

The Ten Virgins (Reading)

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual preparation and being ready for Christ's return, highlighting the difference between the wise and foolish virgins and the sleep of the godly and hypocrites.

Duration: 1:03:16

Scripture: Genesis 6:3, Isaiah 63:10, Hosea 7:16, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 25:1-13, Acts 7:51

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, Reverend Robert Murray McChain focuses on the parable of the ten virgins from Matthew 25:1-13. He addresses the congregation, dividing them into two classes: the wise and the foolish. The wise are those who have the gift of the Holy Spirit and show genuine sympathy and grace. They speak the language of Canaan and have a true relationship with God. On the other hand, the foolish are those who only profess their faith but lack the genuine presence of the Holy Spirit. Reverend McChain warns the unconverted members of the congregation about the consequences of their actions, urging them to repent and turn to God before it is too late.

Transcript

O Lord, Thou hast taught us in Thy Word that midnight is coming, and not the midnight that all the world looks forward to today, but the midnight of Thy return, O blessed Savior. O Lord, we confess to Thee we are not worthy of the least of Thy mercies. And what a blessing, O Lord, that we were brought through another year, through the trials and temptations, through the strife, but also to experience the joys and the mercies and the benefits Thou hast bestowed.

O Lord, we come before Thee and humble ourselves at Thy throne and confess, O Lord, we are not worthy, and Thou should enter under our roof. We have sinned away every mercy and grace. And yet, O Lord, we bless Thy name that Thou hast brought us hitherto.

Yet, Lord, we plead that Thou will prepare our souls for the midnight hour of Thy return, that none of us here would be counted foolish, unwise, giving away the birthright that Thou hast given in the promise for the soup, for the empty pottage of this world and its treasures, or for the fig leaves of a self-made righteousness. O God, we beseech Thee, send Thy Spirit and work in each of our hearts and convict us of our sins so that we can't go on in the world or in religion, but that we lose all our life in our own hands and flee. O Lord, bless Thy Word to that end tonight.

We beseech Thee, Lord, grant us the rich blessing of Thy Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into all the truth. Lord, we pray that as we gather in Thy house for the last hours in this year, that our hearts would reflect upon Thy care, upon Thy providence, upon Thy chastisements and Thy instructions, that we would bless Thy name, O Lord God, as the psalmist said, O come, my soul, bless Thou the Lord, Thy Maker, and all within me bless His holy name. O Lord, Thou hast provided so bountifully.

O we pray, Lord, open our eyes that are in Thee the triune God bestowed for the sake of Thy people. O Lord, Thou hast purchased all, every gift, both spiritual and natural. Lord, we pray that this night we would have a view of the riches that Thou have bestowed upon us.

O Lord, we pray that, O Lord, make it real and personal, without Thee for our soul and as our portion. O Lord, we pray to hear it again. We pray also for the denzels in Florida, be their refuge and their help, and grant that Thy blessing may rest upon them and the reading and the instruction and the preaching of Thy word that they hear.

O Lord, we pray that Thou wilt extend Thy kingdom, that Thy name would be published from the river unto the ends of the earth and made known. O Lord, we pray for those who on a day like today remember and think of their relatives, though they're in a faraway place. Lord, be their comfort, strength and sorrow and burdens.

O Lord, Thou hast promised to carry the heavy burdens. And we pray that for all Thy servants, some persecuted unto death, O Lord, Thou wilt give them a crown of life. We pray now, O Lord, that Thou wilt be with us and go from heart to heart.

We confess to Thee, O Lord, that without Thee, our means are vain, our words fall on the ground and don't have an effect. But Thou, O blessed Savior, doth carry the sword of Thy word and Thou art piercing through the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. Through the joints and marrow, Thou art a discerner of the hearts.

We pray that all the Lord Jesus said together, Matthew 25, goes verse by verse through the whole Bible. I'll read the verses. There is not in the whole Bible a parable that applies more accurately to this congregation than this.

