

In Preparation for His Return

From the very beginning, when I cried out in my sin and misery for Jesus to take the life I did not want anymore, I started to learn of His desire for me. He wanted to know me and for me to know Him. He introduced me to His life-changing love that would never let me go.

This is the heart of Jesus' fourth parable of how we should live in this season of His return. He wants us to have a relationship of intimacy instead of a manmade religion. I was raised with a religion of fear and guilt, and I ran from it as far as I could. But His love drew me close and I could not resist the power His love had on me. It inspired me to love and serve Him.

The ten virgins parable speaks of those whom Jesus knew and those He did not know. All ten were waiting for Him to come to His wedding with His bride, but only five were wise enough to be truly prepared because they genuinely loved Him.

The other five were "in the church," so to speak, but they did not love Him and were unprepared for His arrival. John writes in his love letter to his spiritual children that true faith produces a love for Jesus that is eternal life. If there is a faith without love, then there is no life in that relationship.

Jesus came to give us abundant life full of love and obedience to His commandments. This abiding in the vine will produce much fruit. Our call in this season of His Second Coming is to bear fruit in righteousness and in making disciples to build His kingdom.

Jesus is the Son of Righteousness. He came for us to become like Him, to be restored in the image of God. God's image in us from the beginning was to be fruitful and multiply. In His kingdom, this translates into holy living that produces

spiritual children who know how to produce fruit of their own, which continues into the next generation.

The five virgins whom Jesus shut the door on, preventing their entrance into His wedding feast, were religious without a relationship and had not been fruitful, so He said to them, "I never knew you." Those are the worst words recorded in the Bible.

To those who were faithful to be ready, "full of the Holy Spirit oil," they loved Him and were fruitful in their faith. They were honored by Jesus to join in His wedding feast, the celebration of His gathering to Himself all who had abided in Him and those in whom the Father and the Son had made their home. This is eternal life.

This parable leads to the last one of the talents. We are not to live in fear but in freedom to use our resources to prepare the way for the return of our Master. This freedom comes from the love we have for our Master.

He knows and trusts us with His gifts to use them to build His kingdom. We know Him so we can hear His voice and fulfill His vision for His kingdom. We become fruitful and multiply. To the one who is faithful, He gives more.

His words to the faithful servant contrast with His words to the five virgins left out of His feast. "Well done, you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:23). These are perhaps the most wonderful words in the Bible versus "I never knew you."

Or the harsh words to the fearful servant in this parable: "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not winnowed. Then you ought to have given my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten

talents" (Matt. 25:26-28).

Jesus' words expose the deception of our day, that because God loves us all, everyone will be welcomed into His kingdom. Not true; only those He knows and who have been faithful in their love and service will enter. "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. And throw the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:29-30).

How are we using the abundance God has given us? To build bigger barns or to build His kingdom to prepare the way for His return? I often ask God, "How can I use the resources of our ministry and my own prosperity to prepare for Your Son's arrival?"

When I have learned to be generous and obedient by putting away my fears and selfishness, then I have seen God do more than I could ever imagine. The more we have given away, the more we prosper. There is wonderful joy in those experiences, all for His glory.

Jesus finishes His parables of how we should live in these last days before He comes to gather us in His love unto eternal life. Each parable connects and builds upon the other to teach us a lifestyle of love in action and faithful obedience in these most exciting days of all; to be part of preparing the way for our Lord and Savior to complete the kingdom of His Father.

Let our prayer be, "Come Lord Jesus, come, but until then use me for Your glory!"

Author's Note: The Presence of God lives in us. The Word tells us the Holy Spirit comes into our lives the moment we are born again. We also know that the Father and Son abide in us as they have made Their home in us. This life we have in Jesus is a glorious one. We are being changed from one degree of glory

to another to be like Jesus. We hunger for less of us and more of God to fill us completely. There are also moments when God's presence fills the atmosphere where we worship as our Lord did when Solomon dedicated the temple or when Isaiah saw Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, in the temple, or when the Holy Spirit was poured out in Cornelius' house in the book of Acts. When God acts in His glory, lives are transformed to live for His purposes and plans to redeem the world.

We have set our hearts on God to come in His glory at our "Hosting His Presence" event on Sept. 9-12. We do not want only an encounter with God but for Him to remain, so it is not just a visitation but a habitation that draws us daily to Himself. This glory moment will inspire us with dreams and visions to go into the world as Jesus sent His apostles and disciples to the nations of the earth. Begin praying now for this Holy Spirit gathering, that Jesus will be exalted, and we will see a nation transformed for Jesus.

Our gathering is free. You can register at [. {eo}](#)

Once a professional baseball player with the Chicago Cubs Organization, **Blake Lorenz** was called to Asbury Seminary after a radical encounter with Jesus, where he received his master's degree. He has pastored in the Orlando area for 33 years and has been blessed with the opportunity to evangelize globally, visiting five continents and preaching the gospel to tens of thousands. Blake has also helped plant 500 churches. He has been working in Israel for the past 20 years, includes serving on the board of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast in connection with the Knesset. In 2020, and the Awaken podcast launched to teach and challenge others to join him on a journey of anticipating the return of Jesus. He has used the three books he's written in his seminars and conferences. He and his wife, Beverly, share three children and six grandchildren.

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