

# Matthew 25:1 - 13

**At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise** (verses 1 - 2).

This morning's reading builds on Jesus's description of signs of the end of the age, recorded in chapter 24. In today's parable, what made five of the women 'foolish' (see verse 3)?

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What made five of the women 'wise' (see verse 4)?

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**The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep** (verse 5).

Who does 'the bridegroom' represent in this parable?

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**At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"** (verse 6).

How do you think the foolish women felt at this point?

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How did the wise women feel?

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**Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out"** (verses 7 - 8).

'Trimming the lamps' means cleaning and refuelling them so that they burn brightly. Why did the foolish women have to ask the wise ones for fuel?

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**“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”.**

**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** (verses 9 - 10).

This feels very final. How do you think the foolish women would have felt when they returned to find the door of the house shut against them?

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**Later the others also came. “Lord, Lord”, they said, “open the door for us!” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I don’t know you”.**  
(verses 11 - 12).

This seems uncompromising. Does it surprise us to hear these words coming from the mouth of the character who represents Jesus? Why does it surprise us?

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How might this inform our understanding of Jesus and his coming judgment?

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**Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour** (verse 13).

Here Jesus reminds us that we do not know the day or hour when he will come again. He tells us just to ‘keep watch’. What would it mean for us to be ready for Jesus to return?

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What do we need to do to get ready for Him?

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How can other members of the Church (God’s people) help us to be ready for his coming? How can we help them?

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