Like the ten virgins, you may all be divided into two classes. Some of you are wise, I trust, and some, alas, are foolish. Like the virgins, you all profess a great deal, and yet some have the gift of the Holy Spirit and some lack it.

And the day is fast hastening when you will be separated. The truly saved among you will enter in with Christ and the rest will be shut out. For God's children are wise, the rest are foolish.

Those of you who are God's children are truly wise. First, not worldly wise. This is denied.

Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 26-27.

And the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Corinthians 3, verse 19. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Matthew 11, verse 25. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength. Not many of deep, profound mind are saved.

Not many men of learning, not many of your sages worldly men, men wise to drive a bargain. These are often passed by. And God takes some little child who knows nothing of the world or some peasant from behind his plow and brings him to glory.

Why? Just that no man may boast and say, it was my wit that saved me. Second, yet God's children are wise. The only wise in this world.

First, they see things as they truly are. You that are mere professors do not see things as they truly are. You do not see time as it truly is, the threshold of eternity.

You do not see how short it is, that three score and ten years are but a span. You do not see how rapidly it passes, like the swift ships, like the eagle to the prey. You do not see that it cannot be recalled, and that every moment is precious, that it is the time for conversion, the only time, else you could not waste it in mere pretenses to godliness.

They that are Christ see time as it really is. You do not see yourselves as you truly are. You have never seen what it is to be by nature children of wrath.

You have never seen the awful mountains of sin that are piled over your soul. You have never seen the lusts that bind your soul, the deep volcano of burning lust that is in your own bosom. They that are Christ see this somewhat as it truly is.

You do not see the favor of God. You have never seen how precious it is. You know the value of the favor of man, and therefore you wear a cloak of profession, but you know not the value of God's favor, for you would fly to Christ.

They that are Christ know this as it is. God's children do not rest in knowledge. Hypocrites always rest in their knowledge.

You can never tell them anything new. They say, I know that. Tell them of sin, of Christ, of judgment to come.

They think they shall be saved because they have knowledge, although this knowledge has never led them to rest on Christ, to pray, to leave their sins. But you that are Christ do not rest content with this. You not only know of Christ and speak of Him, but you do the things which He says.

You have turned from idols. You are the only wise. A child of God lives for eternity.

The hypocrite lives for time. This was all Judas lived for. If he could pass off for a while as a true disciple, if he could keep up appearances for a time, if he could indulge his lust and yet be esteemed a believer and a true apostle, he tried to keep up appearances to the last.

So Demas wanted to deceive Paul for his life, for this life, to be thought a brother. Alas, how many of you are thus foolish, living so as to keep up an appearance of being a Christian for a little time, though you know that you are living in positive sin and that you will be discovered before the world in a short time. You only are truly wise who live for eternity, who live as you shall wish you had done when you come to die.

Now secondly, the wise and foolish are alike in many things, verses three and four. The virgins were alike in many things. To the eye of man they appeared the same.

All were virgins, probably dressed in white, all their faces fair and comely. Each of the ten carried a silver lamp, bright and polished, and every lamp was lighted. Moreover, all of them seemed to have one object in view.

They went forth to meet the bridegroom. In one thing alone they differed. The foolish took no oil in their lamps, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

So it is with professors and God's children to this day. In many things man can see no difference. You enjoy the same ordinances.

You sit under the same pastor in the same seats. You come up together to the house of God in company. You sing the same psalms.

Your voices blend together and know here that that of God can distinguish the voice of the hypocrite from that of the wise virgin. You stand up for the same prayer, all equally reverent in appearance. You listen to the same sermons.

Sometimes you will be affected together. The feeling of sympathy runs through the midst of you, and no one can tell where it is, like early dew or where it is, the dew of the Spirit, the sympathy of nature or the sympathy of grace. You sit down at the same Lord's table and pass the bread from hand to hand.

