

Advent

A Time to Prepare




ARE YOU
PREPARED?

So you also must be ready,
because the Son of Man
will come at an hour
when you do not expect him.
Matthew 24:44

STAY READY SO

YOU WON'T HAVE

TO GET READY.

A lit oil lamp in a dark setting. The lamp is made of a dark, textured material, possibly wood or metal, and has a bright flame. The background is dark, with some light reflecting off the surface of the lamp.

*Keep watch,
because
you do
not know the day or the hour.*

Matthew 25:13

Matthew 25:1-13-The Parable of the Ten Virgins

“At that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ 7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ 9 “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. 11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ 12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ 13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Lessons About Being Prepared

1. What's Inside the Lamp Matters the Most

- With no oil the lamp was virtually useless.
- Are we focused on what the outside of the lamp looks like or do we care what's inside the lamp?
- The oil represents the Holy Spirit, so the question becomes are we full of the Holy Spirit? (Romans 8:9)
- Without the Holy Spirit or the oil, we are just empty lamps.

Lessons About Being Prepared

2. You Need Oil to Be Ready for His Coming

- Prepare your heart to be ready for Jesus' coming.
- The ones who took extra oil were prepared and ready for his coming.
- Those who didn't were not.
- Even though they looked prepared, they weren't ready for the bridegroom.

Lessons About Being Prepared

3. This is a Picture of the Rapture

- The virgins got tired and fell asleep.
- To fall asleep can also be a reference to dying.
- After they fell asleep, they were awoken by a cry that rang out.
- Those who were ready went into the banquet with the bridegroom and those who were not ready got locked out (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Lessons About Being Prepared

4. Preparation Happens Before You Die

- Our eternal destination is determined by what we do now.
- Those who were ready went into the banquet and the door was shut.
- Those who were not ready were locked out.
- Share the Gospel with others, so as many people as possible will enter that banquet when he comes.

Lessons About Being Prepared

5. Does Jesus Know You?

- Verse 12 says, *'Truly I tell you; I don't know you.'*
- The greatest question in life is does Jesus know you?
- Have you put your trust in him as Savior and Lord?
- If Jesus is your Savior, you are known by him today.



- Eliminate distractions (Hebrews 12:2a).
- Notice God's hand (Genesis 50:20).
- Discern God's will (Proverbs 16:9).
- Unite in a mission.

BE PREPARED TO



- Discuss ways your family, this Bible study group, or our church family can share the gospel with others.
- Identify distractions that will keep you from truly worshiping Christ this Christmas.
- Ask God to help you see what He wants you to do.
- Find a family or an organization you can help as they prepare to celebrate Christmas.

Live **JESUS**
as if
is coming
today

- Living in the expectation that Jesus could return today should cause us to live every day for what really matters—for eternity.

We'll Work
—TILL—
Jesus
Comes!

- Before ascending into heaven, Jesus gave the church its marching orders (Acts 1:8-11)
- As the disciples just stood there looking up into the sky, two angels appeared and spoke the words the church today needs to hear: Why are you standing there gazing into heaven? Jesus is coming back—so get busy!

Discussion Questions

1. It appears we run out of time to get everything done during this time of year, and in the end, we feel unprepared in some way. What are some examples of this being true in your life?
2. Advent reminds us that we should lead a life of readiness and preparedness for the Lord's work. How do we ignore or miss what God wants to do in our lives? How has this been true in your life?
3. What life experiences were you unprepared for that caused you to turn to God very quickly?
4. What sorts of things do you do on a consistent basis to stay alert and prepared for God's work in your life?
5. How can you prepare to be a blessing to others during this stressful time of the year as well as all year long?
6. How are you preparing your heart for the coming of the Lord?