

I. Review

- A. Context – The exhortations and parables found in Matthew 24-25 must be interpreted through the lens or context of the times that Jesus describes in Matthew 24:3-31. This time is known and referenced as the Day of the Lord in the rest of scripture. The parables and exhortations we will look at in this study are given to those who are desiring to be faithful and overcome in those days.
- B. Lover of our Soul – We must connect this study to the burning heart of love that Jesus has for His disciples. He gave us these chapters and 170 others concerning this time because He loves us and wants us with Him where He is. Yes, this is Pastoral council and encouragement, but it is given with a fierce burning heart of love and affection for His flock to prepare them for those days.
- C. How to watch – The portion of this discourse that we are going to look at in this study directly follows two very strong exhortations to “watch” in order that we are not swept away in His righteous judgment against sin and evil in that day. He is now going to directly follow up with what it looks like to prepare and watch so those dark days do not overtake us.

II. The Faithful and Wise (watching) Servant

- A. Watching defined through Wisdom and Faithfulness – Jesus just finished his exhortation that we must be intentionally “watching” as we see the Day of the Lord approaching in order that the Day doesn’t overtake us like a thief who breaks into our house. Jesus in His compassion for us now goes on to tell us what watching looks like and how to do it. He defines it using two main themes: wisdom and faithfulness. In other words, those who are wise and faithful (as He defines it) are those who are watching.
 - 1. Who then is faithful and wise – This is Jesus’s way of connecting to his multiple exhortations to watch. This first line is the key context to the theme of what it looks like to watch and is the premise for the next two parables. He first will address what wisdom looks like in the parable of the 10 virgins. Then He will define what faithfulness looks like in the parable of the Talents. He who is walking out wisdom and faithfulness according to the definition that Jesus gives is one who is watching for the Day of the Lord (1 Cor. 4:1-2).

2. Who the Master has made ruler over His household to give them food in due season – Jesus tells us those who are watchers will automatically be those who are giving those around them food in due season. I do not believe this is referencing just any food but rather the imparted spiritual strength needed to endure the given season, or in this case, preparatory help to endure the Day of the Lord (Jer. 3:15; Ezek. 34:2-10; John 21:15-17; 1 Tim. 4:15-16).
3. Finds Him doing – The word “doing” is given in the active sense in the original language. So the blessing is to those who are actively watching and giving food in due season when the Day of the Lord comes. In other words, those who are living a lifestyle or a culture of watching before the difficulty, deception, and lawlessness of that day comes. Jesus tells us in the next parable that those who wait until the Day of the Lord to watch will not be able to withstand the Day and it will overtake them.
4. He will make Him ruler over all His goods – Jesus constantly gives the theme of positions of responsibility in the age to come as eternal rewards and incentive to be watchful. In this case, He makes a direct reference to the upcoming parable of the faithful servant who was given “goods” to be faithful with, who the Master then rewarded with more “goods” to be faithful with. His generosity and grace is astounding. He tells us that we will benefit from His goodness far more than just being overcomers in the Day of the Lord but we will receive eternal rewards and blessings as well (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 25:21-23; Lk 12:37-44, 19:17, 22:29-30; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:21, 21:7).
5. My Master is delayed – Jesus now talks about what will happen to those who do not walk in the wisdom and faithfulness that He defines as watching. They choose not to watch because the Day of the Lord is not here yet and they see it as some time before it comes. They think to themselves that when the signs come to pass, then they will get serious (Ecc. 8:11; Ezek. 12:22, 12:27; 2 Pet. 3:3-10).
6. They begin to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards - Jesus presents us with a cause and effect rather than a possibility. He says if you choose not to live a lifestyle of watching then you automatically begin to abuse your fellow servants and give into the spirit of this age which destroys our intimacy with Him and our longing for Him to return. Abusing your fellow servants is the opposite of giving them food in due season. By not watching you are actually harming

those who love Jesus around you. By not watching you end up in compromise (Is. 32:6; Is. 56:12; Rom 16:18; Phil. 3:19; 2 Pet. 2:12-22).

