

(Through the Bible) Matthew 25-26

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for the Lord's return, having the Holy Spirit, and showing compassion and kindness to those in need.

Duration: 1:34:00

Scripture: Matthew 25:31

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Kingdom Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being watchful and ready for the return of Jesus. The sermon focuses on the parable of the ten virgins, where five were wise and prepared with oil for their lamps, while the other five were foolish and unprepared. The speaker urges the audience to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit, highlighting the importance of being led by God. Additionally, the sermon discusses the parable of the talents, emphasizing the need to use our abilities and resources wisely for God's kingdom. The speaker encourages the audience to show love and compassion to others, especially those in need, as a reflection of our love for God.

Transcript

Shall we turn now to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25. In the 24th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the disciples came to Jesus and asked him what would be the signs that would precede the destruction of the temple and then the signs of thy coming and the end of the age. He had just left the scribes and the Pharisees and told them that they would not see him again until they said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And so Jesus was referring to another coming and so the disciples were questioning what will be the signs of thy coming and the end of the age. And so he proceeded to tell them the various signs that would indicate his return. And then having given to them many of the signs and the events that would take place prior to his return, his coming in clouds of glory to establish God's kingdom upon the earth, he then said to his disciples that the important thing for them was they should be watching and they should be ready because they will not know the day or the hour that the Son of Man is coming.

Paul wrote to us in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, he said of the times and the seasons you have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves know perfectly well that the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night, but you are not the children of darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Now, the Lord does expect us to be aware of the times and the seasons. However, we do not know the day or the hour.

Therefore, the word of Christ to us is to be watching and to be ready. And he gave to them a series of parables and the emphasis of the parable was to be watching or to be ready for the Lord because you don't know when he is coming again. So the important thing is that you are watching and that you are ready.

So we are continuing then as we get into chapter 25, these series of parables which have as the chief thrust the importance for us to be watching and the importance for us to be ready when he returns because unfortunately there will be some who are not ready and the coming of the Lord will catch them by surprise and they will not enter into the glorious marriage feast of the Lamb. Chapter 25, then shall the kingdom of heaven, then when, when Jesus of course comes again, then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and they went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish.

And they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all of those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us some of your oil for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered saying, not so, lest there not be enough for us and you. But go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came.

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgin saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Now, with this particular parable, there is both the injunctions to be ready for they that were ready went in and then he concludes by saying, watch therefore, because you don't know when he's coming. Now, again, with the interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins, there are probably ten interpretations.

Rather than try and go through the various ways that this parable has been interpreted, I will just share with you my understanding of the parable. And if you don't like my understanding, you can go ahead and pick something that fits or suits your schema. But I believe that the parable of the ten virgins, that the ten virgins are representative of the whole church, that the five Ys are representative of the true body of Christ.

Now, there is a vast church system in the world today. As Jesus said in his parables of the kingdom, how that the mustard seed grew into a tree and every bird came and lodged in its branches. There are all kinds of birds launching and lodging in the overall tree of the church.

Some of them not so good. As we look at the church today in the world, I think that it is safe to say, for the most part, the church is pretty apostate. There are surely many apostate ministers.

As Paul the Apostle said, there will come up from among your own group, those who will depart from the faith, seeking to draw men after themselves, and many of them departing from our very Lord. And when you hear the unbelief and skepticism that is expressed by so many ministers today, unbelief in the Bible as God's inspired word, unbelief in the virgin birth in Jesus Christ, unbelief in the atoning death of Christ, and

yet they call themselves ministers, and yet they are part of major denominations, and yet they are embracing all kinds of ungodly doctrines. And many of them are extremely opposed to any fundamental view of the scriptures and especially to any evangelical approach to man.

So the church encompasses a broad spectrum of people, some converted and some unconverted. Surely this is declared in the messages of Jesus to the seven churches. They're in the first or the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation.

To many of the churches, the word of the Lord was repent, or else I'm going to come quickly. And the inference is that if you don't repent, you're going to be going into the great tribulation. In fact, he said that plainly to the church of Thyatira.

I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not. Therefore, I will cast her into the great tribulation and those that commit fornication with her unless they repent. The church, unfortunately, is not a true representation of Jesus Christ.

And I blush with shame at the history of the church. I blush with shame at the world council of churches today, the actions, the deeds of these men in the name of Christianity. But within this whole system of the church, God does have his faithful remnant, the true body of Christ.

Jesus said to the church of Philadelphia, thou has kept the word of my patients. There are those who are keeping true to the word of God. And within the church itself, there is the true body of Christ.

Now the oil is representative in the scriptures of the Holy Spirit. There are those who are trying to do the work of the ministry and the work of the gospel in the energies and the abilities of their flesh and their flesh only. The church has developed magnificent programs.

Some of the greatest genius of man has been dedicated to devising and scheming finance programs and enlargement programs and all of these kind of things whereby the church might be built into a great organization and structure that might influence the world through politics. But then there are those who are walking in the spirit, who are filled with the spirit, who are trusting in the spirit to guide the church, to build the church. Paul tells us in Romans, but as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And so it is significant that there were those foolish virgins who had their lamps but no oil. And as the result, when the cry finally came, behold the bridegroom cometh. Notice they were all lumped in one party until that final cry.

