

We are back with **Kick Butt Answers to Listener Questions**

Last week we discussed how, as believers, we are to view the Jews as well as the nation of Israel. I tried to cut through the hype that we often see in the religious media to get to the truth about what the Spirit of God says about the matter; and therefore, how His opinion should form our own opinion, choices, and behaviors when it comes to how we relate to the Jews and to the nation of Israel.

This week, I am addressing a listener question who asked if I could explain the parable of the 10-virgins. This is a famous parable, though its meaning is often not well understood much less accepted and applied.

This story has its roots in the historic Jewish wedding ceremony, yet, its implications are extremely practical, that is in our “now.” The implications are also **apocalyptic**, meaning that it addresses what happens at the end of time.

In Jesus’s standard methodology, this parable is packed with meaning and communicates through word pictures, which can be understood as a sort of code, a secret cypher which the Spirit uses across the scriptures to communicate truth.

However, to say that the ramifications of this parable are hard to accept is a huge understatement. Most people tend to read this parable and move on instead of absorbing what the Spirit now says to the church. And those who do stop, tend not to be able to fit the meaning into their spiritual world view, their pre-defined box of religion, so again, they just move on.

So, when you’re ready to listen, I invite you to tune in.

Let’s read the passage, then we will pinpoint the key word pictures, dive into the historical framework, and then into its application for our lives.

Matthew 25:1-13

Then the kingdom of heaven will in the **future** be caused to be comparable to ten virgins, who were taking their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish were taking their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

While the bridegroom is now delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! You are commanded to choose to now come out to meet him.'

Then all those virgins were caused to arise and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are **now** caused to be going out.” But the prudent were caused to answer, **now** saying “No, there *may* not be enough for us and you too; you choose to **now** go instead to those **now** trading and buy some for yourselves.”

And while they chose to **now** be going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and

those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was caused to be shut. Later the other virgins also chose to **now** come, **now** saying, "Lord, lord, open up for us." But caused to have been answering, he said, "**Truly I now say to you, I do not know you.**" You are commanded to **now** be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Word Pictures: the Code

We will work through the word pictures as we traverse the story, but the pictures of key importance are as follows:

- The Betrothal
- The number five
- The number two (as in 2 sets of 5 virgins)
- The number ten
- Virgins
- Lamps
- Oil
- Becoming Drowsy
- The Shout
- The Bridegroom
- The Wedding Feast
- The Door

Historic Framework

Let's begin with the Jewish wedding motif.

The Preparation

It all begins with the engagement. Different from how we do it, when a couple got engaged, they were deemed to be legally married, husband and wife, though not yet spiritually married as the marriage had not yet been consummated before God or with each other. Being legally married, the only way an engagement could be broken off is through the legal process of divorce.

We see this dynamic in the story of Mary and Joseph who were engaged and though they had yet to consummate the marriage before God (and had yet to have sex) they were considered to legally be husband and wife. When Joseph found out Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit, Joseph considered divorcing her or legally setting her aside, but God would not permit him.¹The point is that the engagement was a big deal.

From the point of engagement, there was a gap in time, sometimes up to a year or more

¹ See **Matthew 1: 18-25**

before the actual wedding celebration. It was during this time that the groom made the arrangements for the ceremony and the “bride to be” would stay with her family until the bridegroom sent for her. She would use this time to learn how to be a wife.

During this time of preparation, the bride never knew the date or time of her wedding. They did not set the date as we do, rather, the date was determined by the father of the groom, when He determined that all the arrangements had been made and everything was in place for the wedding. Even the groom did not know exactly when this would take place, it all depended upon the father’s say so. It was the father’s sole responsibility to make this determination, not the son.

Therefore, from the time of the engagement, the bride to be always had to be ready because she simply never knew the day nor the hour.

The Ceremony

Once the father said it was time, the wedding procession would begin. Typically, the bridegroom would be at the house of a relative or a friend, where all his friends would gather. They would tell stories, make speeches, give all the requisite congratulations, and so on. It was a bachelor party. This was a time of great joy; the time for which everyone had been waiting.

The formal procession was generally at night so that those who are busy during the day could attend the ceremonies. It made for a very romantic scene with the dark night, the torches, the candles, and so on.

When the father indicated that it was time to go, the wedding party would rise, candles and torches lit, and they would move off in the starry night to fetch the bride and escort her to the home of the groom.

