

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

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[0 : 00] It's very warm welcome to the service of worship. It's good to be with you once again this evening. I'm going to say that you will know God's blessing as we come around his word.

We're going to begin our worship singing to God's place. Psalm 95. Psalm 95 at the beginning of the psalm. Come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone.

A joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation. Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice. Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise.

We're going to sing verses 1 to 6 to God's place. So come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone.

Let us sing to the Lord.

[1 : 37] With praise and thankful voice. Let us sing to the Lord.

Lord, let us sing to the Lord. Let us sing to the Lord. The love of God's he is.

It's on the earth I am this land The strength of his sisters.

To him the spacious sick belongs For he the sick could take The fire and all so proud resistance It's for my first to take O come and let us worship them Let us bow down with all And God will reach before the Lord

And make a blessed home Let's join to United Hearts in prayer.

[4 : 02] Let us pray. Lord our God We seek to come and to echo the sentiments of the psalmist To bow down and to worship your great name You are worthy of all praise and adoration You are worthy of your name being high and lifted up For you are God And there is none other You are the one who inhabits eternity The one with whom there is no beginning Nor end The one who never changes Is always the same The one

Who is our prophet, priest and king But we bless and we thank you Lord As we seek to Think about who you are And That eternal state We praise you Lord That You can be known That you sent your One and only son To take to himself Bone of our bone And flesh of our flesh The one who Walked through the scene of Time Alongside Sinful Men and women Just like us The God man Who was perfect Yet the one Who knows what it's like To dwell Here in time The one who has Identified As one of us Yet Without sin And what I wonder it is That this is the way

That you have chosen To reveal yourself To us A God who has every right To Be far removed Yet Draws near A God who even Wept over Jerusalem When Jerusalem Failed to accept That invitation To come and find Shelter And Solitude Under the shadow Of your wings Lord we praise you For who you are And for your loving Kindness to us For as we reflect Upon who we are By nature We know That we are so Undeserving That even as your People We all too often

Find ourselves Straying from That path Of obedience Help us Lord then To reflect To reflect upon The wonder Of what it is To be identified As a joint Heir with Christ To be numbered Amongst that Covenant of grace To know What it is To have a hope And a purpose That Extends so far And beyond The few short Years in this world And as we do So And as we think Upon that Loving kindness That you have Shown to us Let us all the more Seek To worship In that spirit Of obedience That we would Seek to offer Ourselves Daily As living Sacrifices Unto you For that is A reasonable Act of worship Oh Lord How we Long for your Spirit To equip us

For works Of service We confess That at times We find it Difficult To As it were Go out Into the highways And hedges And compel Our friends And family And neighbours To come in We find it Difficult Even as one Beggar To show others Where To get food And so we Need you Oh Lord Every hour We need you Your Holy Spirit To grant Unto us That boldness To To speak The truth And love To go out And to show Something in the Darkness of this World Of the light Of the gospel That is shining In our hearts Through our words Especially through Our actions That we would Have that Spirit of Christ Drawing alongside Poor And needy Sinners That we would Have that

[9 : 04] Desire To show Our loved Ones And our Friends And our Families The way The truth And the life That is found Only In the Lord Jesus Christ You are able Oh Lord And so we pray Even for days Of revival And renewal Here in this Community At hearts Of stone Even this Evening By the Transforming Power of your Spirit Would be turned To hearts Of flesh And as we Think upon These things We come And we seek Forgiveness We seek Forgiveness For the very Fact that we Expect so Little from Such a Great God That our Faith is Perhaps Relegated to A bygone Day as we Reflect upon Days in our Experience where We knew your Closeness and Nearness As much as we

Enjoy looking to These days Oh Lord We know that We cannot Feed off the Manna of Yesterday To get us Through today Or tomorrow That today Is the day Of salvation Today you've Given to us All that we Need in your Word to Know the Nearness of Christ Even that Our forefathers Did And so we Pray that you Would come And you would Revive us in Our hearts In our spirits So that we Would afresh Even this Evening See something Of the Beauty Of who You are We thank You oh Lord for The weekend We've enjoyed One with Another For that Timely Reminder of The blessing That is to Be found In Fellowshiping One with Another As your People As your Church As your Bride The joy It gives To us To spend