You pass the cup from one to another. Oh, how affecting it is to think that so many in this congregation are but foolish virgins, that you will be parted in eternity to use the same speech. God's children speak the language of Canaan, but professors learn to imitate it, and at last no one can discover the difference.

They speak of convictions of sin, awaking, getting light, seeking Christ, finding Christ, closing with Christ, finding peace, when all the time their hearts are far from God and they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Oh, how sad it is to think that many a tongue that has spoken much about Christ's regeneration and the Holy Spirit shall yet want a drop of water to cool it in the burning lake. They utter the same prayers.

One of the great marks of a child of God is prayer. He loves to pray. Behold, he prayeth, he said of Saul.

But even this is imitated by professors who have a name to live and are dead. Often they will pray in secret with great meltings and affections. Often they will pray in public with great fervor and pathos.

And yet all the time they are living in sin and know it. Alas, how sad that many of you whose voices have often been heard in prayer may yet be heard crying, Lord, Lord, open to us, crying for rocks and mountains to cover you from the wrath of God and of the Lamb. They have the same outward behavior.

The truest mark of the children of God is their avoiding of sin. They flee from their old companions and old ways. They walk with God.

And yet even this is imitated by the foolish virgins. They go out to meet their Lord. They flee old sins for a time.

They hasten from their work to the house of God. They seek the company of God's children. Perhaps they try to save others and become very zealous in this.

Oh, how sad that many who now cling to the godly will soon be torn from them and bound up with the devils and wicked men. There is a difference. The foolish virgins have no oil in their vessels.

Professors are often striven with by the Spirit. In the days of Noah, he strove long to get men to leave their sins and enter the ark. Genesis 6 verse 3. So also with Israel in the wilderness they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 63 verse 10. And even in the days of Stephen, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do ye.

Acts 7 verse 51. In the Bible, in the ministry, by mercies, by afflictions, he strives like a man wrestling with you. He strives to make you quit your sins and flee unto Christ.

Most of you have in each or all these ways felt the Spirit's strivings. Still, they are not caught by the Spirit. All who are saved are caught by the Spirit, all caught of God.

Without this, no man will come to Christ, for the soul is dead. He teaches our lost condition, then he glorifies Christ. They are not dwelt in by the Spirit.

The Spirit dwells in all who come to Christ. John 7 verse 37. As a seal, in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed.

Ephesians 1 verse 13. The heart is the wax, the Holy Spirit the seal, the image of Christ, the impression. He softens the heart and presses on the seal, but not like other seals, he does not lift it away, but keeps it there.

As a witness, the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit. Romans 8 verse 16. The spirit of adoption crying Abba in the heart is the spirit bearing witness.

When the soul is taken into the child's place, it can use a child's liberty. As an earnest, the spirit is given. The earnest of the spirit in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 1 verse 22. A little in hand of the full reward. The Holy Spirit in the heart is a little of heaven.

The peace, joy, holy breathings, humility, communion of heaven, all begun. O my dear friends, be not deceived. Do not tell me you sit under this or that minister and have those convictions and liberty in prayer.

But are you changed? Have you received a new heart? Is heaven begun? Have you oil in your vessels with your lamps? Matthew 25 verse 5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. The bridegroom tarried. Certainly he desires to come.

As it says in the Song of Solomon, his desire is toward me. It will be the day of the gladness of his heart, the bridal day. And those that love Christ, love his appearing.

They cry like John. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Yet still he tarries.

Why is this? First of all, he is not willing that they should perish, that any should perish. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. But his longsuffering to us were not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3 verse 9. This is the reason why he tarries. He has compassion for the vilest and waits long before he comes. And secondly, he waits to fill up the number of his elect.

Christ is at this moment gathering a people from among the Gentiles. He is building up the great temple of the Lord, adding stone to stone. He cannot come till this is done.

When the last of his elect are gathered, then he will come. And thirdly, he waits to try the graces of his people. There are many of the graces of God's people that can only grow in time of affliction.