And then the real nature was exposed. And those foolish virgins lacking the oil, as they began to trim the wicks, they said, oh, our lamps are going out. And they realized at that time that they didn't have the true light.

But it was also at that time too late. And while they were gone to buy the oil, the bridegroom came and they that were ready went into the marriage feast of the Lamb. They that were foolish when they came back, they said open to us.

But the Lord said, I don't know you too late. Therefore, be ready. Not only that, walk in the spirit, be led by the spirit, depend upon the spirit of God, be filled with the spirit.

All of these are injunctions given to us throughout the New Testament. And watch therefore, because you don't know when the Lord is coming. Now, again, the kingdom of heaven is as a man who is traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods.

And to one he gave five talents. And a talent is actually a weight. And so the value depends on whether or not it is copper or silver or gold.

And to another he gave two and to another one. To every man according to his several ability. And he took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went out and traded the same and made them other five talents or increased them. And likewise, he that had received the two, he also gained another two, but he that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money. And after a long time, the Lord of those servants came and reckoned with them.

And so he that had received five talents came and brought the other five talents saying, Lord, you delivered unto me five talents and behold, I've gained beside them five more talents. And his Lord said unto him, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou has been faithful over a few things.

I will make the ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received the two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered unto me two talents and behold, I've gained two other talents beside them.

And his Lord said unto him, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou has been faithful over a few things. I will make the ruler over many things.

Enter down to the joy of thy Lord. Then he, which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know you, you're a hard man. You reap where you have not sown.

You've gathered where you have not sown. And I was afraid and I went and hid the talent in the earth and lo there thou has all the design. I give you back the talent you gave me.

And his Lord answered and said unto him, thou wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reaped where I did not. So, and I gather where I had not sown. You ought therefore to have put the money to the exchangers.

And then at my coming, I should have received my own with usury or interest. Take therefore the talent from him and give it to him, which has 10 talents for unto everyone that has shall be given and he shall have abundance, but him that hath not shall be taken away. Even that which he had and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth here.

Obviously the Lord is telling us that he is wanting us to be productive with his things. Whatever God has entrusted into our care or keeping God expects it to expects us to use it and to be productive with it, not to bury or to hide, not to try to just to preserve, but the Lord wants us to increase that which he has entrusted into our keeping. Now it is interesting to me that the amount that he gave to each one was according to that person's abilities, but the person who had the two was rewarded just as that one who had the 10 or the five in that in their doubling of what was given to them.

They were each commended to the Lord as good and faithful servants and were given their place into the kingdom. This parable would seem to indicate that our position in the kingdom of God, when Jesus comes to establish that kingdom upon the earth will be relative to the faithfulness now to the things of God that God has entrusted into our care. If God has placed things in my keeping, then I am responsible to be using those things to increase the kingdom of God.

And if I am faithful now in those things that God has entrusted to me, then according to that faithfulness will be my position in the coming kingdom. In one of the Gospels it said, he said to him, be thou ruler over 10 cities, enter into the joy of thy Lord. The Bible teaches that we are going to live and reign with Jesus Christ.

Jesus in his message to the churches, to those who overcame, he said that they would rule over the earth with a rod of iron looking forward to that day when Christ will establish his kingdom and our position in the kingdom determined on how I handle now those things. God is entrusted to me. Now God had entrusted to each one of his servants something and to each one that was entrusted by God with whatever it was, it was his responsibility to use it, to bring an increase unto the Lord.

It should cause each of us to seriously examine our own lives and seek first of all to understand what is it that God has entrusted to me of his kingdom, of his kingdom's goods. And then what am I doing with what God has entrusted to me? Am I a faithful servant or am I slothful in spiritual things, in the things of the kingdom? Do I have a very slothful attitude just seeking to hang on to the status quo rather than really seeking to use those things of God to their best advantage. Now Jesus declares in verse 31, when the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of the father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me meat.

I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me.

I was in prison and you came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we the hungry and fed thee or thirsty and gave you a drink. When did we see you a stranger and took you in or naked and clothed you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison and came unto you? And the king shall answer and say unto them, barely I stand to you in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me meat. I was thirsty.

You did not give me a drink. I was a stranger. You did not take me in.

I was naked and you did not clothe me sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then shall they also answer him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister unto you? Then shall he answer them saying, barely I stand to you in as much as you did it not one as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. And these shall go away

into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

When Jesus returns to the earth in glory to establish his kingdom upon the earth, the first order of business at his return will be the judgment of the nations in which it will be determined which of those people who have survived the great tribulation will be allowed to enter into the kingdom age. And so all of the people of the nations will be gathered before Christ for this period of judgment. So it is possible that a person could survive the great tribulation and see the Lord when he comes again and still not be able to enter into the kingdom age.

