

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

(Matthew 25 : 1 - 13)

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”



The symbols of the parable:

- **wise maidens** = Christians who take care of their souls during their life, adorning them like candles with faith, love and good deeds;
- **foolish / careless maidens** = reckless and negligent people who postpone doing good deeds and returning back to God, and who are surprised by death in this state;
- **lamps** = souls of man;
- **oil** = faith, charity, and good deeds done during earthly life;
- **light** from lamps = The love of Christ (Light of the world), the grace of Christ, which is ignited and maintained through the spiritual "oil";
- **Bridegroom** = Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church;
- **The delay of the Bridegroom** = the time of salvation given to men by Christ, from His Ascension to the end of the world and His second coming, for the Last Judgment;
- **falling asleep of the virgins** = they died, death being like a long sleep.
- **midnight** = the hour of the death of each; the end of the world;
- **the cry at midnight** = the trumpets of the angels proclaiming the second coming of Christ;
- **the wise virgins did not give oil to the unwise** = every man is responsible for his deeds;
- **those who sell oil** = the needy, who help us to be saved, because we have someone to give alms to;

- **watch!** = we should be always prepared, for the hour of death and the end of the world may come at any time.
- The **Kingdom of Heaven** is like a **wedding** in which there are several *brides/virgins* (good people with pure heart and body) and a *Bridegroom*: Christ. God the Son loves us so much that **He wants to unite with us** even more than a man and a woman are united through wedding.
- In every soul, divine light and love can be maintained only through faith, good deeds, and almsgiving, just as a lamp burns only if it has oil in it. **Christ tells us that we need this "oil" to prepare for the Kingdom of Heaven.** Christ is the *Light* of the world, and whoever wants to enter His kingdom must have the Light lit in his soul.
- Only the wise virgins could enter the bridal chamber. The other five were virgins, but "foolish," that is, **during their life they did not make good deeds that would enlighten their souls.** Whoever lives in virginity but does not give alms is driven out of the kingdom of heaven.
- At His second coming, Christ **will come unexpectedly**, when people will not even think He will come; **no one knows that moment, but only God the Father.** That is why we must always be careful at what we do, always be prepared, for no one knows the hour of his death, nor the time of the Second Coming. It is possible that whoever postpones his repentance and generosity till the hour of his death would not have time to do them if the death or Christ come unexpectedly. There are many people today who are thinking ahead of time about their deaths, even preparing their coffin and funeral clothes. They are wise if they think about helping others as well.
- The wise virgins *did not give oil* to the foolish ones not because they did not have compassion for them, but **because after death no one can do anything anymore for their own salvation or for the salvation of others** (Lazarus could not give water to the rich man in hell). Here, on Earth, we have a physical body which allows us to do good deeds; in the other world the soul cannot do anything without the body, nor is there anyone to be helped. Moreover, the good deeds of man will barely be enough for his own salvation at the Judgment, so the wise ones had no way to give; and every one will be judged for his own deeds, not for those of other people.
- The foolish virgins should have looked for the poor while they were still living. In vain they became loving of almsgiving after death. Christ said to them a harsh word: "*I do not know you*", because they had nothing in common with Him, as the Light has nothing in common with the darkness.
- Teaching about work: if you don't do your duty at the right time, it's worthless to be sorry later, you cannot turn back the time.

Let us wait for Our Savior ever increasing in faith, prayer, and good deeds, to meet Christ as a Bridegroom at the time of death and at Judgment, not as a Punisher.

In Jewish tradition, weddings were held in the evening. The bridegroom started from his house towards the bride's house, accompanied by friends, and the bride was waiting for him with her girlfriends, welcoming him with lit candles to illuminate his way.

Many times the bridegroom was delayed because of the negotiations that took place between the parents regarding the bride's dowry.

Gathered Treasures

Once upon a time there was a stingy man who lived in a city. All his life he did nothing but collect and gather more and more wealth! He never had any pity for someone poor. He would not give any alms for anything in the world. Only once he threw two pennies to a beggar, while passing by a church on a Sunday. Other than that, he never gave anything his entire life. Whenever the priest met him and reproached him, he was always answering:

- Father, in this world everything can be bought. Surely it is the same in the other world. With the fortune I have gathered, there is no way I won't get in heaven. Whatever advice the priest gave him, he would not want to hear them. It went on like this for many days, until one night he had a terrible dream. It was as though he had died and reached the Gates of Heaven when, at the entrance, Saint Peter asked him:

- Okay, man, what's up with you here?

- Saint Peter, I'd like to go to heaven.

- But do you think you can?

- Saint Peter, I'll pay if needed. I have countless treasures...

- Well, why didn't you say so, man? If you've gathered treasures, there is no problem. Let's see how much wealth you have with you.

The man was overjoyed when he heard he could pay, for all his life he has done nothing but collect and gather. He started to rummage through all his pockets, but believe it or not, he could not find any money. Seeing him so troubled, St. Peter told him:

- Keep looking, keep looking, maybe you'll find something!

And indeed, the man found two pennies at the bottom of his pocket.

- Oh my, but why do I have only that? On Earth I had thousands of times more. How did I end up having only two pennies here?

- Well, Saint Peter answered, when you get here, you only have what you gave in life. These are the treasures that each person gathers in Heaven. With them you can indeed get into Heaven, but do you think two pennies are enough!? Throughout your life, you've only given these pennies to a poor man waiting for your help at the door of a church. If you would have gathered more treasures in Heaven during your lifetime, you might have entered, but like this...

Just at that moment, our man awoke from his dream, extremely scared. From that day on, he was not the same. He tried to gather treasures only in Heaven. There were so many poor people in need of his help...!