

WISE AND FOOLISH

MATTHEW 25



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

Wise and Foolish: Matthew 25
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Matthew 25: Introduction

As the end of His earthly sojourn draws near, Jesus looked beyond the cross to His second coming, as we've seen in Matthew 24. The emphasis in chapter 25 is on readiness. Jesus instructs His disciples, through a series of parables, to make sure they prepare well for His coming. They must be wise, and not foolish, in how they spend their time until He returns.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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1 The Wise Virgins

Pray Psalm 143.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Sing Psalm 143.1, 2.

(Divinum Mysterium: [*Of the Father's Love Begotten*](#))

Hear my earnest prayer, O Lord! Give ear to my pleas for grace!
In Your faithfulness and righteousness, look upon me with Your face!
Enter not to judgment with Your servant, Lord, with Your loving servant, Lord:
None can stand before Your Word.

Read and meditate on Matthew 25.1-10.

Prepare.

1. Who were the wise and who were the foolish virgins?
2. What does it mean that the wise virgins were “ready”?

Meditate.

This is a strange but beautiful parable, and it introduces a chapter in which Jesus urges those who hear Him to choose the wise rather than the foolish course in life. He will illustrate what He means throughout the rest of the chapter.

It will strike us strange that ten virgins are preparing to meet the bridegroom (v. 1). Do they all intend to have him as their husband? To be his wife? Yes, they do; and immediately we realize Jesus is not talking about human marriage. He has a larger wedding feast in mind, that which is coming as described in Revelation 19, when the Son of Man will welcome His bride as an uncountable multitude from every nation, tribe, and tongue, to join Him in the eternal feast of the Lamb.

In the parable, the groom arrives at an unexpected hour (v. 6), just as Jesus said in chapter 24 that He would come when no one was looking for Him. The oil in the virgins' lamps is a symbol of readiness. The wise virgins are described as having their lamps filled with oil, so that they would have the light they will need when the groom arrives. When he finally did, the wise virgins were ready; they trimmed their lamps and hurried to meet him (vv. 7-10).

Believers must maintain a state of readiness for the return of the Lord. Here that state is compared to having one's lamp trimmed with sufficient oil to keep it from going out before the Lord returns. We are lights in the darkness, and we must make sure our lamps are perpetually burning with good works of love and good words of truth. Strive for consistency and continuity, so that, in whatever you are doing, the light of Christ is evident in some way. Build up your reserves of faith – praise, thanks, prayer, meditation on the Lord and His Word, recognition and celebration of His Presence and glory in all things, joyful anticipation of His soon return, the filling of His Spirit – so that nothing can extinguish your light.

The question might be asked: Why didn't the wise virgins share oil with the unwise? To spend too much effort on this distracts us from the point of the parable: Each of us has a stewardship for which we are ultimately going to give an account. The wise virgins knew that, if they shared with the unwise, none of them would have enough oil for their lamps. They had fulfilled their stewardships; the unwise virgins would have to look elsewhere for oil.

Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit are the defining radiance of the Kingdom, and of the coming King. Make sure these are always lit and glowing in you; and build up your reserves against any situation that might diminish your light, so that when the King returns to gather His own, you will be ready.

Reflect.

1. To what does the oil in this parable refer?
2. What do the lamps and their light represent?
3. What must we do to make sure we are ready when the Lord returns?

Towards the close of the former chapter, our Lord specially required steward to be wise, (Matthew 24:45) for it is reasonable, that the heavier the charge which any man sustains, and the more important the matters in which he is employed, the wisdom with which he conducts himself should be the greater. But now he demands wisdom from all the children of God in general, that they may not, through inconsiderate rashness, expose themselves to be the prey of Satan. Now this kind of wisdom he describes by saying, that they are to provide themselves with the supplies necessary for completing the course of their life. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Matthew 25.2

Lord, help me to be ready today, so that my light will shine as I...

Pray Psalm 143.3-12.

Meditate on the Lord and His works, then call on Him to refresh your soul, teach you His will, and prepare you for the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 143.3-12.