7. The Master will come when he's not looking – Once again Jesus does not give this as a possibility to those who choose not to watch but rather a certain outcome. If you live a lifestyle of choosing not to watch because you think it's too far away to bother with, then the Day of the Lord will rob you like a thief. You simply will not have the depth to endure it and you will fall away as a result of difficulty, deception, and lawlessness that Day brings (Matt. 24:42-43; Lk. 21:34-36; 1 Thess. 5:2-3; Rev. 3:3).
8. The Master will appoint him his portion with hypocrites – The just God will justly give the person who was once His servant the same just penalty for sin that He gives to those who never were His servants (1 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).

III. Wise and Foolish Virgins

- A. Defining a lifestyle of wisdom that produces watchfulness – Jesus just got done telling us that He is calling His disciples to watch by living a lifestyle of wisdom and faithfulness to prepare themselves for the Day of the Lord. He then goes on to define what wisdom looks like. You could easily call this the parable “those who watched and those who did not watch”.
- B. Jesus puts this parable in the context of weddings of the ancient near eastern cultures, so some context is helpful here. There is so much beautiful and relevant revelation to be found in looking at the traditional wedding of that time and the timing and events of the return of Jesus to claim His bride.
 - First, the parents arranged the marriage of the bride and groom.
 - Second, the couple would go through a lengthy engagement period.
 - Third, on the day of the wedding the bridegroom would come with friends to claim the bride from her parent's home.
 - Fourth, a ceremony would take place at the bride's home.
 - Fifth, in the evening of the wedding ceremony the bridegroom would take his bride home in a nighttime procession through the streets.
 - Sixth, the marriage would be consummated at the groom's home which he prepared for his bride
 - Sixth, there would be a seven-day feast and celebration at the groom's home.

1. Then the Kingdom of Heaven – The word “then” is very key to understand this parable. He is referring to the Day of the Lord. As we have pointed out before, the Day of the Lord covers a season of time, not just a day, so in this instance Jesus is speaking of the “then” as the beginning of the Day of the Lord which is a day of great trouble, deception, and lawlessness that precedes His coming on the clouds (Matt. 24:9, 16, 21).
2. Ten – It was incredibly common in that day for the wedding party or friends of the bridegroom to be ten individuals. Most scholars do not believe the number ten is prophetically significant.
3. Virgins – It was uncommon that the individuals of the wedding party would all be virgin women so most do believe that this is prophetically significant. Biblically, this term speaks of purity and wholeheartedness before the Lord. I believe Jesus uses this term to speak of believers (Ps. 45:14; Is. 62:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:2; John 3:29; Rev. 14:4).
4. Lamps – The lamps of that day used highly refined oil to burn bright and clean. The imagery here speaks of the flame or fire which represents love for Jesus. It burns because of the oil which represents intimacy rooted in knowledge. The wick of the lamp represents the heart and is saturated in the oil, therefore it burns. (Is. 62:1; Zech. 4:2; Matt. 5:16; John 5:35; Phil. 2:15-16; Rev. 1:20, 2:5, 11:3-6)
5. Meet the Bridegroom – The friends of the bridegroom would go out to meet him as he is on way to the bride’s home in order to accompany him and herald his coming to the bride. Jesus refers to Himself as the bridegroom multiple times and is the revelation of Himself that is catalytic in His return. (Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; Rev. 21:2, 22:17)
6. Five foolish, Five wise – Jesus chose this language so we would connect it to the previous statement concerning watching for the Day of the Lord. “Who then is the wise and faithful servant” (Matt. 24:25). We are to understand that He is about to define what it means to watch for that Day so it does not overtake us (Dan. 11:32-33, 12:3,10).
7. Took Oil with Them – The foolish did not bring any oil with them and the wise brought oil. Making it through the Day of the Lord hangs upon the meaning of what this oil is. Everything hinges on this. Wisdom is having reserves of oil and foolishness is only having enough to keep your lamp burning for a short time. I believe very strongly that this oil represents the intimacy or the personal experiential knowledge that you

have with the person of Jesus, which produces love (Ex. 27:20-21; Song. 8:6; Lk. 10:28-42; Matt. 26:6-13; Rev. 4:5).