Because of the bachelor party, it was not unusual for this procession to start after midnight. Therefore, it was not unusual for those who stayed behind at the house, servants, members of the bridal wedding party, and so on, to slip into a slumber as they were waiting and waiting, and waiting, for arrival of the bride. If she lived across town, that could be a long wait.

All along this procession, the bridegroom would be announced with a great cry “*Behold the bridegroom comes.*” Everyone who heard the cry, even those in the streets and in the houses along the processional route, would join in the cry. It was a time of great joy for everyone, for the entire community. The cry was so loud that the bride, and those waiting with her, were warned of the groom’s soon arrival, and they would get up, clean up, dress up, and be ready to welcome him with honor.

Can you imagine the emotional and mental strain on the bride to be? She did not know when her husband would come for her, so she always had to be ready. In the first few months of waiting she was probably giddy with excitement, but as many months went by, it was probably hard to stay excited, alert, and to be ready to have her night interrupted by the loud cry. Nevertheless, ready she must be.

Surprisingly, only a limited number of people who joined the processional could enter the

wedding ceremony. It was by invite only. Most of the crowd who joined the processional escorted the bride and groom to the ceremony, and then went back to their own homes, coming by in the subsequent days to offer congratulations. When everyone who was appointed to enter had entered the house, the doors would be shut with only the invited guests having entered to enjoy the festivities.

The wedding feast would typically last for one week. However, it was not unheard of for the celebration to continue for up to two weeks.

At the beginning of this celebration, the couple would enter the “chamber” in which the bridal bed stood, and they would do the deed, physically consummating the relationship that had already been legally and now would be spiritually concluded. All the guests would be waiting for them to finish, and once they had done the deed, that is when the festivities really kicked off and the wedding supper, the grand feast, began.

The Application

The spiritual parallels of these wedding traditions to our relationship with Christ are uncanny, and this is where all the imagery comes to light.

The **betrothal** is likened to the time when we accept Christ. When we say yes to the marriage contract, and we become his bride to be. He gives us a “wedding present,” a gift of unparalleled value, the Holy Spirit. And the dowry we pay in return is our very lives. Everything we have is now His, not just our possessions but all that we are belong to Him.

Ephesians 1:13-14

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were caused to be sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who **now** is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The Spirit is given to us as a wedding present, a promise that when all things have been set in order, the groom will come for us and take us back to His Father’s home to be wed.

As for now, Jesus is in His Father’s home, and the preparations are being made. He is preparing the dwelling places he told his disciples about.² We do not know when He will come, when all will be ready, when the Father will say “go get your bride,” so this time of waiting, is our time of living as a **virgin** and practicing our **virginity**. It is to be the time we learn to be His wife, so to speak, where we learn to be faithful to our spouse.

What does practicing our virginity look like? This time of waiting is when we learn to be like

² See *John 14:1-2*

Him, to adopt His nature, and to willingly discard everything that would cause separation or division in our union.³ It is the time when we prepare for this great feast knowing that we will live “happily ever after.” It is the time when every little girl’s fantasy will come true. Prince Charming will come and make us His wife.

Of course, this is all a picture, so guys do not get too weirded out, it is just metaphor.

It is also during this time that we prepare and cloth ourselves with our wedding garments, which are a symbol of eternal adornment.

Revelation 19:7-8

Let us **now** rejoice and **now** be glad and may we give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.

It was caused to be given to her that she may choose to clothe herself in fine linen, bright, clean; for the fine linen **now** is the righteousness of the saints.

Getting Ready

Getting ready is a choice that each person must make to clothe themselves with our grooms sacred covering, the righteousness of **Yahweh Tsikdenu, Yahweh** who is our righteousness.

Revelation 3:5, 18

He who is **now** overcoming will thus in the **future** choose to be clothed in white garments; and I will not in the future erase his name from the book of life, and I will in the future confess his name before My Father and before His angels. ...

I now advise you to buy from Me gold caused to being refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may choose to clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness may not be caused to be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may **now** see.

The Processional is a picture of the days leading up to the rapture of the church. We wait not knowing the day or the hour when He will come for us. But we should be ready and clothed only in Jesus’ righteousness, claiming no part in our own so-called goodness. We are to live as **virgins**, committed only to our groom and to no other who would feign to take his place in our life.