There will be a definite division at that point, as he separates the people, the nations, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats in Daniel chapter 12. As Daniel is asking the Lord, how long till the end? And the Lord informs Daniel from the time the daily oblations and sacrifices are caused to be ceased unto the end shall be 1290 days. And he said, blessed is he who comes to the 1335 day.

I believe that that signifies that this particular period of which Jesus is referring here in Matthew 25 will probably last for 40 days, which is the number of judgment in the scripture. Forty is the number of judgment that reigned for 40 days and 40 nights. And this is a numeric kind of a symbolism, the number of judgment.

And it would appear that Jesus will be judging for 45 days, actually, from the 1290 to the 1300. Let's get that straight. This period of judgment, though, in which Jesus will be judging the nation so that as Daniel said, or the Lord said to Daniel, blessed is he who comes to the 1335 day.

That is, if you make it to then you're in the kingdom, he will have cast off from the kingdom at that point. Those that he deems unworthy to enter in now notice to those referred to as his sheep. He said, come ye blessed of the father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

It is interesting how that so often the scripture refers to God's plan for our lives, having existed from the foundations of the world chosen in him. Paul said from the foundations of the world, God's plan, God's eternal plan for his children to share in the glory of his kingdom. Jesus prayed father.

I would that they who have been with me might share with me in the glory that they might see me with the glory that I have with you before the world ever was the glory of God's kingdom. Those that will be able to share it. Now, when did we see you hungry? When did we see you thirsty? When did we see you in these conditions? And Jesus responds in as much as you did it under the least of these, you did it to me.

There is a very beautiful story of a Martin of Turin. He was a soldier and he was a Christian. And as I was entering into a city on a cold day, there was a beggar in rags asking him for help, but Martin didn't have any money.

And so he took his coat, his army coat, and he cut it in half and he gave half of it to this beggar. It was sort of a tattered coat and all, but he was willing to share it with this man in need that night. It is said that Martin had a dream and in his dream, he saw the Lord standing with all of his holy angels in heaven.

And the Lord was wearing half of an army coat. In as much as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me. You know, whatever we do, we should do as unto the Lord.

And whatever we do as unto the Lord, the Lord will reward us for. So important that we be interested in people around us, in the needs of people around us. How can I say that the love of God dwells in my heart

if I close up my heart to the needs of people? James, in his practical exposition, bringing Christianity into the practical aspects, said that if you just say to a brother, oh, be fed, be warm and all, and yet you don't actually give him something, what good have you really done him? And he exhorts us actually to the practical aspects of reaching out, having compassion for those that are in need and reaching out to help those that are in need.

Surely in these days of economic crisis, we as true children of God should be very concerned with those less fortunate ones in our midst around us who are in need of help at this time. How can we ply luxuries upon ourselves when someone next to us is going hungry? Jesus said, inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, you did it to me. And those who were ignoring the needs of those around them, the goats, inasmuch as you didn't do it unto them, you didn't do it to me, Jesus said.

Now, there was one thing that I thought was interesting there. Depart from me, verse 41, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. God did not prepare Gehenna for man.

It was prepared by God for Satan. Therefore, God does not cast men into hell. He didn't prepare it for men.

He prepared it for Satan. However, if a person wants to align himself with Satan and go there, God will do his best to stop him. God has done his best to stop him.

He has sent his only begotten son to save men from that fate. But if a person wants to reject God's provisions, if a person is bent upon rebelling against God and joining with Satan's rebellion against God's kingdom, then a man can, by his own volition and his own choices, spend eternity apart from God. The last verse, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to life eternal.

Now, the question of whether or not a person is in torment and suffers forever is an issue that I hope doesn't exist, but I dare not seek to change what God has said or to modify what God has said. And here, Jesus said, depart from me, ye cursed into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to life eternal.

Now, just what that does mean, I'm not prepared to say, but I dare not try to modify it or change it. But really, why should you be so concerned about it? If you're not going there, you know, rather than being all, you know, upset over that aspect, just live for the Lord and escape the place. You don't even have to worry about it, whether or not it's temporary, whether or not you're consumed there, whether or not you're, you know, or you're going to go on for a period of time or whatever.

As I say, I, I, I would hope, but I don't know. Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these things. This is the end of now the Olivet discourse.

He now said to his disciples, now, you know, that in two days is the feast of the Passover and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Now this is interesting because this apparently was on Monday that Jesus gave the Olivet discourse. He had made his triumphant entry on Sunday, which is known as Palm Sunday.

And then the next day he came back into the temple and that, and he had been there the day before and cleanse the thing, drove out the money changes. The next day when he came back, the scribes and the priests and all said by what authority, and they challenged him on the issue. And so as they were leaving the temple, they said, Lord, what will be the sign of your coming and the destruction of the temple? And Jesus gave this Olivet discourse.

Now, as he had finished the discourse, now he said to his disciples, you know, in two days is going to be the feast of the Passover and the son of man is to be betrayed, to be crucified. Now, if he was saying this on Monday, it meant that the feast of the Passover in two days would of course be on Wednesday and Jesus was crucified on the feast day, the feast of the Passover. So it would appear that Jesus was probably crucified on Wednesday, which would then give you the three days and the three nights in the heart of the earth.