Psalm 143.3-12 (Divinum Mysterium: [Of the Father's Love Begotten](#))

See, the enemy pursued my soul; he has crushed and cast me down.
He has made me sit in darkness, Lord, like those dead and in the ground.
Thus my spirit faints within me, Lord, faints within my weary soul,
and my heart is no more whole.

I recall the days of old; on Your works I meditate –
all the wonders of Your mighty hand, works both small, O Lord, and great.
Lord, my thirsty soul cries out to You! To You, Lord, I reach my hand
in a dry and weary land.

Answer quickly, O my Lord! Do not hide from me Your face!
For my spirit fails and I am like those who do not know Your grace.
In the morning let me hear Your steadfast love; Lord I trust You, show my way!
I lift up my soul and pray!

Rescue me from all my enemies! Lord, I refuge seek in You.
Let me know Your will, O Lord my God; make me know what I must do.

Let Your Spirit lead me on to level ground; save my life! Preserve my soul!
Rescue, Lord, and make me whole!

2 The Foolish Virgins

Pray Psalm 53. 5,6.

There they are in great fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.
Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!
When God brings back the captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Sing Psalm 53.5, 6.

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.
Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects!
Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,
And let salvation's Word resound from us again!

Read Matthew 25.1-13; meditate on verses 10-13.

Prepare.

1. What happened to the virgins who were not ready for the bridegroom's return?
2. What lesson did Jesus teach from this parable?

Meditate.

Why didn't the foolish virgins prepare? We can only speculate. But this much seems clear: They were not sufficiently eager for the bridegroom's arrival to take the necessary steps to be ready to meet him. They went too late to buy more oil for their lamps (v. 10). When they finally arrived for the wedding, "the door was shut."

And that was that. When they appealed for admission, the bridegroom disavowed any knowledge of them whatsoever.

Jesus applied this parable to His return, again, emphasizing the importance of being ready by being good stewards, wise servants, and virgins ready for His coming. The idea of virginity is frequently applied in Scripture to those who have no mixed motives or divided affections in their love for the Lord. Indeed, Jesus revealed that *only* such virgins will finally have a place in His Kingdom (Rev. 14.1-5). The foolish virgins may have been virgins in the flesh, but their hearts were not fully engaged with the promise of the bridegroom's coming. And where Jesus is concerned, the heart is the heart of the matter. When the bridegroom showed up unexpectedly, their distractedness – often considered in the Old Testament as a form of adultery – was their downfall.

Jesus is coming again. Do we look forward to this with such a sense of eagerness and preparation, that our hearts are pure and undistracted in fulfilling the calling He has appointed to us? Are we ready to join Him at the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19), or will we still be trying to get our act together when He comes?

Put another way, with respect to the Lord's return, are we wise and ready, or distracted and foolish?

Reflect.

1. What does it mean to "love the Lord's appearing" (2 Tim. 4.8)?
2. How should we prepare each day for the possibility of the Lord's return?
3. How can believers help one another to keep from being distracted from loving Jesus and preparing for His return?

At length it follows that the door of the heavenly kingdom will be shut against all who have not made provision, because they failed in the middle of the course. We must not enter here into minute inquiries, how it is that Christ says that the foolish virgins WENT TO BUY for it means nothing else than that all who shall not be ready at the very moment when they shall be called will be shut out from entering into heaven. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Matthew 25.10

I'm looking at the day ahead, Lord, and I ask You to help me be a good steward of my calling so that I...

Pray Psalm 53.1-5.

Pray for the lost people of the world, especially those in your Personal Mission Field. Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to talk about His salvation today.

Sing Psalm 53.1-5.

Psalm 53.1-5 (Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God at all!"
Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.
Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.
None understands the Word of God or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God's grace?
The Church they hate with passion and seek not God's face.
Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.
And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

3 The Wise Servants

Pray Psalm 126.5, 6.

Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Sing Psalm 126.6.