Time with Those with Their own Trials and Difficulties and Temptations and Joys and Sense of Anticipation and Expectation Their own Lives to Live Yet we Meet at The cross Of Jesus Christ United By The blood And how We long Oh Lord To see Many more Sharing in This unity As we Reflect upon The world That we Live in And even The week That lies Ahead for Us if We're spared To see It If we're To live That week Out with The Security Of Christ We are Looking for Peace Peace Where there Is no Peace And so We thank You oh Lord then For the Peace of The gospel And what We pray For this Community We pray For our Nation We remember Our first Minister Our prime Minister Our king

All those Over us In leadership How we Desire and How we Long that Once more We would See righteousness Exalting a Nation We find Ourselves At times Lamenting But grant Unto us Rather than Have the Spirit of Lament To all The more Have that Spirit of Prayer Praying for Those over Us in Leadership Praying that They might Gain their Wisdom Not from Themselves But from The god Of all Wisdom Their creator And sustainer That you Would turn Them to Yourself So that We might See days Whereby the Name of Jesus Is high And lifted Up and How we Need you As we Reflect Upon the Chaos that We see in The world In which we Live Nation Rising up Against Nation Man's Inhumanity Towards man Coming to The fore

Each and Every day And yet We know And we Confess That for All of Us Before we Stand on Our towers Of condemnation That the Root of Every known Sin Is in Our hearts And so We pray For them Oh lord We pray For divine Intervention That you Would bring Peace To situations That only You can Do That they Also would Turn to You And that We would See lives Being spent As we See The senseless Deaths That take Place Through and As a result Of that Ultimate Spirit of Pride And so We pray Now that You would Lead us In your Truth Open our Ears To hear Your Voice As we Perhaps Find ourselves With distracting Thoughts That you Would take These from Our hearts And from Our minds Anything That obscures The vision Of Christ

[14 : 06] That that Would be Removed And replaced By the Beauty And the Power Of your Gospel Lead us Then we Pray and Forgive us For Jesus Sake Amen Let's sing Friends Once more Psalm 119 Psalm 119 At verse 129 That's the 17th part Of the Psalm 129 Thy Statutes Lord Are Wonderful My Soul Them Keeps With Care The Entrance Of Thy Words Give Light Makes Wise Who Simple Are My Mouth I Have Wide Opened And panted Earnestly While after Thy commandments I longed Exceedingly We're going to sing the whole section now to God's praise

Thy statutes Lord Are Wonderful Thy statutes Lord Are Wonderful Thy Soul And Keeps With Care The Entrance Of Thy Heart Gives Light Make Wise To Step Of Power My Mouth I Have Wide Opened And Busted Heresy Why Not Friend Know

ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK

ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK ZANG EN MUZIEK Now we give men wrath on it soon, and do not keep thy law.

Friends, let's turn now to read God's word together. We're going to read from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 25. We can read together the first 30 verses.

[19 : 01] Matthew 25, verses 1 to 30. Let us hear God's word.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.

[20 : 14] But go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage.

And the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say it unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, For you know neither the day nor the hour Wherein the Son of Man cometh. For the kingdom of heaven is like a man Travelling into a far country, Who called his own servants And delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, To another two, And to another one, To every man according to his several ability. And straight away took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents Went and traded with the same And made them other five talents. And likewise, He that had received two, He also gained other two.

[21 : 29] But he that had received one Went and digged in the earth And hid his Lord's money. After a long time, The Lord of those servants Comes and reckons with them.

And so he that had received five talents Came and brought other five talents Saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents.

Behold, I have gained beside them Five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

He also that had received two talents Came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents. Behold, I have gained another two talents beside them.

[22 : 27] His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent Came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man Reaping where thou hast not sown And gathering where thou hast not strawed.

And I was afraid And went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo, there thou hast. That is thine. The Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not And gather where I have not strawed.

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money To the exchangers, And then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him And give it unto him Which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given And he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not Shall be taken away Even that Which he hath.

[23 : 49] And cast ye the unprofitable servant Into outer darkness. There shall be weeping And gnashing of teeth. Amen.

We pray God's blessing On that reading of his word. Let's sing once more together friends. We're going to sing this time from Psalm 43.

Psalm 43 reading at verse 3 of the Psalm. O send thy light forth And thy truth Let them be guides to me And bring me to thine holy hill Even where thy dwellings be Then will I to God's altar go To God my chiefest joy Yea God, my God Thy name to praise My heart I will employ.

