

The Matthew 25 Challenge

"Don't Be Late for the Party!"

INTRODUCTION:

Matthew 25 contains 3 Parables:

- The Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids
 - Which speaks to living in readiness for the Lord's return.
- The Parable of the 3 Servants
 - Which speaks to making the most of all God has given us; blessed us with.
- The Final Judgement
 - Speaking to the accountability each one of us will face when we stand before God at the final judgement.

*** Intro Matthew 25 Challenge

*** Mention it one of many opportunities to get involved in the mission of the Church. (List opportunities). Feeding Families.....

World Vision video

- Mention personal or even better, Family Challenges on the week of 10/20
 - Monday, 10/21 – Skip lunch & break your fast tonight with rice & beans – *"I was hungry"* – Read ahead. Read all of Matthew 25 today.
 - Tuesday, 10/22 – Give up all drinks except water – *"I was thirsty"*
 - Wednesday, 10/23 – Sleep on the floor tonight – *"I was a stranger"*
 - Thursday, 10/24 – Wear the same clothes you wore yesterday – *"I needed clothes"*
 - Friday, 10/25 – Reach out to someone going through a difficult time – *"I was sick...I was in prison"*

- Saturday, 10/26 – Take a 30-minute prayer walk – “...whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”

On Sunday, the 27th, we will celebrate the past week together & we will have an opportunity to sponsor a child from a small impoverished village in Guatemala. In fact you will have the opportunity to be chosen! (Explain)
Then on November 10 is Reveal Day! We will get a picture of the child we sponsored; probably holding a picture of us.

Try not to miss a single Sunday this month; but, if you must, each Sunday's sermon will be on our website.

*** Several months ago Maryellen & I were invited to the wedding of friends in their backyard. Maryellen got stuck at work & got home later than we anticipated. We hoped in the car racing to southeast Fresno; arriving 7 minutes late (we husbands keep track of details like that). We parked & ran through the gate to find people mingling & socializing. I looked at Maryellen & said “good they're starting late.” Only to find out that we had missed the whole thing. A local judge had done the ceremony & he was definitely short & to the point!
We missed the wedding!

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives a parable of people who missed a wedding.
Jesus often spoke in parables. A parable is “a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral or spiritual principle.”
Parables were used to illustrate spiritual principles that the audience would otherwise not comprehend.

BIBLE READING:

Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT)

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

Jesus said;

"The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, 4 but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. 5 When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

7 "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

10 "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. 11 Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

12 "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

13 "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

PRAY

2 Fatal Mistakes:

I. Messing Up

- Not being prepared (not enough oil)
 - Living in the moment (with just enough oil for the moment)
- In our city & nation, where we have so little persecution, we tend to play loosey goosy with our faith. Many feel they have all they need, resulting in their not making God the #1 priority in their lives.
 - In Revelation it's described this way;

Revelation 3:15-19 (NLT)

"I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! 16 But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! 17 You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. 18 So I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes

so you will be able to see. 19 I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

- The way we live matters
- The things, & even the people, we make priorities in our life matter
- In Matthew 25 we will see that this life matters a lot; but the party is found in the life to come!

II. Missing Out

- Missing the wedding in this parable illustrates those who will miss heaven because they were messing up.
 - The 5 bridesmaids in this parable illustrate those who will miss out on Christ's return due to...
 - A lack of preparation (treating a life in Christ as if it's not important)
 - Procrastination (waiting for another time to prepare for His arrival)
 - Entitlement (thinking I was invited, there's no way they'll start without me)
 - Dependence on others (if I use up all my oil someone else will give it to me)
 - Parents
 - Pedigree
 - Church attendance & involvement
 - Charitable acts
 - Biblical & theological knowledge
 - Over blown self-esteem
- *** When that day comes we will held accountable for ourselves & ourselves alone!
- Our loving God is so patient that He gives us 2nd, 3rd, 15th, 189th chances this side of heaven, but once He returns it will be too late!

CONCLUSION:

*** When Jesus comes to take His bride (The Church)...

- Will I be ready? Or will I be messing up & missing out?

Jesus said, while He was on earth, that He would return.

- From what I know about scripture and the signs of the end times – we are living in the last days! Jesus, our bridegroom could return at any moment!
 - We need to live as if Jesus is returning today, yet as if we are going to die at 120.
- I'll just share one scripture this morning regarding the final days of earth:
2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)
You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!
 - Sounds a lot like the culture of the world.
- Please, don't get caught up on things that don't matter. Be ready for they Party!

COMMUNION:

Invite worship team & servers to come

Sing first half of *"Oh Come to the Altar"* as people are being served.

COMMUNION

(Give opportunity in Communion for response)

Second half of *"Oh Come to the Altar"*

Jacob dismiss