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*"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:13)*

**I. A Word on Readiness**

- a. This story mentions only two parties, the bridegroom and the bridesmaids (disciples not sinners).
- b. The role of the bridesmaids was to escort the bridegroom in a torchlight procession to his house.
- c. There was no time frame placed on the groom's arrival. After the procession, the wedding feast begins at the bridegroom's house, which is the high point of the celebration.
- d. Why then did the five foolish girls miss the feast? Verse 5 says they all slept, and all had to be awakened by the midnight shout. The problem goes back to the lack of preparations.
- e. *Readiness*, whatever form it takes, is not something that can be achieved by a last-minute adjustment. (*Remember the 5 p's*) We must *think* and *do* with the end in mind.
- f. Being truly prepared depends on planning and anticipation. The wise disciple can sleep secure in the knowledge that everything is ready.
- g. The unprepared are often called "foolish" when they are warned to prepare but fail to prepare.

**II. The Key Word is *Watch!***

- a. The *bridesmaids* are Christian people who have been invited.
- b. The message of Jesus, from the text, is clear: "**Be prepared.**" Most of the Jews were not prepared when Jesus came.
- c. Jesus tells us this story because He prays for better *watchfulness* and *readiness* in His church.
- d. This story tells us that it is possible to be in church and in Christian company and yet be a stranger to the Holy Spirit.
- e. It is possible to have a lamp that looks good, but have no oil in it.
- f. It is equally possible that one day Jesus will say to some, "I never knew you and shut the door."
- g. There are some things you cannot borrow. You need to possess them for yourself. It simply is not possible to rely on anyone else for them. Holiness is one of those things.
- h. You cannot borrow relationship or service.
- i. If you are not what you profess to be, nobody else can help you or stand in for you.
- j. There are times when it is too late. One day it will be too late to say, "I will try harder."

**III. Word Reflection and Application**

- a. Despite the waiting time, Jesus came to separate those who had been waiting for His arrival.
- b. *those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast (v.10)*. There is a sweetness and a promise in those words.
  1. The Lord will gather together all that He loves. (The vision of marriage)
  2. We will go in with Christ to the marriage, not as mere spectators, but as friends of the groom.
- c. What is the oil? How do we fill our lamps? (Matt 6:33; Prov 15:9)
- d. We all get "tired" on this faith journey, but will you hold on to the righteousness of God.
- e. Are you ready? As God's people, we have all been invited and warned. One day the door will be shut. Those without a light were assumed to be party crashers.