All true believers, those who are **now** having ears to hear and who are **now** overcoming, who

³ See **Romans 12:2, 8:29-30; Ephesians 4:24, 2:10; Colossians 3:10**

are *willing* to let God cause them to put down their idolatry of self, are those who are ready and clothed. They now just need to endure in that state; they need to remain faithful.⁴

Sadly, like the 5 foolish virgins who ran out of oil, there are those who will never be ready because they do not choose to clothe themselves only in the righteousness of **Yahweh Tsidkenu** which means that they do not choose to rely only upon the oil.

There is a fundamental difference between those who are trying to be good for God and those who stand only on the goodness of God.

Even though they identify as virgins, they knowingly exhaust their supply of oil. They do not prepare far enough in advance, and they do not refresh their supply of oil. Ultimately, they rely on the merchants of religion to find supply, but it is too late. With the oil being the promise of entry into the wedding, no oil, no entry.

In the wedding processional, Jesus comes for His bride with the shout of the Archangel and the blast of the trumpet, He harvests the earth, and we are escorted to His Father's home in which there are many rooms. There we can anticipate the consummation of our union where the two shall become one, a union in which no man or no one will be able to set asunder.⁵ And then the feast begins. "*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*"

Let's review the **Code**, the word pictures

- **Betrothal**: the time when we accept Jesus and enter a "covenant" relationship with Him, with a promise that we can be His bride.
- **5**: the two sets of five virgins. The number *five* is the number indicating God's grace. Each group of virgins were extended God's grace, God's super-natural enablement, pictured in the Lamps and the Oil. As we learned in the book of **Revelation**, grace is always about what God does in-through-and-for-us, and it has nothing to do with what we do for Him.
- **2**: The number *two* pictures both witness and division. In this parable there were two sets of five each with their own witness. To the casual observer they may look similar as they wait, but time will tell that they are divided by the oil.
- **10**: the number *ten* indicates completeness, divine order (such as with the Ten Commandments, the ten plagues, our ten fingers and toes, the ten generations from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham—two epochs of completeness). The number ten is also used as a multiplier. God's grace has been given in a complete

⁴ **Luke 21:19; Hebrews 10:36, 12:1; James 1:3-4; Revelation 17:14**

⁵ **See Isaiah 26:2-21; John 14:1-3; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31-32**

measure to a divided multitude. They all identify as virgins, they all were given grace, but time reveals that some do not rely on grace and do not belong to the groom.

- **Virgins:** This imagery applies to those who faithfully worship only **Yahweh**. They do not adulterate or enjoin themselves to any other lover (any other god).
- **Lamps:** Containers that hold the oil. The *lamp* is the equivalent of the *New Creation* that has been created in God's image, righteous, holy, and true.⁶ The lamp bears the flame of light, a witness to the darkness that the light (Jesus) will prevail. The lamp is where the Spirit of God takes up His residence in our being. Relying on another parable, if he were to place His Spirit in the old wineskins (our body), we would explode, we cannot contain His perfection. We need new wineskins (the lamp, the *New Creation*) to contain the oil.⁷
- **Oil:** the Holy Spirit who is our pledge of admittance (our ticket) to the wedding event. Without the oil, one does not get to enter. The imagery is terrifying. Jesus is saying that a person can consume their supply of oil (their reliance on grace), and if it is not replenished, they will find themselves with no oil and they will not be permitted into the wedding celebration.
- **Drowsy:** this is what happens when we wait and do not stay alert, do not stay ready, and we wane in our focus on the coming groom.
- **The Shout** – “Behold the bridegroom comes.” When Jesus’ returns for His bride it will be initiated with the shout of the Archangel.⁸
- **The Bridegroom:** Jesus is the bridegroom, and He is now busy preparing our place; one day He will return for His bride.⁹
- **The Wedding Feast:** The wedding supper of the Lamb. **Revelation 19:9**, “Then he **now** says to me, “you are commanded to write, ‘Blessed are those who have been caused to being invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he **now** says to me, “These **now** are true words of God.”
- **The Door:** the entry way into the wedding supper. For those to whom it is shut, they will know only darkness and deep torment.

