

Message #55 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Five Deceived Virgins"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about being ready for the soon coming of Jesus, and not being left behind. And first, I'd like to bring your attention to the parable of the ten virgins who were waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom. Let's read Matthew 25:1-12. It says, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be compared to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil; for our lamps have gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, No, we cannot; for there is not be enough for us and you: but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you."

Now, notice in verse one that we see there are ten virgins. Virgins, in this parable, symbolize Christians, those who are supposed to be waiting for Jesus Christ, the bridegroom. They are waiting for the bridegroom so that when he comes, they can enter in with him to the marriage supper. This is what Christians want to do. Jesus Christ is our bridegroom. We are the bride. We are waiting for him to come so we can go in to the wedding feast, or, as it says in Revelation 19:9, "The marriage supper of the Lamb."

Now, the parable of the ten virgins tells us that five of these young women were not ready when the bridegroom came, and therefore they were not admitted. Even when they returned later, having supposedly refreshed their vessels of oil, they were still not allowed to enter in. This is a very significant point. And for those who believe that there is a second chance for those left behind, they should consider these five virgins who were given no second chance. When they returned after having purchased the oil for their lamps, the door was shut, and it was not opened for them.

Sometimes Christians miss the point that these five unprepared virgins are symbolically representative of those people in the Christian church who are willing to be content with just the initial born-again experience, but are not willing to continually refresh themselves in their relationship with God. Yes, they still continue to think of themselves as Christians, but because they are concerned with the cares of this world, and have little desire for the heavenly things of God, they lose that initial born-again spiritual relationship with Jesus. They lose the motivation of the Holy Spirit, and in essence, they run out of oil.

Now, let me take a minute and explain the symbolic concept of oil. In the Bible, oil represents the power that reveals God's word. In Zechariah, chapter 4, and Revelation, chapter 11, we see lamps which are lit from oil, and in both Zechariah and in Revelation, this oil comes from the two olive trees. To put it very simply, the lamps, themselves, represent the written or spoken word of God, and the two olive trees represent Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the two additional testimonies to God's written or spoken word. Now, just as a lamp cannot shed light without first adding oil to it, God's word cannot completely dispel the darkness without the additional witnesses of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. And just as oil allows a lamp to dispel the darkness, the testimony of Jesus Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit reveals understanding of the word of God and sheds light to the world.

Now, concerning the five virgins who were left behind, notice that they had no oil. They did have lamps, but they had no oil to light the lamps. They had brought their lamps, but they were so foolish that they didn't have the foresight to realize that the lamps were completely useless without oil. These five virgins represent people who attend church, but have only a surface understanding of God's word and have no depth to their understanding. They do have the written or spoken word of God, but they have never been born again in spirit. They have a lamp, but no oil. They have the word of God, but no spiritual relationship with Jesus. And this is why Jesus responds to them saying, "I know you not."

In essence, what is being represented by these five virgins is a mental acceptance of God's word, but no heart for it. They are Christians in name only. They claim to believe the word of God, but they only have the one witness of their lips. They have no spirit for Christianity, and their actions and words show the lack of it. They have one Christian testimony, but they have the other two testimonies of their spirit and their works which show that they don't seek after the heavenly things of God, but rather seek after the earthly things which stimulate the flesh.

There are many people today who have claimed Christianity, but have never had a heart for it. Because they do not have a true love for the truth of God, there is nothing there to light up the

word of God. They are unworthy to enter into the marriage supper of the lamb because they have no spiritual experience with Christ down deep in their hearts. Jesus refers to these people as being people he does not know.

It is important to realize that the church of today is, symbolically speaking, made up of virgins. This means they are supposed to be keeping themselves separate from the affections of other lovers in order that they might remain pure for Jesus Christ, their prospective bridegroom. Some of these are spiritually renewed on a daily basis as they press in to the kingdom of heaven with a true fervent spirit, earnestly desiring more of the things of God. And some of them do not press into the kingdom of heaven at all. And instead of establishing a true fervent spirit for heavenly things, they remain lukewarm. Their desire for the things of God never grows, and even though they put on an outward show of spirituality, their hearts only yearn for the things of this world. Yes, they are still in the church, and they still think they are Christians. And, they may profess that they believe the word of God, but on the inside they have lamps that do not burn. They have no ability to see spiritual things because their lamps have no oil and therefore shed no light.

For those who try to live their life according to the written or spoken word, but have little or no understanding down deep in their heart, there can be no eternal life. We are saved, not just by the written and spoken word, but by becoming one with God by applying the word to our lives as Jesus demonstrated to us. We are saved, not just by the written and spoken word, but also by entering into the power of it.