(Truro: [*Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*](#))

They who in tears of sorrow sow, and cast their seed on every hand,
with joy shall reach their heav'nly home, and bring the harvest of their land.

Read Matthew 25.1-23; meditate on verses 14-23.

Prepare.

1. With what were the servants entrusted? What were they expected to do?
2. Why did the master commend these servants?

Meditate.

In this parable, Jesus continued teaching on the theme of stewardship and wisdom in anticipation of the day of His return.

It's interesting to see how much Jesus talks about His return in the light of His impending death. It shows us what He was thinking about. Dying on the cross was a necessity, but it wasn't the end. The joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12.1, 2) was the joy of His coming Kingdom, both in time and at the end of time. Psalm 22 gives us a beautiful picture of this. We know Jesus was praying this psalm as He hanged on the cross, but that was to remind those looking on of what He was fulfilling (Ps. 22.1-21) and Himself of what lay ahead for Him (Ps. 22.21-31).

This is where Jesus wants us to be looking as well, eagerly waiting and preparing for His soon return. And this is a matter of stewardship. Like the servants in this parable, we have all been entrusted with certain skills, resources, opportunities, and the time within which to make the most of these for the Lord. He expects us to get busy and create a "return on investment" of what He has entrusted to us. Elsewhere He will say that He expects us to bear much abiding fruit from all that He has done for and entrusted to us (Jn. 15.16).

The two wise servants gave a positive account of their stewardship, and the master commended and blessed them accordingly. Notice that, while one servant created more return than the other – since he had more to begin with – still, they both received the same reward (vv. 21, 23) – "ruler over many things." Jesus expects us to work to bring forth fruit, and what we're able to produce will differ according to what the Lord has entrusted to us. But the reward will be the same for all: rule with King Jesus!

We need to be aware of all that the Lord has given us to serve Him. Our calling is daily to seek the progress of His Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, so that, when He

returns, He will see the fruit of our labors and how that fruit has redounded to His glory.

Reflect.

1. What do the “talents” in this parable represent?
2. What do we have to do to make our “talents” productive?
3. What does it mean that the Lord promises faithful servants will rule with Him over many things?

What then does the master say? “Well done, good and faithful servant.” For it is good to see the neighbor’s benefit. “You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.” He means by this expression, enter into the realm of all blessedness. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 78.2

Lord, I offer back to You all that You have entrusted to me for this day. Help me to...

Pray Psalm 126.1-5.

Today is another day to work the Lord’s field and to advance His Kingdom. Pray for grace and strength, that you might sow faithfully, even though it be through tears.

Sing Psalm 126.1-5.

Psalm 126.1-5 (Truro: [*Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*](#))

When God restored our fortunes all, we were like those who sweetly dream.
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled, made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said, “The Lord has done great things for them!”
Indeed, great things our God has done, Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King! Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing who sow while yet they weep and wail.

4 The Foolish Servants

Pray Psalm 78.1-4.

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
We will not hide *them* from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

Sing Psalm 78.1-4.

(Foundation: [How Firm a Foundation](#))

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,
dark sayings and parables sent from the Lord,
things we have before by our fathers been told,
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

Read Matthew 25.1-30; meditate on verses 24-30.

Prepare.

1. How did the Lord refer to the unfaithful servant?
2. What ultimately happened to the unfaithful servant? Why?

Meditate.

Turns out, the unfaithful servant wasn't really a servant at all, except of himself (vv. 25, 30). His fear kept him from doing what he knew the Lord expected of him. When it came time for an accounting of his stewardship, he had nothing to show but what the Lord had entrusted to him.

Which is to say, *he* had nothing to show the Lord, but what was the Lord's already. Jesus is looking for more than that.

This servant's "talent" was given to the more fruitful servant, who would make good use of it in bringing honor to the master. Jesus says there's a lesson here: If we're faithful to develop what the Lord has given us for fruitful living, He'll give us more (v. 29). As for the unfaithful servant, he is cast out, since he showed that he was not a servant at all.