There is a plant in the garden which the gardener trampled beneath his feet to make it grow better. So it is with many of the graces of God's children. They grow better by being tried.

Now secondly, the sleep of the virgins, they all slumbered and slept. These words have been interpreted several ways. I have no doubt that the simplest interpretation is the true one.

That before Christ comes, all the Christian churches will fall into a deep slumber. The Bible shows that not only do hypocrites fall asleep, but true believers also. Hence we find the apostles sleeping at the Mount of Transfiguration and again at Gethsemane.

And Paul cries to the Romans, it is high time to awake out of sleep. How Christians sleep. The eyes begin to close.

When first brought to Christ, the eyes of sinners were opened to see the shortness of time, that it is but a span. The vanity of the world, all vain show. The exceeding sinfulness of sin.

And they saw sin covering them like devils and were amazed that they were out of hell. They saw Christ in all his beauty, fullness and glory. But now all these things become dim as to a sleeping man.

All outward objects are hidden. The soul no longer sees the shortness of time, the emptiness of the world, the vileness of sin, the glory of Christ. The ear does not hear his knockings.

Once the ear heard his voice. Amid a thousand, the voice of Christ was sweet and powerful. Now the soul hears as if it did not hear.

I have put off my coat. How shall I put it on? I have washed my feet. How shall I defile them? The sleeper dreams.

So the soul takes up with idols, vain fancies. When first awakened, the soul says, what have I to do anymore with idols? But now when Christ and divine things are hidden, the soul again takes up with vain idols. Hence comes first deadness and prayer.

How sweet prayer is to a believing soul. There is wonderful success to the throne, pouring out the heart, no separation, nothing kept back. But now there is utter barrenness.

The soul has no desire, no free access. Secondly, there is a fearful spirit, a sense of guilt now lies on the conscience, a stupefying sense of having offended God, a spirit of bondage. And thirdly, the believer does

not fear sin.

Once there was a sweet trembling fear of sin, a keeping far from the occasions of it, like Joseph. How shall I commit this great wickedness? Now there is a fearful familiarity with sin. That's how God's people sleep.

And now how hypocrites sleep. They lose all their convictions. At one time they had deep and clear convictions of sin, but now they lose them.

They have gone into some open sin and ground conviction. They quench the spirits. They lose their joy of divine things.

The stony ground hearers receive the word with joy, as a flash of delight. Something about the word attracts their fancy, eloquence or imagery or hoping they are converted. They flatter themselves and take great delight in hearing.

This soon dies away. They give up prayer. For a long time they prayed in a very melting manner.

When under convictions or under illuminations and a false hope or before others, they prayed with fluency, but now they give up prayer by degrees. They all slumber and slept. They have been out in company, or they are sleepy, or they have no relish for it, and so they give up prayer by degrees.

Between the two there is this great difference. The godly still have oil in their vessels, the others none. I would not say a word to encourage you who are godly to sleep on.

On the contrary, it is high time to awake out of sleep. But I cannot but remark how different is the sleep of the two. The godly will awaken out of their sleep.

It is very sinful and very dangerous, but it is not fatal. The hypocrite seldom ever awakens out of his sleep. The rarest conversion in the world is that of a hardened hypocrite.

While the godly are under the displeasure of God, yet they are not under his curse. But the hypocrite sleeps over hell. Now the coming of the bridegroom.

First we notice the time at midnight at an unexpected time. Christ will come. The whole Bible shows this.

Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Matthew 24 verse 36. It is like a thief.

The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. It is thus in two respects. In the uncertainty of the hour.

When a thief is going to break into a house, he does not tell the hour which he will come. He gives no signs of his approach. If the good man of the house knew what hour he would come, he would sit up and not suffer his house to be broken up.

Such will be the coming of the bridegroom. He know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. A thief comes at the hour of rest.