People have an awful hard time figuring that from a Sunday aspect, um, uh, from a Friday crucifixion to a Sunday morning, three days and three nights takes a lot of, um, juggling. So after two days, the feast of the Passover and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the people and to the palace of the high priest.

The high priest was called Caiaphas. Actually, there were two high priests, Caiaphas and Annas. Caiaphas, the appointment of the Roman government and Annas, the accepted one by the people, the religious people.

And they consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. But they said not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. So they were doing their best to keep this from happening on the feast day.

And yet in order that it might really fulfill the types of the old Testament, it was important that Jesus be crucified as the lamb of God on the feast day. So they were trying to avoid the feast day, but yet there was no way that they could because that was appropriate that, uh, that feast of the Passover in which they, uh, remembered how that the lamb was slain in order to save the firstborn. So the lamb of God establishing now a new covenant of God with people, it was important that it be on that day that commemorated the Passover lamb, Christ, our Passover suffering for us.

Now, when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at me. And when his disciples saw it, they had indignation saying, to what purpose is this waste? Now in John's gospel, he tells us that the disciple that declared this was Judas Iscariot. When this woman came and poured this expensive perfume on Jesus, perfume that was worth several thousands of dollars, Judas became indignant and he said, is what, what purpose is this waste? Now, John tells us that Judas said that could have been sold for several thousand dollars and we could have given the money to the poor.

But John tells us that he said that not because he was really interested in the poor. And this is, of course, where Jesus Christ superstar really, you know, stumbled and fell on his nose and really revealed the true character of the whole portrayal. Because in this portion, they seem to make Judas appear to be the hero of the whole issue.

Here, Judas is a very benevolent man. He has a great concern for the poor. And, you know, this waste, this extravagant waste upon Jesus when the money could have been given to the poor.

And Judas comes out as a shining hero. And Jesus becomes in that portion of the play, a extravagant, careless person who is disregarding the needs of others. But had they read on, John said that Judas said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was holding the money and had been thieving out of it.

So Judas wasn't really a very magnanimous kind of an individual concern with the poor. He is holding the bag of money and had been thieving out of the money. And he figured, wow, if we had that in the treasury, there'd be more to pilfer.

So they said this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. And when Jesus understood it, he said to them, why do you trouble the woman? For she has wrought a good work upon me. For you have the poor always with you, but me you will not always have.

For in that she has poured this ointment on my body. She did it for my burial. And I say unto you that wherever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this be declared that this woman has done.

It'll be declared what she has done and told for a memorial of her. Now in this Judas was rather rebuked by Jesus for the statement that he made. And so he left.

One of the 12 called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest and he said unto them, what will you give me? And I will deliver him unto you. And they covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver. And from that time, he sought the opportunity to betray Christ.

Of course, the 30 pieces of silver was a price that was predicted in prophecy in the old Testament, in the book of Zechariah chapter 11 verses 12 and 13. And then it was told also by Zechariah that the silver would be cast down in the house of the Lord and used to buy a potter's field. 30 pieces of silver was the price that you would have to pay to your neighbor.

If you had an ox who was always goring people or going around budding people with his horns, and he happened to gore your neighbor's servant and kill them, you would have to pay your neighbor 30 pieces of silver for his gored slave in order to compensate him for the loss of his servant. As in Zechariah said, and name for me the price of which I am prized of you. And they measured out 30 pieces of silver and he said, a good price that I was prized of them, throw it down in the house of the Lord.

And so Judas turning against Christ, seeking now to betray him, looking for the opportunity. Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus saying unto him, where will you that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, go into the city to such a man and say unto him, the master saith, my time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.

And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them and they made ready the Passover. Now remember that in among the Jews, their day does not begin at midnight as does ours. Their day begins at sundown.

So they celebrate their Sabbath dinner, not on Saturday night, but on Friday night because their Sabbath begins at sundown Friday night and goes till sundown Saturday night. So Jesus having the Passover dinner with his disciples had it at the beginning of the day of Passover, which began at sundown. And so in the evening they ate the Passover meal together.

But that day continued till sundown the following day. So that on the first day of the feast of the Passover, as the disciples came, it was to prepare the meal for the Passover. And then was not like we take a piece of bread and we drink a cup and have communion, but there was a feast.

They were, they would roast the lamb and they would eat the whole thing. And it was just a time of feasting. And in the early church, they had feasts.

They called them the agape feast. And so at sundown, they were to have the thing ready and prepared. And they ate then the Passover dinner with Jesus.

And then of course, it was that night that Judas came in the garden of Gethsemane and the following day, which would have been the day of the feast of the Passover is when Jesus was crucified. So when the evening was come, Jesus sat down with the 12 and as they did eat, he said, verily, I say unto you that one of you is going to betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful.

And they began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, he that dips his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. Now the son of man is going as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed. It had been good for that man.