We'll sing down to the end of the Psalm To God's praise O send thy light forth And thy truth O send thy light forth And thy truth Let them be guides to me And bring me to thy holy hill In where thy dwelling's been Then will I to God's altar go To God my chiefest joy Yea God, my God

Thy name to praise My heart Thy will and God Why art thou then Cast down my soul What should discourage me And why with fixing thoughts God's altar go Is quiet in me Still trust in God For him to praise Good good marching

[26 : 44] Good God Godstew Let's turn back now together to the chapter we read, Matthew 25.

We're going to think about that parable that we have in the first few verses.

If we were to take a text, we can maybe think of the words of verses 10 to 12. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with them to the marriage, and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

The book of Proverbs is a book that is so full of wisdom.

[28 : 26] Wisdom for really every area of life. But there's one text in Proverbs that I suppose sums up all the rest.

And it tells us that wisdom is better than rubies. And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

So my question to you tonight as we begin is this. Are you wise? Are you wise? And of course we can answer that question in all kinds of different ways, in all kinds of different contexts.

I think it's fair to say we're all looking for wisdom as we negotiate our way through this world. Wisdom in our families, knowing how to bring up our children.

Wisdom perhaps in our marriages. Wisdom in our workplaces. Wisdom in our communities. Wisdom even in our congregation.

[29 : 37] We're always seeking after that wisdom. Or at least we ought to be seeking after that wisdom. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness.

And we know ourselves, if we're being honest, that at times, in all of these areas, we don't show wisdom. We are prone to knee-jerk reactions.

We're prone to perhaps speaking without thinking. We're prone even perhaps to doing more damage than good in our own attempt to resolve a situation.

That's why we need wisdom. But friends, if we need wisdom when it comes to earthly things, how much more do we need wisdom when it comes to the things of our soul?

The Bible talks about setting our house in order. And when we think about that, we might think about the physical, the temporal, the ordinary every day.

[30 : 40] But really, what's crucial in that saying is that we set the house of our soul in order. That in everything that we seek to do, in all the wisdom we seek to gain, we seek after wisdom that leads us to make provision for our never-dying soul.

And that's what the parable here we have before us is all about. A parable that illustrates those who are foolish and those that are wise.

The parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. A parable I'm sure that perhaps many, if not all of us, know as being familiar. We've heard it many times.

We've heard this parable preached and spoken about and discussed. And we know what it means, or so we think. But isn't it true, friends, that we need to be reminded?

Because what we see here in this parable, when it comes down to it, are matters of life and death. Matters of a lost eternity or an eternity with Christ himself.

[32 : 01] And so we're going to think about this under three headings. The context, the crisis, and the cost. The context, the crisis, and the cost.

So firstly, the context that we find this parable in. Parables were just stories that Jesus spoke. Of course, they used props in them, if you like, that the hearer could identify with.

The things that Jesus spoke about were those things that were familiar in everyday life. And so when Jesus spoke these parables, the people could identify with what he was saying.

The meaning of the parables was a different story. The spiritual meaning often had to be broken down and shared with the people so that they could see the depth of the reality of what that parable meant.

And here, what Jesus uses is the illustration of a wedding. Now, of course, cultures and contexts and times, they vary. And so it is with the picture here of a wedding.

[33 : 08] Because in the immediate context, and of course, that's our first heading, what we see is that we find ourselves in first century Palestine. And in first century Palestine, customs and traditions, they were vastly different from that which you and I might know when it comes to weddings in the 21st century Western world.

Not an awful lot is said here about wedding ceremonies, of the structure of them at that time. And Jesus hasn't included that detail. But if we go to the Jewish historians of that time, we see some detail recorded.

Detail that sheds a little bit of light, perhaps, on what's happening here. Because before a wedding, what would happen is there would be what was known as a betrothal.

And to be betrothed to someone, I suppose, is what we would call to be engaged to someone. But it was different to an engagement because a betrothal was far more binding.

It was, if you like, the first stage of the marriage. So that in order to break off the betrothal, what would have to happen is, essentially, you would need a divorce.

[34 : 25] It was binding. So that at the end of this betrothal period, the marriage would then take place. Very specifically, on a Wednesday, or if you were a bride who was a widow, for whatever reason, the wedding would take place on a Thursday.

Now, in the day of the wedding itself, it's thought that the bridegroom would make his way, at his own leisure, to meet the bridal party. This would happen at the house of the bride.