So, let’s review this terrifying parable. At first everything seems to be awesome; there are a complete number of virgins who are dedicated to the groom. They are waiting patiently for the wedding celebration. They are not outsiders, they are not strangers, and they fully anticipate, **no they expect**, to join the groom in His wedding supper.

But as time lingers and lingers, it seems that only a subset will choose to live only by the grace

⁶ *Ephesians 4:24*

⁷ See *Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38*

⁸ *1 Thessalonians 4:16*

⁹ *John 14:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Revelation 14:6-8, 20:5-6*

of God (they continually renew the oil in their lamps). Whereas others will let the oil be exhausted, relying instead on their own attempts to be good for God, doing what they believe God wants them to do, all in His name, of course.

Perhaps they think that since they once had oil that they belong and should be let in, however, they will learn that to them the door will be closed, and they will miss this most important event. Remember, the oil is a promise, no oil no entrance.

A similar picture is given to us in the letter that Jesus wrote to the church at Ephesus. This church was committed, dedicated, and focused. Jesus said about them, *"I know **your** deeds and **your** toil and perseverance, and that **you now**, by choice, cannot tolerate evil men, and **you** put to the test those who are **now** calling themselves apostles, and they **now** are not, and **you** found them false, and **you now** have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary."*

This letter starts off sounding pretty good. Most Christians would give this church an A+ rating, a 5-star performance, quite the witness to the world. But Jesus was not impressed. He emphasized "you or your" six times (six being the number of man). In effect, He is communicating that this was all their work, and not His. They had exhausted their supply of oil and had substituted the oil for their own amazing works.

Jesus tells them, *"But I **now** have against **you**, that **you left** your first love. Therefore, **you** are commanded to **now** remember from where **you** have **fallen**, and **you** are commanded to repent and **you** are commanded to do the deeds you did at first; or else I choose to **now** come to **you** and will in the **future** remove **your** lampstand out of its place--unless **you** may repent."*

Though we may be impressed with those who make an ardent and vibrant stand for Jesus, He is not impressed if what we do comes from our own effort and not from the oil of God. They had left, discarded, abandoned, or divorced their first love, no longer relying on the Spirit of God for their witness to the world.

They had fallen away, apostatized, all in the name of Jesus. Worse yet, they were so delusional with their religious success that they had no idea that they had left Jesus and fallen away. So, Jesus commanded them to repent or else He would rip their lamp away from them, leaving them with no opportunity to refill their oil, even if they went seeking for more oil from the merchants of religion.

Jesus emphasized "you and your" nine times, with nine being the number indicating judgment.

The letter to Ephesus is the same story as the parable of the ten virgins. While the night lingers on and the groom tarries, the virgins who continually replenish their supply of oil, their dependency upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time, will be welcomed into the marriage supper. But those who rely on their own efforts, their own wisdom, their own ardent dedication, will not be permitted entry. They will not be ready when the groom comes; they will have not repented of their self-reliance and self-idolatry.

We learn in the Parable that the Oil, the Spirit of God, cannot be given away, it cannot be shared, one must have their own supply, and one must maintain their own supply. If one runs out of oil, they just might miss the return of the groom and be left behind. The doors will be closed, and they will not be permitted to enter.

And despite their desperate cries of *"Lord, Lord, open up for us"* they will hear the most terrifying words a person could ever hear: **"Truly I now say to you, I do not know you."**

It is much like that terrifying passage in ***Matthew 7:21-23***.

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who is **now** saying to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will in the **future** choose to enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who is now doing the will of My Father who is in heaven

Many will in the future say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will in the future declare to them, 'I never knew you; you are commanded to **now** depart from me, you who chooses to **now** be practicing lawlessness.'

This is crazy, not everyone who says to Him, "Lord, Lord" will in the **future** choose to enter the kingdom of heaven. But only those who are **now** doing the will of His Father will enter. Did you notice that their future, their destiny, is their choice; they choose the lawlessness of amazing and even supernatural religious deeds!

Many will say to Him, on that day (**YES MANY**), *"Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?"* But as with the five foolish virgins, and those ardent proclaimers of Christ in the church at Ephesus, He will remove their lamp and declare to them, **"I never knew you."**

**The source matters the source is everything!
We must be dependent upon His grace for all things all the time.**

Luke 13:23-29

And one said to Him, Lord are there few who are now caused to being saved? And He said to them, "You are commanded to now choose to strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I now tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Once the head of the house has been caused to get up and shuts the door, and they will choose to begin to stand outside and now knock on the door, now saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will be caused to be answering and will say to you, 'I have NEVER known where you now

are from.'