When the family have all gone to rest. When the good man of the house has locked and barred the door. When every candle is put out and every eye is sealed in sleep.

Then the thief comes and forces the bar and enters in. Such will the coming of the Savior be. When the world is steeped in slumber, Jesus will come.

Are you ready? Let me now speak a word to the unconverted. Some of you live in dishonesty in buying and selling. Some of you perhaps use the light weights and the false balance.

Some live in deeds of darkness. Perhaps you say surely the darkness will cover you. Some of you commit these things of which it is a shame even so much as to speak.

How awful will it be to you when his holy face appears. Some of you stifle convictions like Agrippa. You are almost persuaded to be a Christian.

Like Felix you tremble and say a more convenient season. Some of you put off your convictions with a little gaiety, a little worldly pleasure in saying, I have plenty of time before I die. Oh, what will you do when the cry comes at midnight? No time for a prayer.

No time for your Bible then. No time for conversion. At midnight there was a cry.

And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him.

Matthew 25 verse 6. There is something sweet in that midnight cry. The bridegroom cometh will revive the drooping hearts of his own chosen ones. It will remind us of the time that he chose us to be his own.

The time of love when he wooed us and said, Thou shalt be for me and not for another man. He that loved us and died for us and promised to return and receive us to himself. Behold, the bridegroom cometh.

Oh, consider, beloved friends, whether it will be a time of joy to you or a time of wailing. Fearless sinner, what shall then become of thee? Discovery. Our lamps are gone out.

A dry wick has often a great glaze for a while, so hypocrites often keep up their profession to the last. Often it is very showy and evident. Many things might awaken hypocrites.

The first thing that might awaken a hypocrite is their case as described in sermons. Often the minister is directed by God to speak exactly to their case. Often the word comes very close to their conscience.

We say, surely that man will take the word home. But it slips past some way or other. And the second thing that could be for their conviction is seeing others converted.

Often hypocrites see others undergo a saving change. They see them convicted of sin, made to lie in the dust, brought to Jesus, filled with joy, living a new life, overcoming the world. This might open their eyes to see that their professed change is false and hollow.

And the third thing that might convince a hypocrite is the death of others. It must be a solemn thing to be a hypocrite, to see others cut down. Death tears away every mask.

It calls the soul before the heart searching one. Pretended convictions, pretended grace, words of put-on godliness will not avail now. When hypocrites see others cut down, I have often thought, surely they will turn now.

Yet it is not so. They often burn on to the last. They have got a good name to live, and they do not like to lose it.

They have made a profession, and they do not like to draw back from it. Ministers have been pleased and satisfied with them, for godly persons have esteemed them, and they do not like all at once to give this up. So Judas was long esteemed a true disciple, and kept up his profession to the last.

Often do they delude themselves. They have some inward light and knowledge which they mistake for grace. They have a form of godliness, pray in secret and in the family, and so deceive themselves as well as others.

But their lamp will go out at the coming of Christ. Our lamps are gone out. Not one blaze more, not one spark more.

What is the reason? Well, there is no indwelling grace. Their lamps went out because they had no oil. So it is with the hypocrites in this congregation.

Many of you have had the spirit poured out on you as it was on Balaam and on Saul. Your eyes have been opened. You have had deep convictions, wonderful discoveries, panting desires after Christ and divine things, and yet you have never been brought by the working of the spirit of God to plead to Christ.

Oh, your lamp will go out and leave you in the blackness of darkness. Dear friends, make sure of a deep and real work of grace upon your hearts. Remember it is said that the man who built his house upon the rock digged deep and laid his foundation on the rock.

It is not every change that is saving conversion. Of many it is true. They return, but not to the Most High.

Hosea 7 verse 16. Do not be content with being civilized if you are not converted. It will not stand you in good stead in the great day.

They have to appear before Christ. It is an easy thing to appear a Christian before men. Man looks only on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.