It was a relaxed affair. It was a time where there were no cards given out with exact dates and times as such. The bridegroom would come with the other parties together when they pleased.

And so there was a bit of waiting around involved in all of this. And following this, when the bridegroom would come, what would happen is, there would then be a torch-lit procession with the bridegroom and all his entourage, if you like, onwards towards the house of the bridegroom, where the feasting would go on for days and days.

And that's really what we see happening here. If we were in first century Palestine and we heard this parable being spoken, these are the kind of thoughts that would be going through our mind.

[35 : 49] We would be able to picture the scene as to how this would play out. In the wedding that we have before us here, what we have are ten girls. Ten girls who have been invited to be part of this wedding, specifically to be part of that torch-lit procession.

This would, of course, escort the bridegroom to the reception. It doesn't say what relationship the girls have with the bridegroom. It doesn't matter. Maybe in this context they were attendants of the bride, what we would call bridesmaids.

Perhaps they were servants in the bridegroom's home. Maybe they were friends or neighbours. We don't know. But what we do know is this, that at a first glance, when we see these ten girls, they all look similar.

They all look the same, not in terms of their physical features, but just in terms of who they were. Ordinary, everyday girls. They've all been invited to the banquet.

They're all anticipating the arrival of the bridegroom at some point. They're all waiting for the proceedings to start so that they can take their part in the torch-light procession.

[37 : 04] And so it would appear that all the girls are ready. They all have their lamps in hand. They're all ready to go.

Now these lamps, as an aside, they were just little terracotta lamps. They would have been pretty basic. I suppose if you think about what would be used in the not-too-distant past here, tilly lamps.

They were larger. They would take oil. There would be a wick in the tilly lamp. You would light the wick and so the light would glow. It was the same, but in a little terracotta jar, there would have been a wick.

And the wick would have been found floating, I suppose, in some oil. They were basic lamps. And these were the lamps that they would have held as they walked towards the wedding itself.

Without oil, they would have been useless. And so here we have ten girls with ten lamps, all ready to go. But yet all was not as it seemed.

[38 : 17] Because although ten of the girls appeared to be ready to go to meet the bridegroom, there was, of course, a problem, a fundamental problem.

A problem that would lead us to our second point, to a crisis. What do we read in verse 1? Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

That's them all appearing to be the same. They've all got their lamps in hand. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them.

Five of the girls have made an effort. They've made an effort, yes, to be in the right place at the right time for the bridegroom coming. They appear to have made an effort and that they have the lamp ready there at their disposal.

But they have no oil. So that when the bridegroom would come, and he would, so that when the procession would start, and it would, yes, they would be present, yes, they would have the needed lamps, yet five of them couldn't take part.

[39 : 38] Why? Because they had no oil. Now, unlike our culture, where oftentimes or sometimes the bridegroom standing at the church here at the front, waiting for the bride to come, we know here that it was the opposite.

They're waiting for the bridegroom to come. So while they wait, they sleep. They don't know when he's going to come, so they sleep. We read in verse 5 that they become drowsy, they fall asleep, which leads us to the main point of the parable.

Because what do we read in verse 6? We read, At midnight there was a cry. At midnight there was a cry made.

Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet. Now you can just imagine the scene. It's the middle of the night.

The girls have been sleeping soundly. They're awoken. They're startled by this cry. Behold, the bridegroom cometh.

[40 : 48] There would have been excitement, no doubt. Excitement as they tried to get themselves together, as they trimmed their lamps, as they lit their lamps, half of them at least, as they anticipated this moment that they had been waiting for.

You know what it's like. When you're waiting for something special to happen, and when it finally comes to pass, even if it's been your own wedding day, you have that sense of excitement, that anticipation.

But not all of them were excited. Not all of them had that sense of anticipation. Because remember the other five.

The ones who had no oil. Instead of excitement, there was panic. They weren't ready. They weren't prepared.

And because of this, they couldn't take part. And in that which the others with whom they had spent time with were looking forward to taking part in. And of course we have to pause and remind ourselves that as perhaps we get carried away with all that detail, this is a parable.

[42 : 03] Yes, it's a parable with earthly imagery, if you like, that the hearer can relate to. But it's a parable that has a deeper spiritual meaning.

And as we see that the five wise and the five foolish, we begin to see that deeper spiritual meaning unraveling, unfolding before our eyes.