"Then they will choose to begin to now say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; and He will say, 'I am now telling you, I have NEVER known where you now are from; you are commanded to depart from Me all you workers of iniquity {or "lawlessness"}.'

In that place there will choose to be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they choose to see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but themselves caused to **now** being thrown out.

The foolish virgins, the hard core Christians from the church at Ephesus, those who cast out demons, perform many miracles and do all manner of amazing deeds in the name of Jesus, and all those who ate and drank in His presence and seek to enter the narrow door and will not be able, share a common attribute, they chose to not be reliant upon the Spirit of God for all things all the time; they chose to not live as little children, and they will not enter the kingdom of God.¹⁰

He was and is not their source, so He labels all that is done in His name as lawlessness or works that were not authorized by the Father. **The source matters the source is everything!**

Therefore, He tells them, "*I have never known where you now are from.*" In other words, Jesus states that He never lived in that place of self-dependency, though being God, He never relied upon His own authority. He always lived dependent upon the Father for all things all the time.

Whereas those who do not rely on the oil, though accomplishing all manner of amazing even supernatural deeds in Jesus' name, are not His image bearers, their lamps do not produce His light. To them the door will be shut, and they will **NOT** be permitted to enter the marriage supper of the Lamb. "*Blessed are those who have been caused to being invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*" And he **now** says to me, "*These now are true words of God.*"

The terrifying truth is that these people have chosen (yes, it is their choice), to be thrown out to that place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

They are NOT victims, despite how they feel. They choose their destiny. They choose to NOT enter **Yahweh's** rest. They choose to NOT be that little child dependent upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time, and they refused to live needy, desperate even, for the oil of God.

Jesus said, in that place "*there will **choose** to be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Again, it's their choice. They will be cast away into darkness believing, convinced through and through, that God owes them something for all that they did for Him. They will enter eternity choosing to be *wailing*. They will be convinced that due to their sincerity and intention, their **virginity**, that He owes them entry into the kingdom, they will choose to gnash their teeth when that is not their reality.

¹⁰ See **Matthew 18:3**

They believed the lie that if they said the “sinners’ prayer” and did all manner of service and sacrifice for **Yahweh**, and served others in the name of Jesus, that they would be assured their heavenly destiny.

Instead of eternity with Jesus, they will be cast into outer darkness because their oil ran dry. The oil symbolized the promise, but no oil no promise. And worse of all, they are those who should have known, for they were once possessors of the oil. As Jesus said in other parables, **“You wicked, lazy bondservant, you very well knew” ... “that without me you can do nothing.”**¹¹

It is likely that throughout all eternity, they will hear these truths echo in the darkness: **“for by grace you now have been caused to being saved through faith and not that of yourself, of God the gift, not of works lest anyone should choose to boast.”**¹² **“And without faith, it is impossible to please God.”**¹³ For **“there is only one who is good.”**¹⁴ **“No one is good except God alone.”**¹⁵ And yes, the Greek says, **“being saved”** rendered as a *participle*. It is not to be understood as a past tense (“been saved”), but we are in a journey, a process of salvation, and we must endure.

This parable of the ten virgins is terrifying because most of those in the realm of Christianity are manically focused on being good for God, not sinning, being disciplined, and ardent supporters of Christ, busy doing great works, even the miraculous, for God, and they no longer realize that **the source matters, the source is everything!** They do what they think is right, what is Biblical, but they are not reliant upon the oil. Therefore, the Spirit asks and then He commands.

Galatians 3:3, 5:16, 25

Are you now so foolish? Having chosen to begin by the Spirit, are you now choosing to be perfected by the flesh?

But I now say, you are commanded to now walk by the Spirit, and you may not carry out the desire of the flesh ... If we **now** live by the Spirit, may we **now** also **now** possibly walk in the Spirit.

May we stay alert, and clothed, continually refreshing our supply of oil.

I am glad you tuned in and have been ready to listen.

¹¹ **Matthew 25:26; John 15:5**

¹² **Ephesians 2:8-9**

¹³ **Hebrews 11:6**

¹⁴ **Matthew 19:17**

¹⁵ **Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19**