



Home Group study: week beginning 18th June 2023

TITLE: Parables – stories to live by: The Ten Virgins

PASSAGE: Matthew 25:1–13

Icebreaker

Do you find it hard to wait for things? What was the biggest thing you had to wait for when you were young?

If you like, read Psalm 74, and consider the plight of the remnant in Judah who were desperate for God to bring relief from the catastrophe they had suffered after the sacking of Jerusalem. And if you like, compare their situation to our world situation today. If this leads into prayer for the world, the nation, and our church - great. But you could miss all this out and go straight into the parable...

Discovery

Read the Parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25:1–13.

What jumped out at you in it?

How could you summarise the parable? (Perhaps the idea of waiting for something that has been promised, but seems a long time incoming. Maybe other things.)

Key themes that come out of the parable are:

Wisdom. Why did Jesus use wisdom as the differentiating mark between the two sets of young ladies? Why not 'readiness' or something else?

Why is wisdom so important? (One reason is that it enables us to work out how to be ready for when Jesus comes, and what to be doing whilst we wait.)

Watching. Why does Jesus tell them to watch in the last verse? After all, all of them went to sleep – not just the unwise ones, and that wasn't what caused them problems. What is it about watching that he was getting at? (NB the NIVSB suggests he was rounding off all he had said to them in ch 24 as well).

What can we watch for now? Perhaps watching for good things and bad things? Maybe, the enemies, schemes, and plans, and God's intentions, and the activities that he calls us to be involved

in. You could read Matthew 24 which talks about the signs of the end of the age that we 'should' be watching for.

Readiness. How can we get ourselves ready for when Jesus comes back? What should we be doing whilst we wait? What qualifies us for acceptance before him? (you could mention the need to have personal relationship with him, and not relying on others...)

If you like you could read out some encouraging verses from the Bible about what it is that God looks for in us. You could invite people to speak out their own verses that have encouraged them. Or use some of the following: 2 Chronicles 7:14; Proverbs 23:17–18; Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 66:2b; Jeremiah 9:23–24; Micah 6:8; Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 3:16–18; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Philippians 2:12b–16a; ...and the whole of the Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5–7 – joke!

Pray

Pray for each other for wisdom and understanding about what to be doing whilst we wait, and for increasing faith to believe the truth that Jesus is coming back - and it could be today!

Maybe ask what the biggest thing people are waiting for now is, and pray for them.

Sunday was Father's Day. We had a nice time of celebrating and praying for fathers. You could invite people to spend a bit of time continuing that.