: They are free because **JESUS** paid the price **IN FULL**!
- c. How are those gifts received? As the Holy Spirit (*working through baptism and the God's word*) moves people to repent and believe!
- d. We Cannot Save Other People: In **Ezekiel 14**, the LORD described *certain tragic situations* that He could bring upon the nation of Israel. Then He said, **Ezekiel 14:20** "...even though **Noah, Daniel and Job** were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either *their son or their daughter*. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness." // So, each person is being called to ♦repent of his sins and ♦trust in Jesus for eternal life! **Are YOU ready to meet Jesus?**

3. **No Second Chances!**<sup>10</sup> "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut [*locked, barred*].<sup>11</sup> Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up [*give access*] for us.'<sup>12</sup> But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you [*not have a close relationship with you*].'"

- a. Time Is Running Out for 2024: We are now in the final hours of 2024. At midnight on January 1,

2024, this year was like a wide-open door, *but immediately it started to close*. Very soon it will be shut and locked, *and never opened again!*

- b. Time Is Running Out for Knowing Jesus:
- i. **He wants us to be ready** – *with godly sorrow and trust in Him alone for heaven!*
  - ii. **He wants to know us now** – *listening to Him, following Him, learning from Him, and living for Him!*
  - iii. **He wants to welcome us in when He arrives!** **Are YOU ready to meet Jesus?**

4. **Always Be Ready!** <sup>13</sup> *“Be on the alert [keep awake, be watchful] then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”*

- a. Whenever we have something coming up in our lives: **We know WHEN**, *so we plan to be ready at that time!* However, **when we don't know WHEN**, then we only have one good choice: **ALWAYS BE READY!**
- b. What about you: **Are YOU ready to meet Jesus?**

**Let Us Pray:** **Dear Jesus**, we are certain You will return, *but we don't know when*. **Therefore, dear Holy Spirit**, make us ready and always keep us ready, *so that Jesus will welcome us in when He arrives!*

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