

Being Ready for the Bridegroom

Matthew 25:1-30 We used to lead a “Lamp Lighters” group when my husband was in the army. The children in this group were junior high age, and I loved hearing them sing. “Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning till the break of day.” This story of the ten virgins is about being ready for the Lord’s return. One has to understand the Jewish betrothal customs to receive the full impact of what is being conveyed in this passage.

Betrothal was a Jewish custom that occurred before the consummation of a marriage. We would call it today an engagement period, but betrothal was a much deeper commitment than an engagement. During the betrothal period, which was usually a year, the bride was given all the rights of a wife, including all of her future husband’s income and inheritance. During this year of betrothal the bridegroom would prepare a place for his bride to live. The day would come when he would call for his bride, and this was done in a unique way.

Every year in the small villages on the Judean hillsides, as many as ten virgins or more could be betrothed. Their duty was to be prepared at all times for the trumpet sound and the shout, “The bridegroom comes!” At that moment the virgins were to light their lamps so the bridegrooms could find them. Usually the shout would come in the midnight hour. All the bridegrooms would then travel down the hillside to find their respective bride, and thus would begin the time of celebration before the wedding supper and the consummation of their marriages. The virgins would usually know the season of their betrothal, but they would never know the exact day. They were to have sufficient oil daily to keep their lamps ready for that special night. In this story five of the expectant virgins went out to meet their bridegrooms, and they also carried vessels of oil with them. The other five failed to

have sufficient oil with them, and their lights went out because their bridegrooms tarried for awhile. The virgins who were not prepared asked for oil from the prepared virgins, but the prepared virgins told the unprepared to go out and buy some more oil. While the unprepared were purchasing more oil, the marriage took place and the door was shut to them.

Our bridegroom Jesus is coming soon, and it is our responsibility to stay filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit so our lights will not go out before He comes for us. We are the only light the world has now, and it seems the darkness around us becomes more intense as we await the coming of our Lord. The question to ask ourselves is, Are we receiving daily a fresh filling of this oil of anointing from the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit always has sufficient oil, but do we receive it? Daily I pray this prayer, and you may want to pray it today with me:

Lord, I ask for a double portion of Your anointing. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit today.

**READ: Exodus 26:1-27:21; Matthew 25:1-30; Psalm 31:1-8;
Proverbs 8:1-10**