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| Psalm 130:5-6 Matthew 25:1-13 | The Stories Jesus Told – The Ten Maidens | Pinelands – 9am – 14/09/2025 |

Every generation has believed that they were living in the last days.

In just about every generation there has been a period of expecting the

RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST (The second coming)

Just a few decades after the Apostle John wrote Revelation,

 In about 110 A.D… Ignatius wrote…

***"The last days are upon us. Weigh carefully the times.***

***Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible."***

An Early Church Father, Hippolytus, wrote in the year 236 A.D…

***that Christ was sure to return by 500 A.D.***

An influential Christian named Martin wrote in about **375 A.D…**

 ***“There is no doubt that the Antichrist has already been born.***

 ***Firmly established in his early years, he will, after reaching***

 ***maturity, achieve supreme power."***

The years surrounding the year 1000 were filled with…

Predictions about the imminent return of Christ

In the 1500’s, Martin Luther wrote,

***"We have reached the time of the white horse of the Apocalypse.***

***This world will not last any longer than…***

***…another hundred years."***

Even Christopher Columbus predicted that…

the world would end in the year 1656.

The year 1666 saw an explosion in end times speculation.

Reports of people sleeping in Coffins

People gave up on life and daily tasks…

considering it a waste of time and effort.

A Pastor wrote in his journal that…

every time a severe storm hit that year,

his people would go to the church building

to await Christ’s second coming.

In a Philadelphia store window in 1844 a sign appeared,

***"This shop is closed in honour of the King of Kings who***

***will appear about the 20th of October.***

***Get ready friends, to crown Him Lord of all."***

A group of about 200 left the city. They waited, but the days past and nothing happened.

Five years later, another date was set, and another date passed.

In the 1981, I clearly remember a full page advert appearing in 4 major newspapers across South Africa Predicting the return of Christ.

 Which, as we know, did not happen.

In the 1980s and 1990s there were many popular Christian Writers

 Predicting the return of Jesus.

Listen to what Jesus, himself, says about his immanent return:

**Matthew 24:36-42** (GNT)

***No One Knows the Day and Hour***

***“No one knows, however, when that day and hour will come—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son; the Father alone knows. The coming of the Son of Man will be like what happened in the time of Noah. In the days before the flood people ate and drank, men and women married, up to the very day Noah went into the boat; yet they did not realize what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes. At that time two men will be working in a field: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind. Two women will be at a mill grinding meal: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind.***

***Watch out, then, because you do not know what day your Lord will come.”***

And that is the context of our PARABLE for today,

 **The Parable of the Ten Maidens**

 And all the Parables in **Matthew 25…**

 The Parable of the three Servants

 The Parable of the Sheep and Goats *(Final Judgment)*

However, this parable is far less about the Coming of Christ…

 As it is ABOUT… The DISCIPLE of JESUS

 US, you and Me.

**So let us look at the Parable…**

**Parable of the Ten Maidens…**

 Everybody Loves a Wedding…

 The Pomp and Ceremony, The Décor and Dress

 *(Ringing of Bells, walking down the isle,*

 *Wonder of 2 people falling in Love,*

 *Commitment of Marriage)*

However, in Early Palestine weddings were very different.

 In our culture it is the Bride that is the centre of attention,

 Everybody waits for her,

Everybody wants to see her.

**BUT… In Early Palestine…**

 It was the Groom for whom everybody waits.

 He is the principle participant.

 The Groom negotiates a Bride Price,

 This could take hours and hence…

the groom could easily be late.

This is where the Ten Maidens / Girls enter the Story.

 It was their Function to… Meet the Groom and

 Show him in to the Venue.

 Lead him into the venue / house

 *(If HE was late…*

*to light the path with lamps)*

**SO…** They would **WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION**

 Everybody loves a wedding

 This is a Significant Celebration in the Community

 The festivities would go on for several days

IT IS LIKE… a Child waiting for Christmas… *(Remember)*

 It cannot come quick enough

 Always looking out the window for

Father Christmas and Rudolph.

