

11/12/23 Week 4 Participant Material, Getting Ready for the King
Be Prepared – Matthew 25:1-13

In our series *Getting Ready for the King*, we've talked about giving to God what belongs to God, loving God, and our neighbors, and living humbly as Jesus teaches and models for us to live. For our final session, we're going to discuss the importance of being prepared and ready for the return of the King, who in this parable is pictured as a bridegroom. We start with a parable Jesus tells about what the kingdom of heaven will be like.

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a shout, '*Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.*' ⁷ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish said to the wise, '*Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.*' ⁹ But the wise replied, '*No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.*' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹ Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, '*Lord, lord, open to us.*' ¹² But he replied, '*Truly I tell you, I do not know you.*' ¹³ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Optional Ice Breaker question: Have you ever been late or close to late for a very important event? Or were you ever impacted by someone being late or unprepared for an important event? If so, what was it and what happened?

Questions for Discussion

1. When you're invited to an event, do you usually arrive early, on time, or late?
What influences the timing of your arrival?

2. What, if anything, in the parable in *Matthew 15:1-13* startles or surprises you?

3. Why were five of the bridesmaids considered wise? Why were the other five considered foolish?

4. Why didn't the wise bridesmaids share their oil with the foolish bridesmaids?
What are the implications of this for us?

5. What can, and should, we do so we're ready and prepared for Christ's return?
How does our behavior demonstrate what we believe?

6. What will be the reward for being prepared to greet Christ when He does return?

Closing Prayer: Let not your Word, O Lord, become a judgment upon us, that we hear it and do it not, that we know it and love it not, that we believe it and obey it not. For your glory and for your kingdom's sake, inspire us to live lives of love and mercy that reflect the Great Commandment and our readiness to greet and welcome you when you return so we may be with you in the joy and peace of the Kingdom of heaven forever; in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.