If he had not been born, what an awesome thing to say of an individual, but well, might that be said of every man who betrays Christ? Well, might that be said of every man who refuses to accept Jesus Christ? It would have been good for that person. Had they never been born then to be born and to live and to reject God's provision for their salvation. You'd be better off if you had never been born then to reject God's law.

Then Judas, which betrayed him answered and said, master, is it I? Of course, he'd already made the agreement. He knew it was him. He had already made the covenant.

And Jesus said, you said it. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and he blessed it and he broke it and he gave it to the disciples. And he said, take, eat.

This is my body, the broken bread. Jesus relates it now to his body. And he took the cup and he gave thanks.

And he gave it to them saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom.

Now here, Jesus institutes what we commonly call the Lord's supper. That which we observe here at Calvary chapel and we'll be observing Thursday night as we take the broken bread and as we take the cup. And as we remember Jesus Christ, his body broken for us, his blood that was shed for our sins.

As we remember the new covenant that God has made in the blood of Jesus Christ, the old covenant was established through Moses, the covenant whereby man could relate to God whereby a man might come to God. And under the old covenant, man approached God through a priest who offered a sacrifice for that man and for that man's sin. And the priest would go in and approach God for that man.

Jesus said, now we're establishing a new covenant, a new approach to God that approaches through Jesus Christ. In the book of Hebrews, the author goes to great length to declare how much better covenant we have through Jesus Christ. Showing that the covenant that got it established by the priesthood of Levi was something that had to be continued year by year.

Had the sacrifice been complete, they would not have had to have made it every year going into the Holy of Holies, but Jesus Christ has established a better covenant, a better way in once and for all giving his life for us that we through him might be able to come to God and to relate to God. The whole basis of God's covenant with man is relationship with man, man with God. And that basis by which I can come to God

and relate to God.

Now God has made the way for all of us to come and it's through Jesus Christ and the blood that he shed for our sins. And so Christ is establishing now through this memorial, the Passover that of which the Passover supper was always looking forward to. They observed the Sabbaths and the new moons and all Jesus or Paul said, which were all a shadow of things to come, but the substance, the body is of Christ.

All of the observances of the Passover feast in the old Testament were all of them just looking forward to the actual lamb of God who would give his life for the sins of the world and establish a covenant whereby man through him could come into a oneness with God. So that beautiful covenant whereby we come to God through Jesus Christ. Now I look forward to that day when I drink of it in his father's kingdom with him, I'm going to have a glorious Lord's supper someday.

And we're going to just be there with Jesus in the kingdom of God. Now, when he had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. I wish that they had had 24 track recording studios in those days.

Man, would I love to have a cassette of Jesus singing with his disciples, the 12 singing men. Judas was already gone. So that left the 11 with Jesus.

What did they sing? Actually, they sang Psalm 136. This is the Psalm they traditionally sang at the close of the Passover. And so you can go back and you can read the lyrics of the song that Jesus sang, the hymn that he sang with his disciples there in Psalm 136.

Um, that Hallel Psalm, which is traditionally sung at the end of the Passover feast. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. Oh, give thanks unto the God of gods for his mercy endureth forever.

Oh, good. Thanks to the Lord of Lords for his mercy endureth forever to him who alone does great wonders for his mercy endures forever to him by his wisdom has made the heavens and on through that Psalm that declares of the glorious mercies of God. And the law came by Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ, the demonstration of God's mercies for man.

Then says Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written in Zachariah, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answered and said to him, though all men shall be offended because of you yet will I never be offended.

And Jesus said unto him, verily, I say unto thee that this night before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And Peter said unto him, though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. And likewise, also said all the disciples.

Peter is guilty here of boasting in his flesh and really in a sense declaring that his love was superior to the love of the other disciples. When Jesus told him the prophecy of Zacharias, might the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered abroad. All of you are going to be offended tonight because of me.

Peter said, Lord, though they may be offended, I will never be offended boasting in the flesh. I will never be offended. And Jesus responded, Peter, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.

Peter continued to argue with the Lord, arguing with the Lord has to be folly. Have you ever engaged in that folly? I have. I have found myself arguing with the Lord.

I was always wrong. Peter was challenging the statements of Jesus, though they, I will never be Lord. I would never deny you.

I would die for you. Do not doubt Peter's sincerity. Do not doubt his devotion.

I believe that Peter was absolutely sincere when he declared this. I believe at that moment, Peter believed what he was saying to be absolutely true. I believe that Peter felt that he would actually die down his life for Jesus.

I will die with you. I would never deny you. But it does show us the folly of vows that are made, predicated upon the ability of our flesh.

To make a promise to God, to make a vow to God is only to trust in the flesh. Jesus later on will say to Peter, Peter, your spirit indeed is willing. That's right.

Your spirit is right. There's no problem there. But your flesh is weak, a common ailment that we all know.

It isn't a question of my spirit. It isn't a question of my love. It isn't a question of my devotion.

It isn't a question of my sincerity or even of my desire. The question is the weakness of my flesh. That's the problem.

That's where the problem lies. I love the Lord. I want to serve the Lord with everything I have.