The two parables that begin this chapter are important for what we learn from them about time and the use we make of it. Time will end one day, when the Lord of time returns to demand an accounting from all on whom He bestowed His precious gift of salvation and everything that goes with it. On that day we want to make certain that our lamps are lit and burning brightly, and to return to the Lord fruit refracting His glory in proportion to the investment He has made in us. For our lamps to be lit – for us to be the light He intends – we must maintain a constant supply of fuel. Jesus is the Light of the world; we only refract His light against whatever darkness we may enter at any moment in time. If we would shine brightly, we must be continually renewed in Jesus, through

prayer, worship, meditation, and the encouragement of others. We must not neglect this fuel but be always supplying it to our souls.

At the same time, we must be diligent to invest all the resources and opportunities of the time of our lives in ways that bring the glory of God to light. It is important that we practice good stewardship at all times so that nothing is lost, and everything increases and redounds to the glory of God.

Where the first parable addresses the stewardship of our souls, the second addresses the stewardship of our works. Keep in mind Whose you are. Know what you have been given. Watch continuously for the Lord, seeking His promises, Presence, and power. Offer everything you are, have, and do to Him as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Thus you may expect to hear His “Well done” when time is no more.

Reflect.

1. Why was this servant cast into outer darkness? What’s the lesson in this?
2. How should we apply the lesson of verse 29?
3. How can believers encourage one another in their stewardship of the Lord’s light and gifts?

Let us note also where that good and faithful servant is going who was faithful in the little things of this life. “Enter into the joy of your master,” he is told. Every delight and every joy will be there when those who weep here below will be merry hereafter and those who righteously mourn will receive a worthy consolation. He says this in effect both to the one “who had received the five talents” and to the one “who had received the two.” He says, “Enter.” Origen (185-254), Commentary on Matthew 67

Strengthen the light in me, Lord, and help me to use my talents wisely today as I...

Pray Psalm 78.4-16.

God has entrusted us with the Gospel of His Kingdom. Ask Him to help you to be faithful in planting that seed and investing that talent for His glory today.

Sing Psalm 78.4-16.

Psalm 78.4-16 (Foundation: [How Firm a Foundation](#))

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,
and all of the works He has done in our sight,
together with all of the words of His Law,
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

Lord, let all our children arise and declare
the truth of the Lord every day, everywhere,
and set all their hopes in God’s wonderful Word,
and never forget all the works of the Lord.

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.
God’s work of redemption they wholly despised,
forgetting the pow’r He had shown to their eyes.

5 The Wise Sheep

Pray Psalm 24.9, 10.

Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

Sing Psalm 24.9, 10.

(Foundation: [How Firm a Foundation](#))

O Who is this King, Who approaches our gate?
His might is before us, His glory is great!
This King is the Lord of all glory above,
Who comes to indwell us in mercy and love!

Read Matthew 25.1-40; Meditate on verses 31-40.

Prepare.

1. Why were the “sheep” wise and received by the Lord?
2. How can we show Jesus that we love Him?

Meditate.

Jesus directed the attention of His followers to the judgment that will occur after He returns. We note again that the focus is not on being ushered into some paradise of pleasures, but on being received by Jesus and blessed by our Father, and in these, knowing the Kingdom of God in all its fullness (vv. 33, 34).

When Jesus comes in glory, “all nations will be gathered before Him” (v. 32). Jesus is Lord of all nations – King of kings and Lord of lords. We don’t “make” Jesus Lord, or “let Him be the Lord” in our lives. He *is* Lord, now, universally, cosmically, over everyone and everything. Our calling in His Kingdom is to bring His Lordship to realization on earth as it is in heaven, by keeping our lamps lit and using our talents to increase His glory.

The wise sheep are easily seen as such. Jesus explains, just as He had said, that He would recognize them by their works (cf. Matt. 7.20). Sheep are as sheep do; wise people as wise people do. And wise people who are the Lord’s sheep emulate the example of the Lord in serving others (vv. 35, 36; cf. Phil. 2.5-11).