You're here tonight. Some of you are Christians. Many of you are Christians. Maybe some of you aren't. I don't know. I can't see your hearts.

But on the surface, at least it would appear that you all desire to meet the bridegroom yourself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why do I say that? Well, you've accepted the invitation. You've accepted the invitation to come and to sit at the table of the gospel.

[43 : 05] You all appear, at least, to be listening as you sit with the torch of the word of God right there in front of you.

You all look the same in that sense. But are you wise? Are you wise? Is it so tonight that yes, you've accepted the invitation?

Yes, you have the lamp of the word in front of you. But do you have more? Do you have more in your life, friend, tonight than the props of religion?

Do you have the oil? The oil that you need in order to ignite these props and make them alive to you?

Do you? You might be wondering, well, what do you mean? What is this oil you speak of? I've got the word of God. Surely that's enough. I come to church.

[44 : 10] Surely that's enough. What more do I need? What more can God expect of me? You need the oil. And the oil you need in me with you and all that we seek to do is the oil of the Holy Spirit.

He's the one who will reveal to us the wonder of who Jesus is.

He's the one who will make our worship as we gather together far more than routine or ritual. He will give unto us that lively desire to meet with him, to listen to him, to worship him.

when you think of the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit, it's a very specific work. The Holy Spirit makes plain to us the things of Christ.

And it's true, friends, that we can all know the things of the church. we can know what to do and what to say to be at the right place at the right time.

[45 : 24] We can do all of that, but yet we can do it without the oil. Do you have the oil tonight? Can you say with the two on the road to Emmaus as they walked and not realizing that Christ was with them, did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the way?

That's what it is to have the oil. Yes, we don't have that experience all the time, but yet it's a difference between dead, cold, formal religion and a lively living relationship and hope in the lively living God himself.

death. So these girls are in a crisis, they're unprepared. You might feel sorry for them and say, well, they didn't realize they made an effort to be there, they're waiting, they have the torch and maybe they didn't realize that they needed oil, of course they realized, that's the point.

They knew exactly if this was to be a real wedding, they knew exactly what took place at a wedding. You know yourselves if you planned a wedding, you're so involved with the intricacies of each and every detail.

You know, you plan events in this community, I know that. You know what it's like, you plan things down to a T, you know exactly what's needed and why it's needed.

[47 : 02] These girls knew they needed oil but they put it off. They put it off for another day.

They thought, we'll get the oil when the time comes, plenty, plenty time. And I wonder, friend, does that sound familiar to you tonight?

Putting off your salvation, putting off, putting your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ until a time that suits yourself. Yes, you come to church, yes, you read your Bible but you have not come to that living knowledge of Jesus yourself because when the truth be told, perhaps you don't want to.

You might think I'm being harsh, friends, but the Lord will never ever cast out or reject or turn away someone who wants to know him as Lord and Saviour.

That is fact. And so he knows the depths of your heart and mind. He knows if deep down you truly long after him or not. And what does he do?

[48 : 15] He gives you your desire. He grants you that which you wish. Friends, it's foolish.

It's foolish to put off the matters of salvation till tomorrow. Tomorrow isn't promised. I know we think it is when we're young, even when we're not so young.

We don't think too much about the fact that tomorrow might not be ours to see, but time and time again in our communities we're reminded of the brevity of life and we look upon it perhaps from afar and we console the grieving families and we send out our sympathy cards and we make our phone calls and send our texts but do we ever think that this could be me?

This could be me? And what then? What then? That at crisis point is that we read in verse 8 that in this description here we see that they ask, they say, the foolish unto the wise, give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out.

They're scrambling about, they're looking around for an answer. They know that for them to take part in this wedding procession they need some oil, they see oil in the lamps of those around them and so they ask for it.

[49 : 49] A fair request, surely. But yet in terms of the spiritual message that Jesus is portraying here, this was never going to work.

The reality was that the wise virgins needed every drop of oil themselves. The wedding procession would be slow, they would need enough oil to allow their lamps to burn until they had escorted the bridegroom all the way to the house.

They needed every drop. They couldn't afford to give the oil away. And so when they replied saying there's not enough for both them and the foolish virgins, their response was wise and true.

And you know, taking this back, friend, to the spiritual meaning, when it comes to your last day on earth, your last days on earth, we're not all given the opportunity.