My problem is that I am living in a body of flesh and it is weak. Now it is important that I know that it is weak so that I do not trust in it. And this is what Peter was needing to learn.

Jesus knew it all the time. The Bible says he knows our frame. He knows we're but dust.

I don't know my frame. I am often prone to think that I am stronger than I really am, wiser than I really am, more capable than I really am. And because of my feelings of ability, the confidence that I sometimes have in my ability, God must reveal to me the weakness of my own flesh in order that I will learn not to rely upon myself but to rely completely on him.

If I am relying in myself, if I become a self-reliant person, then my strength is always limited to me. My abilities are always limited to me. But if I learn that I am weak, that I can't do it, and I learn to trust in the Lord and to trust in his strength and trust in his ability, then I have unlimited strength and unlimited abilities.

And God wants to bring you to the broader dimensions of unlimited strength, unlimited potential, unlimited abilities by trusting in him to do the work. And Peter needed to learn that. And his spirit indeed was willing, but his flesh was weak.

Jesus knew it. Peter didn't. Peter needed to know it.

And of course, he found out in a little while. Then came Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane. And he said unto his disciples, sit here while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. And he began to be sorrowful and very heavy. The whole thing, the pressure began to come upon Jesus at this point.

And he said unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Tear ye here and watch with me. It's almost as though Jesus is bringing these three who he had brought into that close intimate relationship with himself, the three who had the privilege of being on the Mount of Transfiguration with him, the three that were so often designated for special missions.

Fellas, stay with me. Watch with me. My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death.

Watch with me. And sort of reaching out for that support from these, his closest associates. And he went a little farther and he fell on his face and he prayed saying, oh my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. If what is possible? If remission of sins is possible.

Oh, how this speaks against the blasphemous works of man to be accepted by God. A man thinking that he can offer to God his own good works in order that he might receive the remission of his sins. How this speaks against the efforts of man to be accepted by God by any other means.

If it is possible, if salvation for man is possible, if man can be saved by being sincere, if man can be saved by being good, if man can be saved by being moral, if a man can be saved by being religious, if there is some other way by which sins might be remitted, let this cup pass from me. Christ is calling now for an alternate plan and yet he declares, nevertheless, not my will, thy will be done. And there submitting himself unto the will of the father is what involves the taking up of the cross.

Jesus said to us that if we would come after him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. What does he mean? Take up our cross. It means that I too must submit my will totally to the father.

Let me say that it takes far greater faith to submit yourself totally to God and to commit your life and all totally to God that takes far greater faith than it does to insist that God heal you or that God do something for you. These people that are going around declaring that you should demand from God whatever you want and insist upon it, make your confessions and God must acquiesce to your will, have no understanding of God, the nature of God, nor of our relationship to him. Jesus expressed his will and that's fine.

I often in prayer express my will to God. Lord, this is what I would like to see. This is what I would like to have.

But whenever I express my will to God, I always make that reservation, nevertheless, not my will, your will be done because I know that God's will is much better than mine and God's ways are much better than mine. And Jesus here is declaring, if it's possible, let the cup pass. Nevertheless, not what I will now.

What the cross of Christ then declares and should declare to all men is that there is only one way whereby a person can be saved. For had it been possible, surely God would have taken an alternate way as his son cried out to him there from the garden. If you could be saved by being good or moral or whatever, then God would have inaugurated morality, a law, a code by which you could live and abide and be accepted by God, be forgiven.

But such was not the case. The new covenant must be established in the blood of Jesus Christ. The cross was an essential for salvation.

And that's why the cross offends people today because the cross always declares there's only one way by which a man can approach God. And that's through Jesus Christ. Now, he came to his disciples and he found them asleep and he said to Peter, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Here, when Jesus needed their support more than any other time, he was bereft of it, for they were sleeping instead of watching, instead of praying, instead of being there to encourage and strengthen. His disciples were weary and they were sleeping and Jesus wakes them up and sort of chides them.

Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. And then understanding it, oh, I know your spirit indeed is willing. It's not, that's not your problem.

Your flesh is weak. I know that. I know that.

And he went away again the second time and he prayed and he said, oh, my father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. Consigning himself now completely to the father's will. Lord, your will be done.

And again, he came and found them asleep for their eyes were heavy. And so he left them and he went away again and he prayed the third time saying the same words. Then came he to his disciples and he said unto them, sleep on now and take your rest.

Now, these are not words of scorn or rebuke, but these are words of tender love to those men that he'd become so close to. Notice there is a colon there. Sleep on now.

Take your rest. Probably there's an interval of several hours designated by that colon. And I believe that during this interval of time, as the disciples wearied were sleeping there on the ground in the garden of Gethsemane, that Jesus just sat.

You can't watch with me, but I'll watch over you. And he was waiting, waiting for Judas to come, waiting for the inevitable to happen. And I think he was just sitting there looking at these fellows and loving them and and praying for each of them.

I think he just sort of went around the circle and said, oh, Lord, there's Peter. He's going to blow it so bad and he's going to be so discouraged. He's going to feel so guilty and it's just going to eat at him.