Now, there is also another type of virgin which is common in the church. It is people who have had a true born-again experience, but who forget that the born-again experience must continue. When people profess to be Christians but cease to strive for heavenly things, and instead just strive for the things of this world which stimulate their fleshly appetites, their lamps go out. They run out of oil. They still have the initial spoken word of God, but they do not continue to seek a spiritual relationship with Christ, and the word become meaningless. It grows cold in their heart, and their heart becomes hardened. These people are like the parable of the sower of seed when the seed is sown and springs up, but the plant has no depth to its roots and eventually dies out for lack of nourishment. In other words, their lamps go out, and they can no longer see well enough to remain upon that narrow path which leads to the narrow gate. They fall off that narrow path into the abyss, into total darkness. Yet, because their eyes are darkened, they still imagine they are on the narrow path.

In these last days we are experiencing a trial of our faith. It is an hour of temptation never seen in the history of the world. It is a time of temptation of every possible kind of fleshly stimulation. The trial is a way for God to test the hearts of men to see if what they are confessing with their lips is truly what is in their hearts. The trial will test men's souls to find out whether they truly worship God in spirit and truth, or are just worshiping God by the letter of the word. Those who think they are Christians because they look like a Christian on the outside but are not really Christians on the inside, will be found out.

When the day comes that the bridegroom appears it will be a time of utter darkness. Notice that in the parable of the ten virgins the cry that went out, concerning the arrival of the bridegroom,

was at midnight. Midnight represents a time of tremendous deception. If there is ever a time that your eyes need to be able to see the things of God clearly, it will be at this midnight hour. If you have no oil left in your lamp, your lamp will be useless. What good is a lamp that does not light up your way and reveal your path?

The question is, are you a wise virgin, or are you a foolish virgin? Are you truly seeking the Lord God and building your daily relationship with Jesus Christ? Are you truly worshiping God in spirit, or are you serving him in just the letter of the word? Notice that 2 Corinthians 3:6, tells us that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. We were not called to worship God just by the written or spoken word alone, but to enter into the spirit of it.

Now, there is a way to look at yourself if you want to see what is really down deep in your heart. There is a way to know if what you claim to be in church is what you really are. And it's just simply this. If you are truly entering into the worship of God in spirit and in truth, then you will be moved by the things of God. The things of God will motivate you to do the will of God. Your spirit will be fervent. It will be hot. It will not be lukewarm. Lukewarm means that middle state between cold or hot. When you were first born-again you were hot, at least, you were if you truly did have a born-again experience. But if you have cooled down, God looks at you as being worse than those who have never been hot in the first place. He would rather that you were cold, not ever having had a born-again experience. At least that way you could still be reached with the gospel. But you see, when you think you're a good upstanding Christian, but you're really only lukewarm, you don't look for truth. You think you already have it. This is what happened to five of the ten virgins. They didn't think about the oil. They thought that having the lamp was good enough. But their lamps couldn't light up the darkness without the oil. It's like Christians who no longer have the spirit of God moving within them, but only have an awareness of the written or spoken word. They like to speak the words, but the words have no life in them. They like to present themselves as Christians, but they have no spirit for it. They are just church goers who live out a ritualistic religion, and therefore become easy prey to teachers of false doctrines who tell them they should be rich, or who tell them they will not have to face the hour of temptation in the last days.

God refers to this hour of temptation, in Revelation 3:10. This trial of our faith will touch everyone who claims to be a Christian, and its purpose is to try men's souls. During this trial of your faith, it will be determined whether or not you truly love God or not. Yet, many in the church today have been told that this trial will not come upon them, or any other trial or tribulation, but that they will be raptured prior to this. In this way Satan has tricked them into paying no attention to God's warnings for the end times. The devil has twisted the truth of God's word just enough to prevent people from taking the warnings seriously for themselves. Notice that it is easier to point our fingers at the wicked people of the world concerning the end time prophecies. Because they think they will no longer be present for the Great Tribulation, they ignore the warnings for themselves. But, God has put these warnings into the scriptures for his people so that they will not become like one of the five virgins who had no oil for their lamps. God is calling his people out of their deep sleep. He is calling them to wake up and trim their lamps, and begin to see clearly even at that time of midnight when it is the darkest. God is

calling his people to seek after him in spirit so that they might have enough oil to make the word of God shine forth.