As long as hypocrites have to appear only before men, they can keep up appearances. They can talk and read and pray as if they were God's children, but when the cry comes, behold the bridegroom cometh, then they know that they must appear before Christ. The searcher of hearts.

Oh brethren, there are many of you who can now come in boldly before men, though you know yourselves to be graceless, never born again, living in sin. You can sit down at a sacrament without fear or shame, but when Christ comes, your lamp will go out. You will not be able to bear the glance of his holy eye.

Oh pray for such an interest in Christ now, that you may stand before the Son of Man, the anxious application. So the foolish virgins cry out, give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. Hypocrites will then see the difference between them and the godly.

Their lamps will be out, but the lamps of the truly godly will be burning brightly and clearly. At present, hypocrites think they are as good as anyone. They think there is no real difference between them and God's people.

In that day, they will be convinced that there is a great gulf fixed between. They will see what a happy thing it is to have oil in their lamp. At present, many among you do not see your need of grace.

At present, the godly are poor and despised, often in trouble and chastened every morning, and you would not join them. But in that day, they will be like the stones of a crown, like the children of a king. They will apply to the godly.

At present, hypocrites despise the godly and would not apply to them for anything. When a truly godly person warns you or advises you, you are offended. But in that day, you will be in despair, glad to apply to anyone.

But there is a disappointment, not so, lest there be not enough for us and you. It is not in their power to give grace. It pleases God to use the godly as instruments, but He has not given them to be fountains of grace.

I have planted a pollis water, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. 1 Corinthians 3, verse 6 and 7. They have none to spare.

The righteous scarcely are saved. Every child of God gets just so much grace as will carry him to heaven and no more. Even now, every child of God feels that he has nothing to spare.

He is not too much of the Holy Spirit, helping him to pray, to mourn over sin, to love Christ. In time of temptation, a believer feels as if he had nothing of the Holy Spirit. He has more need to receive than ability to give away.

When Christ shall come in that solemn hour, he will feel that he has none to spare. O dear brethren, go and buy for yourselves. You that know yourselves graceless, go to Jesus before the cry is made, and get grace for yourselves.

The saints cannot give it you, ministers cannot give it you. All our springs are in Jesus. In him the Spirit dwells without measure.

Lord, incline their hearts to run to thyself. 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. Who are ready? All are not ready.

This parable shows that all who make a profession of being Christ are not ready. The foolish virgins appeared to be ready. They had their robe, their lamp, their wick, and flame, yet they were not ready.

It is not all of you that seem to be Christians that are ready. Many of you come to the house of God, sit down at sacraments, and make a profession of care for your soul, and yet you are not ready. Not all who are anxious are ready.

The foolish were anxious now. They had a throbbing heart. They went to buy.

Their cry was loud and bitter. Perhaps they shed bitter tears, and yet they were not ready. Many of you are anxious, going to buy.

You have wet cheeks when you go to seek the Lord, and yet you are not ready. If you were to die tonight, or if Christ were to come tonight, you would not be found ready. Who, then, are ready? First of all, those who have the wedding garment.

This you see in Revelation 19, verses 7 and 8. His wife made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of oprobrium. The king's daughter is all glorious with him.

Her clothing is of wrought gold. Psalm 45, verses 9 and 13, and in Matthew 22, verses 11, we find this was the first thing that struck the eye of the king, that the man had not on a wedding garment. This wedding garment is the righteousness of God, the skirt of Jesus cast over the soul, the imputed righteousness.

This is the first part of readiness to meet the heavenly bridegroom. Have you been shown your utter loathsomeness, that you are all as an unclean thing, all vile and filthy? Have you had a glorious discovery of the way of righteousness by what Christ has done, being reckoned to us? Have you lain down under the blood and white robe of the Lord Jesus? Then you are ready. Do not mistake.

It is not the knowledge of this imputed righteousness. Many people hear and know a great deal about this robe of righteousness, who have never put it on and are not awit the better. Knowledge will but condemn you and sink you deeper.