Lord, just really help Peter. Lord, just really work in his life. And Father, use him as the instrument to strengthen the others.

When you've done your work in him, Jesus said, Peter, I have prayed for you that your faith fail thee not. And when thou art converted, strengthen your brothers. I think Jesus was probably praying that right at this moment as he was sitting there watching the disciples.

And there's an interval of time of perhaps several hours because he had gone to the garden after the dinner. And the dinner usually began somewhere around six o'clock or so. And after the dinner, they had gone to the garden.

There he spent the time in prayer. And then it wasn't until towards morning when Judas came out. Because it was while he was still at Caiaphas that the rooster began to crow, indicating that it was, you know, getting to be close to morning.

They start crowing when about five o'clock in the morning or so. So for a couple of hours, probably Jesus just sat there looking them, watching over them, praying for them, knowing the heartache, knowing that the confusion that they were going to be experiencing, knowing the whole experience that they were, the trauma that they were going to go through when they saw him crucified. I think that he was just praying that the Father would strengthen them in both.

And how often I wonder he sits over us, watching us and says, oh Lord, Father, you know, he's there making intercession for us. Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for you. And how many times he just sits watching you as you sleep.

And just says, now Father, you're going to have a rough day tomorrow. You're going to be facing a lot of problems. Lord, just really strengthen them.

Father, you know, minister to them and all. How beautiful. How beautiful.

Jesus sitting there in the garden. Watching over his disciples. Now that interval of time has passed and Jesus then said, fellows, wake up.

Behold, the hour is at hand. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going.

Behold, he is at hand who betrays me. He could probably hear the soldiers coming through the garden. Hear them as they were coming down the path from the Kidron Valley, making their way from the house of Caiaphas and all.

And noise seems to travel so easily in that country. And while he yet spoke, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priest and the elders of the people. Now, he that betrayed him gave him a sign saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same as he, hold him fast.

And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him. This is an interesting word in the Greek because it says in the Greek there is a word for kiss, which is, you know, the peck on the cheek that you give your wife when you leave in the morning. And then there is another Greek word for kiss, which is a passionate kiss.

And it is interesting that these two Greek words are employed. Judas said, Whomever I kiss, that is that sort of a peck on the cheek kind of a thing, that's him. But when Judas came and said he kissed him, the other Greek word is used, kissed him passionately.

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, why have you come? Then they came and they laid hands on Jesus and took him. Another gospel says, Judas, do you betray me with a passionate kiss? And behold, one of them, which was with Jesus, we know from the other gospels it was Peter. Of course, you'd just know it anyhow, wouldn't you? Stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck a servant of the high priest and smote off his ear.

He can be glad that Peter was half asleep. He'd have had his head. Then said Jesus unto him, Put again thy sword into its place.

For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Don't you realize that I could pray to the Father and he would presently give me more than 12 legions of angels? Peter, don't you realize yet what's going on? I don't have to do this. He was submitting to the will of the Father.

I could escape this Peter right now. I could say, okay, Father, it's enough. And 12 legions of angels would come down, deliver him out of their hands.

He didn't need Peter swinging away with a sword. In the Old Testament, we read that when the angel of the Lord passed through the army of the Syrians, the camp of the Syrians, in one evening, one angel slew 185,000. Imagine what 12 legions could do.

The Roman legions of which they were so familiar and terrified. What could they do against a legion of angels or even against one angel? Peter, don't you realize that I could call 12 legions of angels to deliver him? But if I did that, how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? If I call now for deliverance, how could the scriptures be fulfilled? How could man be saved? And in the same hour, Jesus said to the multitudes, are you come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple. You didn't lay hands on me, but all of this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

And then all of the disciples forsook him and fled. They suddenly just sort of disappeared in the darkness of the garden as the attention was upon Jesus. And he was alone.

And they that laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace. And he went in and he sat with the servants to see the end.

And now the chief priests and the elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death. But they found none, though many people bore witness, yet they really didn't find any that they could use until finally there came two witnesses who said, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose and said unto him, don't you answer anything? What is it which these are witnessing against you? Now, of course, Jesus was talking about the temple of his own body.

He said, they said, you know, they in asking for a sign, he said, destroy this temple in three days, I'll build it. So now they are using this phrase and saying he said, you know, destroy the temple of God. He could rebuild it in three days.

Of course, even when Jesus said that, they challenged him. They said, hey, we've been 46 years building this thing. What do you mean you could build it in three days? But he was talking about the temple of his own body.

But Jesus held his peace and the high priest answered and said unto him. Now, Jesus didn't respond until the high priest then with this oath challenged him. He said, I adjure thee by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Messiah, the son of God.

Now he's adjuring him by the father, by the living God. And so Jesus then responds to him and he said unto him. Now has said, or you said it.

Nevertheless, he said, I say unto you hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes saying he has spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of any witnesses? Behold, now we have heard the blasphemy.

What do you think? And they all answered and said, he is guilty of death. And they did spit in his face and they buffeted him and others smote him with the palms of their hands. In Isaiah chapter 50 verse six, as Isaiah is prophesying concerning Jesus, he said, I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.