Satan has deceived Christians in many ways. And some Christians think it is all right to live their lives just as the rest of the people of earth live. They think it is all right to trust in things around them, but have little understanding of how to place their trust in God. They think it is all right to set their sights on the things of this world. They think it is all right to concentrate on careers and dreams rather than on the word of God. Yet, the Bible tells us to be separate. It tells us to come out from among the people of the world. But, Christians have become deceived, and have accepted the lifestyle of the world rather than the lifestyle of Christ. We are buying and selling according to Satan's system, which deals in things which stimulate the flesh. Few Christians spend much of their energy buying and selling in God's spiritual system. For many, the word of God is not very important, and the oil of the Holy Spirit and the wine of the revealed word through Jesus Christ, is not bought and sold as much as is the merchandise of Satan.

God is calling his people to come out of deception. Never in the history of the world have we seen such wickedness since the days of Noah. We have gone from ox cart and wagon days to the days of unbelievable science and technology. Yet, Christians do not seem to recognize that the prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2, is coming to pass, and that the mystery of iniquity is being revealed because the hindrance to it has been removed. There is an abomination of desolation at work in the world, destroying men's souls, by overwhelming them with opportunities to both stimulate their flesh to extremes, and also to trust in anything and everything except God.

Jeremiah 12:1-5 describes a dialogue between the prophet Jeremiah and God. In these verses, Jeremiah is concerned that God's people seem to suffer much tribulation, but that the wicked seem to prosper. Let me read verse 5, which is God's answer to Jeremiah in the form of a question. It says, "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if the land of peace in which you trusted, wearied you, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?" God's answer is simple. He just implies that when the hour of temptation comes upon all the world, these wicked people will not have learned to trust in God, and therefore will not be able to cross over into the promised land. It will be too late to learn to trust God then. This is the same concept as in the parable of the ten virgins. The five virgins which took no oil with them did not have time to go and buy oil and still be back by the time the door to the wedding feast was shut.

This concept, although devastating for the wicked, is a wonderful promise for Christians. For it tells us that when we suffer tribulation and trials, we are being taught how to place our trust in God. And because of this time of instruction, we will be better prepared for the great testing of our faith at the end of our world. Great Tribulation is feared by many, but Great Tribulation need not be feared by those who have had their faith established on solid ground by the trying experiences of doubt and confusion that God allows his people to go through. God raises up children by giving them instruction. God chastens us because he loves us, and his chastening is for our benefit, not as punishment. When we go through difficult times and feel that God is nowhere to be found, it may not seem to be such a wonderful experience, but it builds our faith

so that we will be strong enough to stand against the storm that will eventually come. Paul states in Hebrews 12:11, “Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it.”

In these verses, we see that it is only by experience of trials and tribulation that we learn to trust God. When we go through a trial, we may quiver and quake when our faith is severely put to the test, but every time we come out of the valley of that trial and we climb back up on solid ground once more, our faith is increased. Each trial of our faith builds up our ability to trust God. True Christians learn to trust God even in the face of seemingly terrible tribulation. Because of this, the severe time of tribulation at the last day will not be able to destroy our faith, for we will have been strengthened by every former trial. But the wicked, who have not been put to the test, will not have been strengthened spiritually, and when Great Tribulation comes to them, they will fall away.

This has an especially significant meaning for those in the church who may not be experiencing trials. They may seem to be going along just fine and trusting in their jobs, their doctors, their credit cards, and their own strength and ability to meet life's needs. When people have trials, but meet those trials by relying on the support of worldly solutions, they will never learn to place their trust in God. Just one example of this is when financial disaster threatens. When this happens, many professing Christians deal with the problem by using their credit cards instead of trusting God. And a prime example of those who have not learned to trust God would be the example of what has taken place during a major stock market crash, and some have lost all hope for the future and have committed suicide.

We know this is the wrong thing to do, yet in many ways we Christians do the same thing. When we are faced with loss of a job, or prestige of position, or faced with a large unexpected bill, or maybe a sudden illness, we sometimes panic and begin to look everywhere else for solutions except to God. But, God is our solution. Satan has developed a world system which offers to be our solution to life's problems, but that is not the right solution. When the end comes, and all is said and done, the only ones who will have been able to cross that Jordan River and enter into the promised land are those who have been willing to come out of Great Babylon. Those who gain victory over the world will be those who have come out from among the wicked of the world and have been willing to be content with such things as the Lord supplies, no matter how little that seems to be.

Yes, the wicked do seem to prosper, and the righteous do sometimes seem to be forsaken, but when Jesus returns, it will be the righteous who have learned to do without all the sumptuous and dainty things of life. It will be the righteous who will have learned that they can trust in God no matter what. It will be the righteous who will not give up when the going gets really, really hard in these last days.