It is not a desire to have this righteousness. The slugger desires and has nothing. Many have lazy desires after Christ.

They are never satisfied, and they are none the better for them, like beggars wishing they were rich. It is not having it once put over us, and then something else afterwards. This fine linen must be granted unto us forever.

It is not that Christ is our righteousness at first, and we are our own holiness afterward. But it is Christ to the end. Our wedding garments in heaven must be Christ's blood-washed robe.

We must have it granted to us every day, every moment. Happy soul, who daily beholdeth thine own vileness, and daily receiveth that wedding garment to hide thy nakedness. Secondly, those who are ready are those who have a new heart.

Can two walk together except they be agreed? It is impossible that two souls can be happy together if they love opposite things. It is the same way with Christ's bride. She must be of one mind with Him if she would enter in with Him to the marriage.

None but God's children. Could you be happy with them? An eternal Sabbath? My highest notion of heaven is an eternal Sabbath with Christ. Could you be happy? Could you enjoy it? O my friends, there shall in no wise enter any that defile it, any that maketh or loveth a lie.

If you are still unborn, you are not ready. And thirdly, those whose lamps are trimmed. While the wise virgins slept, they were not ready.

True, they had the wedding garment and the oil in their vessels, but their lamps were dim, their eyes were closed. But when they heard the cry, they arose and trimmed their lamps, and now they were ready to meet and enter with the bridegroom. It is not every child of God that is ready.

Is a backslider ready? One that has gathered fresh guilt upon the soul and not got it washed away? One that is still lying under guilt and not hastening to the fountain? One that is standing with his back to the house of God and his face toward his idol? Is an idolater ready? One that once loved Christ and now puts

an idol in his place, entangled with some unlawful affection? Is the soul ready that has left its first love, grown cold in divine things? Was Solomon ready when his heart went after many wives? Or Peter when he denied his Lord? Oh, learn, dear friends, to stir up the grace that is in you. Stir up your faith in Jesus, your love to Him and to the saints. If you would be ready, watch, live among divine things, keep the eye open to the coming glory.

Secondly, the reward of those who are ready. They went in with Him to the marriage. Christ will own them.

Christ will take them in with Him before His Father and say, Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given Me, these are they for whom I died, prayed, reigned. At present, Christ does not publicly own His people or put a difference between them and hypocrites. The world does not know them.

The sun shines on the evil and on the good. Worldly men think we are like themselves. Saints do not often know us.

Often they suspect us. Often the children of God suspect one another unjustly. They have not this or that experience, this or that mark of God's children.

Often we know not ourselves. When the war of corruption is strong within, when we have fallen into sin, when grace is low in the soul, can I deem myself a child? But then Christ will own us, and that will put an end to all doubt forever and ever. The scoffing world will then know that Christ loved us.

They will then wish they had passed in their lot with us. The saints will see that we are Christ as well as they. They will have no more suspicion of us.

We will have no more doubts of ourselves. No more deadness, inconsistency, corruption, darkness, sin. Christ will confess our name before His Father.

He will say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Secondly, saints shall be with Christ. They went in with Him.

The greatest joy of a believer in this world is to enjoy the presence of Christ. Not seen, but felt. Not heard, but still real.

The real presence of the unseen Savior. It is this that makes secret prayer sweet, sermons sweet, and sacraments sweet. When we meet with Jesus in them, I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Often Jesus hides His face, and we are troubled. We seek Him whom our soul loveth, but He is gone. We rise and seek, but find Him not.

At best, it is but half bliss to seek after an unseen Savior. Suppose a husband and wife are parted by many seas. It is sweet to have letters and love tokens, and to see a friend who left them well.

But this will not make up for his or her presence. So we mourn an absent Lord. But when He comes, we shall be with Him.

In Thy presence is fullness of joy. At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16, verse 11 Here we have drops and glimpses of pleasure.

Christ could not be happy without us. We are His body. If one child of God were wanting, He would not be complete.