I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Spitting is in that Oriental culture, a sign of total disdain. And that isn't really the spitting of the saliva that is in your mouth.

They really dig deep and it's horrible. We have had them spit at us over there. The people in that culture, if you do, if you take a picture, for instance, and they don't want you to take a picture of them, then you better be able to duck.

They show their disdain by just spitting on a person. It's just absolute disdain. It's one of the most shameful things that you can do.

Of course, that's easily recognized. Now, Isaiah said they plucked his beard, grabbed handful and pulled out. They buffeted his face.

One of the gospels tells us that they covered his face and then buffeted him, which is far more painful. Our bodies are marvelously designed and we have tremendous reflex actions so that if I see a blow coming, my body instinctively reacts to that blow and I give with it. And by giving with that blow, I am cushioning the blow so it isn't as severe.

When the quarterbacks really get hurt is when they get blindsided. They see those big 275 pound tackles coming at them and they relax and they just sort of, you know, go limp and roll with it. And you're in good shape as long as you can see it and you can, your body responds and reacts and you, with that reflex action, you give with the punch.

But if you don't see it, when you're blindsided, you're not expecting it. That's when you really get injured. That's when you really get hurt.

And in the same in boxing, it's when you're coming in that a guy catches you flush and you're not, you know, and you're not able to move back. A lot of you think, well, how can he take all that punishment? Well, you learn to give with the blows. You learn to be relaxed and you cushion the blow by giving with it.

The knockout punch is when the guy isn't giving, he's coming in and suddenly you catch him with a blow as he's coming in and he gets the full force of it. And that's the thing that knocks the guy out. Now in covering the face of Jesus, it took away this advantage of reflex actions and of cushioning the blows so that with the face covered and then they began to hit him, it was the full impact of the blow.

And then they would cry out, prophesy, who was it? Name me. Who was it that hit you? All of this, he endured because he loved you. Now Isaiah goes on in chapter 52 to tell of that suffering that Jesus

received.

And he said, as many were astonished at thee for his visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of man. In the Hebrew, that is declaring his face was so marred, you could not recognize him as a man. By the time they pulled out his beard and put the sack over his head and began to hit him on the face and buffet him.

Face began to swell up, contusions and bruises and the whole thing. When they were through with him, you could not recognize him as a man, as a human being. And Isaiah said, we, as it were, hit our face from him.

That is looking at him was such a shocking experience. You couldn't stand to see it. You ever come upon an accident and you see persons that were so mangled that, you know, you just had to turn your head.

You just couldn't look. That's what Isaiah is saying. It was like we, as it were, hit our faces from him.

But then Isaiah said, but he was bruised. He was wounded for our iniquities. It was for me, wounded for me, chastised for our peace.

Now, Peter was sitting outside of the palace and how it must have hurt for him to see all this going on. But yet by this point, seeing such fierce anger and the crowd turned against Jesus with such venom, fear gripped his heart. And when a damsel came to him and said, you were also with Jesus of Galilee.

He denied before all of them saying, I don't know what you're talking about. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him and she said unto those that were there, this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again, he denied with an oath.

I do not know the man. I swear unto you, I don't know him. And after a while there came unto him those that were standing by and they said to Peter, surely thou also art one of them for your speech gives you away.

You have the accent of a Galilean. And then began he to curse and to swear saying, I know not the man and immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times.

And he went out and wept bitterly. How my heart goes out to Peter because I can identify with Peter. For I have been in the same place where I have done that, which I swore I would not do that, which I promised God I would never do.

I have failed my flesh has failed. I also am guilty of denying the Lord by actions, by deeds, denying the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The comforting thing to me is the fact that Peter was restored, not only restored, but God used him in a marvelous way.

Though Peter had many flaws, though he was impulsive, though he would swing easily with the sword, though there were many times when he was rebuked and though he was even guilty of failing under the pressure in the crisis. Yet the Lord took Peter and used him in such a marvelous way as an instrument in the development of the church that encourages me because I know that God can use men like Peter and thus he can use men like me. But it is first of all necessary that God prepared that man that he uses for you are his workmanship created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has before

ordained that you should walk therein.

And God is working in our lives to take away our confidence in our flesh, to bring us to the awareness of our need of relying totally upon Jesus Christ. So that as God begins to do the work in and through our lives, we will not be taking the credit or the glory for the work that God has done. Recognizing that my flesh is weak and in and of myself, I can do nothing.

As God works through me, I can only praise God and magnify the Lord who uses imperfect instruments to do his work as he anoints them with the power of his Holy Spirit. And I can only seek to be empowered by the Spirit of God in such a way that it will overcompensate for the weakness of my own flesh. And then I glory in the victory that God gives to me through the Spirit.

God wants to work in each of us. God has given to each of us a talent. It is important what we do with that talent.

It is very important that we do not bury it, but that we use it for his glory. That we increase that which God has entrusted to us and give it back to him with the increase. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for these lessons.

Hide them away in our hearts. Teach us thy truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6510.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-matthew-25-26/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net