

## A study of Jesus' Parables

### GOODBYE

There are moments in our lives that shock us—none more so than the tragic death of someone too young. For many of us, it will be hard to forget where we were when we heard the news that basketball legend, Kobe Bryant, died in a helicopter crash. Nine people, including Kobe and his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, died in the crash. Kobe's death rocked the world, even outside of sports.

Everyone who lives dies. It's a fact of life in this world. We often don't think about our own mortality. However, these shocking moments in life remind us, this life will not last forever. Honestly, I'm both saddened and somewhat fearful of that moment. All of us are. I hate goodbyes and I don't like pain, but I have hope.

We've covered a lot of ground in this study. In fact, we've discussed some of the most important lessons in the whole Bible.

However, before we say "Goodbye," we want to make one thing absolutely clear. Although all of us will die, Christ made it possible that we might live. The world is uncertain. We aren't promised tomorrow. Yet, the hope of the Gospel puts these worries and uncertainties to shame. For those who have a relationship with Christ, never do we really say, "Goodbye. For us, it's "See you later."

### MATT 25:1–13

<sup>1</sup> "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of the virgins were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take extra olive oil with them. <sup>4</sup> But the wise ones took flasks of olive oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> When the bridegroom was delayed a long time, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is here! Come out to meet him.' <sup>7</sup> Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> 'No,' they replied. 'There won't be enough for you and for us. Go instead to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> But while they had gone to buy it, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went inside with him to the wedding banquet. Then the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later, the other virgins came too, saying, 'Lord, lord! Let us in!' <sup>12</sup> But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you!' <sup>13</sup> Therefore stay alert, because you do not know the day or the hour.

### SCOUTING REPORT

**SETTING** Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem with disciples.

**NEED** Encourage preparation for his return.

**STORY** 5 wise & 5 foolish virgins before the bridegroom's arrival.

**TRUTH** Christ could return at any time. Stay alert.

### DISCUSSION

What is something that stood out the most from this study? How are you different?

ICEBREAKER

1. What people are in this story, what is their job, and what character quality distinguished them from each other? (1-2)

OBSERVATION

2. What behavior supports Jesus' character distinction? (3-4)

3. What 3 things happened while the foolish virgins were gone to buy more oil? (10)

4. What did Jesus mean by his application of this parable? What is at stake? (13)

INTERPRETATION

5. Based on your understanding of Jesus' principle, how do you follow his command to "stay alert"?

APPLICATION

Thank you for investing your time in this study. We hope to see you again next semester. If anything has been left unsaid, talk to your coach today.

## STUDY NOTES

### PANDEMIC

Not too many weeks ago, if I was talking to someone about Pandemic, I was referring to one of my favorite board games. Now, however, that word has a whole new meaning. The novel coronavirus, or Covid-19, has swept the world. And, as videos surfaced of people literally fighting over toilet paper, it's easy to see, we just weren't ready.

Not only were we not ready, but it has shown us the powerlessness of our idols. An idol is anything that we put in front of our relationship with God. For many people it's relationships, work, money, comfort, and even security. Well, the pandemic has hindered all of those things. For the first time in a long time, many people are asking, "Where is stability? Where is hope?"

For the last three Weeks of our study, we've been discussing eternity. We discussed that true wealth, eternal wealth, comes only through faith. Last Week, we discussed investing in eternity, and seeing your investment multiply in others. This week, however, we're going to see that prepping for eternity isn't for next year, next week, or even tomorrow. We must be ready starting now.

### A WEDDING PARTY ILLUSTRATES READINESS

Jesus told many parables about *the kingdom of heaven*. In this case, he said it *will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom*. Of these ten, there were two groups: *five wise* and *five foolish*. What distinguished these two groups was whether they brought *extra olive oil*.

In this parable, Jesus used an incredibly common event of a Jewish wedding. Although weddings in that time and place were very different than today, we don't have to understand the details of ancient Jewish culture to appreciate the point. Let's just examine the story. First, no one knew when the *bridegroom* was coming. Second, because of the delay, the foolish virgins ran out of oil for their lamps. Third, *while they had gone to buy* more oil, *the bridegroom arrived* and the foolish virgins didn't make the party. Jesus summarized the point, *therefore stay alert, because you do not know the day or the hour*.

We understand that Jesus is the bridegroom. Right now, he is gone. However, Christians of every generation believe that he will return. As this parable states, we don't know when, so we better get ready now.

### READINESS

As we prepare to close this study, I'm reminded of where we started—with the Parable of the Soils. This study has covered some of the greatest lessons about life and eternity from *the* Greatest Teacher to ever live. I dare say, if your life looks exactly the same as when we started this study, you've missed something. So, what have we learned in this study of Jesus' parables?

Remember in the Parable of the Soils that the good soils is the heart of the person who hears God's Word, responds to it, and bears fruit. This kind of person, the one who hears and obeys, Jesus calls a wise builder who builds their house on the rock. And, we should listen well because he is a Good Shepherd who makes a way for us to have a relationship with the Father. The Father who longs to have a relationship with his sons and daughters, the Father who runs to his children no matter how far they've run from him.

This love from the Father is a love that we're expected to pass on to our neighbor, not only to our friends, but also our enemies. God's love is an invitation to join him in the greatest celebration the world has ever known, and it's available to everyone. God's love is generous and spurs us to pray with persistence. God's love also challenges us to forgive much, because we have been forgiven an eternal debt.

Finally, a relationship with God through Jesus gives us hope for eternity. It shows us that wealth and privilege in this life is meaningless without the hope of heaven. Likewise, we have received a mission to multiply, to invest in eternity by bringing as many people as we can with us. And, every day remember that today could be the day that the Kingdom of God might come. I must be ready. I must live like today is my last. Although I hope tomorrow comes, nothing is guaranteed. I must be ready.

How can I be ready? Readiness involves relationships—your vertical relationship with God and your horizontal relationships with others. Very little else matters in the scope of eternity besides God and people. How is your relationship with God? Is it the best it has ever been? If not, why not? If you've taken a step backwards, we call that sin.

How are your relationships with others? Have you said or done something recently that if Jesus showed up, you'd be embarrassed? Have your interactions glorified Christ or defamed him? Are the friends you spend time with good soil, or like thorns and thistles, do they choke out the Word of God in your life?

As we put this study down, remember the lessons from our Lord so that when that day comes, you'll be ready.