It may come as a surprise to the wise – who typically tend to be humble and self-effacing as well – that their good works to the poor, needy, naked, and imprisoned were actually done to Jesus Himself. But Jesus is in His people and with them in all situations. And when we love His people, we love Him. Because if we love Him – thus showing ourselves to be true sheep – we will love those He loves.

If you love Jesus, love His people. In loving them, you will love Him.

Reflect.

1. How can you begin to look at your life more with the eyes of a servant?
2. How is it that in serving the needy we serve Jesus?
3. Jesus is Lord over every aspect and area of your life. How will you acknowledge that Lordship today?

*“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ” To what other blessedness could this blessedness be compared? To be blessed of the Father! Why were they counted worthy of such a great honor? “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” What honor! What blessedness! John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 79.2*

Send me forth to serve others today, Jesus, especially as I...

Pray Psalm 24.1-8.

Jesus is Lord over all the earth, and all your life. Offer yourself to Him as a living sacrifice today (Rom. 12.1, 2), and pray about the many opportunities you will have for serving others.

Sing Psalm 24.1-8.

Psalm 24.1-8 (Foundation: [How Firm a Foundation](#))

The earth is the Lord's, as is all it contains;
the world and its peoples He daily sustains.
He founded it fast on the seas long ago,
and bid gentle rivers throughout it to flow.

Oh, who may ascend to the Lord's holy place?
And who may appear to His glorious face?
All they who are clean in their hearts and their hands
and true in their souls with the Savior shall stand.

A blessing all they from the Lord shall receive
who seek Him and on His salvation believe.
For these are His people, the children of grace,
who earnestly, eagerly seek for His face.

O lift up your heads, all you gates of the soul,
for the Savior would enter and render you whole!
The Lord strong and mighty in battle draws nigh;
He rules in His glory above us on high.

6 The Foolish Goats

Pray Psalm 58.10, 11.

The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,
So that men will say,
“Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous;
Surely He is God who judges in the earth.”

Sing Psalm 58.10, 11.

(Arlington: [*This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made*](#))

The righteous will rejoice to see the vengeance of the Lord;
All men will say, “Then God must be, the righteous to reward.”

Read Matthew 25.1-46; meditate on verses 41-46.

Prepare.

1. Why did these people think they should have been saved?
2. Why did the Lord reject them?

Meditate.

Jesus taught emphatically that true faith is demonstrated in works of love. From beginning to end of His ministry, this was a consistent thread of His Kingdom message and lifestyle.

That is not to say that people are saved *by* works. They are not. Only the work of Jesus saves us, as we receive it and submit to His rule in every area of our lives. But submitting to His rule will mean living as He lived, showing that we are from God, and possess the life of God, by showing the love of God to the people to whom God sends us.

In other words, we’re not saved *by* works, but we’re not saved *without* them.

Jesus rejected those who professed to believe in Him but had no works of love to back up their profession. We do not really love Jesus if we don’t love the people to whom He sends us.

On the day of judgment, those who have not kept their lamps lit, or failed to use their talents in loving service to others, will be in for a rude awakening. Jesus will tell them to depart from Him, and He will send them “into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). That such an “everlasting fire” and “everlasting punishment” (v. 46) awaits the foolish goats of this world should dispel for all time any notion or idea that, in the end, God will save us all.

It’s not that He *could* not save everyone; Jesus’ death is *sufficient* to cover all the sins of every human being from all time. But clearly God *will* not save those who have spurned His love, or tried to use religion in any way other than what He prescribes – love God, love your neighbors.

Let your light shine and invest your talents in serving others. Then you’ll be able to look forward with joy to “inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (v. 34).

Reflect.

1. We're not saved by works, but we're not saved without them. Explain.
2. Why is it wrong to believe that, in the end, God will save everyone?
3. What is the place of the threat of "everlasting punishment" in our presentation of the Gospel?

"And they will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Whatever will be is everlasting. Sinners will have everlasting punishment; and the righteous, everlasting life. Epiphanius the Latin (5th or 6th cent.), Interpretation of the Gospels 38

Lead me into loving service of my neighbors today, O Lord, and I will...