Oil of intimacy does four primary things. It tenderizes our heart, enabling us to feel more of God's desire for us. It enlarges our desire for Him by encountering His desire for us. It illuminates our understanding with growing insight into God's beauty. It imparts zeal for righteousness, which helps us to overcome various temptations. – Mike Bickle

8. The Bridegroom was Delayed and they all Slept – Both the wise and foolish slept, therefore sleeping in this parable is not a negative. He is simply pointing to an unusually lengthy amount of time that passed between the promise of His coming and His actual coming (Hab. 2:3; Matt. 25:19; Lk. 20:9; 2 Pet. 3:9).
9. At Midnight the Cry went Forth – Culturally, midnight would have been a very strange time for the coming of the bridegroom. Biblically, midnight speaks of the hour of human trial and God's judgment. The idea that the message would go forth--that Jesus is about to return--at midnight lines up perfectly with the timeline He gives leading up to this parable (Ex. 11:4, 12:29; Lk 11:15).
10. They all Arose and Trimmed their Lamps – They all woke up when the cry went out that the bridegroom was coming. They lit their lamps immediately. Love for Jesus is present in all of them when the cry goes forth. I believe this cry is the great sign that Jesus gives in response to the question, “What will be the sign of the end of the age and your coming?” (Matt. 24:3). The sign He gives is the abomination of desolation followed by great persecution and great tribulation (Matt. 23:9, 15-22, 32-34; 2 Thess. 2:1-4).
11. Give us Some of Your Oil – They quickly realized He was coming in the context of great darkness, that their lights would have to burn longer than they anticipated. Their lights began to go out as they used up all their oil. In context, this means their love is beginning to grow cold (Matt. 13:20-21, 23:12; Lk. 21:24-26; 2 Thess. 2:3).
12. No, there is not Enough for Us and You – The wise ones realize that they will need all the extra oil they have to get through the darkness of the night and accompany the bridegroom to the wedding feast. As much as we all desperately want to, we cannot give our depth in Jesus to someone else. This becomes especially clear when we want to help someone who is struggling (Jer. 15:1; Ezek. 14:14-16).

13. Go buy from Those who Sell – The wise encourage the foolish to go and get more oil so their lamps can burn through the night. The knowledge of God and intimacy with Him is available to all. However, it does come at the cost of your intentionality to position yourself to receive it. As they are still searching for intimacy they are unable to partner with Him and accompany Him when He comes (Is. 55:1-7; Rev. 3:17-18).

14. Those who were Ready went with Him – Those who brought extra oil made it through the dark night and accompanied Him in the wedding procession to the final destination of the wedding party, to the home of the bride prepared by the bridegroom and began to participate in the wedding feast (Lk. 12:35-40; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:13).

15. The Door was Shut – The foolish were never able to buy enough intimacy to relight their lamps and missed the wedding procession completely. The great mercy and kindness of God allows for that door to stay open, for as many to enter as possible, but the scriptures are unmistakably clear that at an appointed time the door to the wedding of the bridegroom will be shut and it will be too late to enter in (Gen. 7:16; Ps. 95:11; Lk. 13:25; Heb. 3:18-19; Rev. 22:11).

16. Lord, Lord, Open to Us – Now that the foolish can see clearly and the night is past, they recognize where the wedding is being held and they want to come in (Prov. 1:24-31; Heb. 12:16-17).

17. I do Not know You – Notice that He does not say that He “never” knew them like He had to tell others in different passages of Matthew. In this instance, the implication is that at one point and time He did know them, however their lights have burned out and now He does not know them and they don’t know Him (Lk 13:26-28).

18. Watch Therefore – Once again we have a very clear indication that Jesus is telling us that cultivating the oil of intimacy with Him unto love is what it looks like to watch for the Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:42-44; Mark 13:33-37; Lk. 21:36; 1 Cor. 16:3; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7; Rev. 16:15).