We are His fullness. Hence His prayer, We could not be happy without Christ. Take us to the golden pavement, the pearly gates, the songs, the thrones, the palms, the angels.

We would still say, Where is the God-man that died for me? Where is the angel that redeemed me from all evil? Where is Jesus? Where is the side that was pierced? We shall see His face. The Lamb is the light thereof. We shall stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion.

We shall never be parted anymore. Finally, the fate of the hypocrites. The door was shut.

The door of Christ stands wide open for a long time, but shuts at last. When Christ comes, the door will be shut. Now the door is open, and we are sent to invite you to come in.

Soon it will be shut, and then you will not be able to enter. Soon Christ will come like a thief, like a snare, like travail on a woman with child, and you shall not escape. Enter in at the straight gates.

They pray, Lord, Lord, open to us. At present, hypocrites do not pray, or not in earnest. They have a cold, formal, dull prayer.

But in that day, they shall cry in real earnest. At present, many of you would be ashamed to be seen in earnest about your soul, weeping or praying or going to a minister. In that day, you will lose all shame.

You will weep and howl and run to Christ's door in agony of spirit. At present, many of you are sought after by Christ. He has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

He is the shepherd seeking the one sheep that was lost. He stands at your door and knocks, stands and cries unto you, O men, I call. Turn ye, turn ye.

Sinner, sinner, open to me. In that day, it will be the very reverse. You will seek after the Savior in that day and not find Him.

You will stand and knock at His door. You will exert your voice and cry, Lord, Lord, open to me. What a scene this parish or this community will present in that day.

Those who come not to the house of God, old men and old women, gray-headed in carelessness and sin, young persons mad upon pleasure, children who live without Christ, you will be in earnest on that day. May this not rebuke some of you who pray not or pray in a cold, dull manner or in a form. Oh, you will pray in that day when too late.

Why not antedate that anxiety and begin to pray now? They were disappointed. The Lord answered, I know you not. Christ will own His own people.

I know them. The poor despised believers He will own, though the world knew them not. Christ will know them.

Not one shall be passed over in that day, but not so with the foolish virgins who have no oil in their lamps. Christ will not own them. Oh, it will be a fearful thing to be denied by Christ before His Father and the holy angels.

Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. See that ye have true grace in your hearts, that Christ is your righteousness, that your soul is alive. Amen.

Oh, Lord Jesus, these are Thy words. And Thou hast come with a winnow in Thy hand separating the precious from the vile, the wise. Oh, blessed Savior, Thy eyes are like flames of fire, and Thou wilt rule the nations with a rod of iron, and Thou wilt come to judge and separate.

Lord, we beseech Thee that we would antedate those cries, that before we do cry in that day, we would cry today for mercy, for the door to be thrown open to us, for Thee to come as Thou didst to Jacob of old and opened heaven and showed the blessed work of Jesus in communing, in saving Jacob with saving grace. Oh, Lord, we beseech Thee, granted to each of our souls, we confess to Thee, O Lord, we are utterly unworthy. And yet, O Lord, Thou hast spoken in Thy Word of mercy, of grace.

It is unearned. It does not depend on the desert of a sinner, but on the preciousness and the suitability of Jesus Christ. Oh, Lord, teach us to live to Thy righteousness and to Thy blood as our only hope for the future.

Midnight is coming. Lord, we pray Thee that we would be ready by the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. We pray Thee, O Lord, forgive all our sins, all the chorus of iniquity that goes up before Thee from among us, all the transgressions of a year gone by.

Oh, Lord, we pray in wrath, remember mercy. Be with our land and our people and cause us, O Lord, to bow before Thee when Thy judgments are in the earth. Oh, Lord, we pray for brokenness among us and around us for the glory of Thy name.

Grant repentance, we plead, and grant the day of Thy favor the day of revival and return. Oh, Lord, have mercy upon us. For Jesus' sake we pray.

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