Pray Psalm 58.1-9.

Pray for the lost, for the enemies of God and His Church, and for all those who need to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share His Good News today.

Sing Psalm 58.1-9.

Psalm 58.1-9 (Arlington: [*The Is the Day the Lord Hath Made*](#))

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you rulers of the earth?
And do you judge the sons of men according to their worth?

No, not at all, but in their hearts they seek unrighteous ways;
Their hands weigh out upon the earth cruel violence all their days.

The wicked from the womb rebel; from birth they utter lies.
Their tongues of serpent's venom tell; all truth their ears despise.

Break, shatter, and destroy them, Lord; dissolve them from the day.
Consume them by Your mighty Word; and sweep them all away.

7 He Is Coming!

Pray Psalm 96.11-13.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice
before the LORD.
For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

Sing Psalm 96.11-13.

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*](#))

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!
Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, for He is coming swiftly
to judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness –
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

Read and meditate on Matthew 25.1-46.

Prepare.

1. In this chapter, who are the wise, and who are the foolish?
2. From this chapter, what happens when Jesus returns?

Meditate.

Jesus was very shortly to finish His earthly sojourn, but He wanted His followers to know that His death on the cross was not the end of things. He was going away to inherit a Kingdom and prepare a feast for His bride. But He would return, and when He did, those who had believed His Word and prepared for His coming would not be disappointed.

The wise person listens to the Word of Jesus and follows His teaching and instructions carefully. Jesus calls us to let our light shine, and to keep it shining as long as we are in this world. He has given us time, gifts, and opportunities to serve, and He expects a return from His investment in us, so that He might be glorified in the good works of loving service that we do. Every day we have opportunities to shine our light, spend the grace and truth of God on others, and reach out to those around us with the love of Jesus. As we do, Jesus said we are ministering to Him, that is, we are carrying on His ministry, just as He has taught us in His Word.

A final day is coming. There will be an accounting, involving judgment in which the wise will be gathered to Jesus and the foolish will be condemned. This will be followed by a marriage feast that will last forever.

Trim your lights. Roll up your sleeves. Look around for someone to serve. Be wise. Get ready. Jesus is coming again.

Reflect.

1. What are we supposed to be doing as we await the return of Jesus?

2. How can we lay aside all foolishness and increase in wisdom?

3. How should the return of Jesus affect the way we conduct our lives in our Personal Mission Field?

Again, in order to persuade believers to holiness of life, he assures them that the good and the bad will not share alike; because he will bring with him the reward which is laid up for both. In short, he declares that his kingdom will be fully established, when the righteous shall have obtained a crown of glory, and when the wicked shall have received the reward which they deserved. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Matthew 35.32

I will serve You today, Jesus, looking forward to Your return, so that I...

Pray Psalm 96.1-10.

Jesus is coming again! Meditate on what will happen at His coming, and give Him thanks for every opportunity to serve Him today.

Sing Psalm 96.1-10.

Psalm 96.1-10 (Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*](#))

Sing to the Lord! O, bless His Name! All nations tell His glory!

Salvation's tidings loud proclaim; let earth rehearse His story!

For God is greatly to be praised; His throne above all gods is raised –
fear Him, and sing His glory!

All other gods are idols vain – the Lord created heaven.

Splendor and strength with Him obtain; to Him be glory given!

All fam'lies, praise this mighty Lord! Give strength and glory to His Word;
exalt the Lord of heaven.

Bring offerings sweet to Him, our Lord, in holy garments praise Him!

Tremble before Him, all the earth; among the nations raise Him!

The earth is fixed, it will not move; the peoples will His justice prove –
exalt the Lord and praise Him.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. In Jesus' eyes, who are the wise and who are the foolish?
2. What will happen when Jesus returns?
3. How should we prepare each day for the return of the Lord?
4. What is the place of the coming judgment in presenting the Good News about Jesus?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 25.1-46? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.