 Awaiting for the opening of presents…

 WE CAN ALL IDENTIFY

IT IS LIKE… That long awaited holiday…

 Rest from work

 Seeing friends and Family that have been missed

 We talk about it, PLAN for it

The **GROOM** of course represents Jesus and his Return *(second coming)*

The Question is…

 ARE WE WAITING with ANTICIPATION…For Christ’s Return?

 Like The Maidens

 Like a Child waiting for Christmas

 Like the upcoming holiday…

 Are we that excited?

 Do we feel it in our gut?

***BUT…***  It is not **JUST Waiting with Anticipation…**

***IT IS ALSO…* WAITING WITH PREPARATION**

**ADVANCED PREPARATION** – The Maidens…

 Save the Date

 Planning what to wear - Getting Dressed

 Oil… Making sure there was enough… It could be a long wait

There is always preparation required…

 Any Event or Function…

Weddings, Parties, Sport Event, Celebrations.

 Catering, Decoration, Guest List,

 Program, The list goes on and on.

Th Twist in the Parable comes when…

 Only 5 Maidens exercise Advanced Preparation

 5 Foolish Maidens do not bring extra Oil.

 SO… They lost out…

Missed the Coming of the Groom.

**What Advanced Preparation are you doing?**

In preparation for Christ’s Return.

 *(We do not know the Date or the Time)*

***BUT… We know He is coming***

 Are We… Excited?

 Ready and Dressed?

**Are we Waiting with Preparation?**

Then there is… **IMMEDIATE PREPARATION**

The Parable goes on… At midnight - they announce the bridegroom…

**Matthew 25:7**

***“The ten young women woke up and* TRIMMED *their lamps.”***

**They Trimmed their lamps** – ***What does that mean?***

Their lamps had been burning all evening, even while they slept and waited

 To Trim their lamps meant they would trim the Wick.

If you know anything about candles or oil lamps…

 When you trim the wick – You get a **Better, Brighter, Light.**

 They can now… Lead the Bridegroom IN

 SO…the Party can Begin.

**ARE YOU TRIMMING YOUR WICK?**

Are you doing all you can… so your light may shine brighter for Jesus?

What needs to be trimmed in your life?

 So… people can see more of Jesus and his Light in your LIFE

What needs to be TRIMMED…??

**IS IT YOUR…** Attitude, Prejudice,

 Language, Anger,

 Business, Excuses,

**What do you need to do…**

to let more of the Light of Jesus shine through you?

Jesus concludes the Parable with these words… A WARNING

 ***“Watch out, then, because…***

 ***you do not know the day nor the hour.”***

But I can tell you this… Today is one day closer than yesterday.

Today is the Day… Carpe Diem *(Seize the day)*

The Kingdom of God is Here.

 The Opportunity is NOW

As Paul puts it in **2 Corinthians 6:2…**

 ***“Listen!! Today is the day of your Salvation.”***

**May we… WAIT *with* ANTICIPATION *and be* PREPARED !!**

**Psalm 130:5-6**

I wait eagerly for the Lord's help,

 and in his word I trust.

I wait for the Lord

 more eagerly than sentries wait for the dawn—

 than sentries wait for the dawn

**Matthew 25:1-13 The Parable of the Ten Young Women**

“At that time the Kingdom of heaven will be like this. Once there were ten young women who took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and the other five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them, while the wise ones took containers full of oil for their lamps. The bridegroom was late in coming, so they began to nod and fall asleep.

“It was already midnight when the cry rang out, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come and meet him!’ The ten young women woke up and trimmed their lamps. Then the foolish ones said to the wise ones, ‘Let us have some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ ‘No, indeed,’ the wise ones answered, ‘there is not enough for you and for us. Go to the store and buy some for yourselves.’ So the foolish ones went off to buy some oil; and while they were gone, the bridegroom arrived. The five who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was closed.

“Later the others arrived. ‘Sir, sir! Let us in!’ they cried out. ‘Certainly not! I don't know you,’ the bridegroom answered.”

And Jesus concluded, “Watch out, then, because you do not know the day or the hour.”