Some of us are taken from time into eternity like that without so much of us a warning. Others, we might linger on a deathbed, a time where our body is so weak, so consumed by our illness that we cannot think or pray or do anything else.

[51 : 12] We can't rely on that, friend. We can't come to our converted husband or wife or father or mother or son or daughter or friend and ask them for some of their oil, some of their grace.

Give me what you have. We can't ask that. We need our own. We can't, and this is solemn, friends, but it's true. We can't stand before the judgment seat of Christ depending on the prayers of a godly grandmother.

You need your own grace. You need your own oil. And I wonder, as you examine your heart tonight, and I want you to answer this right now in your heart, are you prepared?

prepared? If the Lord was to come tonight and to take you from time into eternity, are you prepared? Well, if not, there's a cost, a cost to you as it was to the foolish virgins, which brings us to our final very brief point, the cost, because we read at the last minute that the five girls, they tried to go and buy oil for themselves.

They thought, well, we can put it off till another day, and we'll have plenty time to then make provision for the lamps. And so that's what they seek to do. When they find out that they're not going to get any oil from their friends, they then go and seek to buy some for themselves.

[52 : 52] They go, they get the oil, and as they come to the wedding banquet, as they make their way, way behind everyone else who've already arrived there, they come to the door, they knock on the door, and they find that the door is shut.

Lord, Lord, open to us. Too little, too late.

And you might be thinking, well, this is hard. This is really hard. Can you not encourage us on a Sunday night of a communion?

Can you not give to us something, of Christ? Friends, this is the gospel. And until we realise the bad news that we all are sinners in need of our saviour, the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is never going to make sense to us, ever.

What do we need saved from? And so as we come to these harsh realities, and as we perhaps in our hearts accuse God, how can you do this, those poor girls, let's remember that they had time, that they had that day of opportunity, that they had that window whereby they could make provision.

[54 : 23] God had given to them he didn't have to. God, the bridegroom rather who had invited them, had given to them that opportunity to get their house in order so that they'd be ready.

And so it is with you and me tonight. Tonight is your opportunity, not tomorrow. Tonight is your opportunity to come and to make sure that you have oil in your lamp to keep you burning.

so that you don't have those words echoing in your ears. The words that we hear, the bridegroom echoing in our text tonight.

Verily I say unto you, I know you not. It stands to reason, friends, why is the Lord going to allow us in at the very last minute when we've lived our whole lives not wanting him.

I'm not saying that we cannot be converted on our deathbed, that happens. But we don't know that that will happen. And so the Lord says to us, okay, you don't want me here in time.

[55 : 50] You're not going to be with me in eternity. You don't want to spend the few short years you had in this world living for me, living with me as a child of God.

Okay, when it comes to eternity, your desire will be met as you live separately in that place where truth is realized too late.

Our God is a just God, he's a loving God and tonight he's reaching his hand out to you in mercy. he's giving to you that ample opportunity to make provision.

But although the door is shut, although the door is a curse, if you like, to the foolish virgin, it's no doubt that it was a blessing to the wise.

We read that there were those who were ready, who went in, who enjoyed the marriage feast. It's true that weddings are amongst the happiest occasions and days that there are.

[57 : 03] Yet the greatest joy, friends, the greatest joy that there is and will be is that joy that comes when the Lord comes for his people so that they can go in, so that they can go in, you can go in, I can go in, to the marriage supper of the lamb.

That's what heaven is, a perpetual gathering together of all that is joyful, all that is good with the bridegroom himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When all evil is undone, the wise find themselves even tonight, even at this moment in time, as they are in eternity, as those who sat in this church, maybe your mother, your father, your husband, your wife, your grandparents, your uncle, your neighbour, your friend, they know what it's like.

Those who have been in the battle, those who fought the good fight of faith, as valiant soldiers of the Lord, not in their own strength, but with the oil of the Lord leading them, the spirit of the Lord leading them and guiding them.

And you might say, well, I want this oil, how do I get this oil, how can I have the Holy Spirit giving to me what I need to see Jesus as my Saviour?

[58 : 53] Quite simple. Ask for it. Ask for it. Come to him and plead with him.

Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner. give to me your Holy Spirit. I long for your Holy Spirit so that I too can see Jesus for myself.

And if that is your heart's desire, that is what the Lord will give to you if you want it. Amen. I wonder what needs to happen in your life before this will take place.

We see the problem, the greatest problem here with the virgins in verse 12. Words that might appear on the surface to be very hard, but he answered and said, verily I say unto you, I know you not.

I know you not. And you know that's our greatest problem today if we're not a Christian. Those words, I know you not. Do you know Jesus?

[60 : 17] You may know about Jesus. I'm sure you do all the stories, the parables, his teachings. You know all about Jesus. Maybe better than some Christians.

But do you know Jesus? Do you know him as your Lord and as your saviour? When you come to the word, are you able to see something of the beauty of who he is and what he's done for you?

Well, if you don't, you can today. I wonder if there's anyone here tonight who's waiting for a road to Damascus experience.

That somehow God is going to send a sign from heaven that's going to stop you in your tracks. And when you get this sign from heaven, then you will believe.

Friends, that's not what the Bible says. All the signs from heaven we need are here in the word.

[61 : 26] Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Let's not add our own layers to that which God doesn't. Let's not add our own expectations which are not ours to be had.

Many of us here have been saved, waiting for a road to Damascus experience and still waiting. It hasn't happened. But yet by faith we've laid hold of his promises and we've believed.

And so as we close this evening, can I ask you to come to him. Come to him even tonight with an open heart, with an open mind and ask his spirit to dwell in your heart.

so that you too will be ready, that when he comes you will be ready to go into that great banquet, that glorious heavenly feast.

And you know the best bit of it is that we don't need to wait until then. Because as we find ourselves here on earth, and we get in such like this at a reminder of that.

[62 : 36] As we find ourselves here in time, he gives us glimpses, boitian, little views through the lattice of his word, through the fellowship of his people, reminders of the fact that we are in Christ, that he is in us, that our hearts are burning within us, enabling us to take that next spiritual step, that because he lives, we can face tomorrow.

Today, friends, is a day of salvation. And as we leave it there, I'm going to ask you that question once more. Are you wise, or are you foolish?

Let's pray. Lord, we come and we pray that this evening we have spoken the truth in love, that our words, although perhaps difficult to bear, would be taken in the spirit that they are intended, so that all gathered here tonight would not settle for the things of this world to give unto them their identity, their fulfilment and their peace, but rather that they would come to know something of the God of this world, the creator of heaven and earth and all that in them is, the one who promises to give life and light and peace to all who put their trust in him.

And so we pray especially for any this evening who are seeking, those who perhaps have been seeking for many a year and as it were have a foot in both camps, who are worried about taking that step of faith on your side.

Help them, O Lord, to see that the lies that the evil one feeds us are lies that tell us that we're better where we are, that if we come out on the side of the Lord we won't be able to carry on, help them to lay hold of by faith the wonders of your promises, that you are a friend that sticks closer than a brother and if we lean on you and you alone, you will never leave us, you will never forsake us.

[65 : 14] We pray, O Lord, then that you would be pleased to do a mighty work in the hearts of our unconverted friends here, so that the scales would be taken from their eyes and that they would see something of the beauty of who you are.

Be with us in our final item of praise and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, friends, we're going to conclude our time of worship. Sing Psalm 45.

Psalm 45 at verse 13. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Here we have a picture of the bride of Christ, the people of God, and the hope that belongs to them.

Verse 15. They shall be brought with gladness great and mirth on every side into the palace of the king, and there they shall abide.

We're going to sing together the verses 13 to 17. Behold the daughter of the king, all glorious is within. Behold the daughter of the king, all glorious is within.

[66 : 45] And with them bright the knees of glory, and with them bright the knees of glory, her garments rock shall be.

she shall be brought to the king, in ropes with needle rot, her fellow virgins following, hazione of hanne her hines hines shot 9 with li God bless you.

God bless you.

And in all places of the earth, And in all places of the earth, And in all the princes may, Thy name remember, Thy will make, Through ages all to be, The people there forevermore, The people there forevermore,

Shall praise and say to thee. Amen. Thank you.

[70 : 22] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. to know Christ for ourselves. It's a solemn thought that for every one of us the day will come that it will be said that our heart has gone out.

[71 : 33] And if that day comes with us unprepared, woe betide us. Thank you to those who have visited with us over the weekend also, Christian friends and others, and your presence is much appreciated and we hope that you too enjoyed the time of refreshing under God's word.

If you would give the minister a moment to get to the door, you can see him on the way out. Stand for the benediction. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with you now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.