

Home Groups | Week of September 27, 2015
Matthew 25:1-13 | Parable of the Ten Virgins

Ice breaker question:

When were you excited about going to a wedding? Who was the bride and who was the groom? Why were you excited about that wedding?

Discuss:

1. We wait for very little in our culture. We live in a culture of instant gratification. How is our faith shaped by perseverance rather than instant gratification?
2. In other places in the Bible, Jesus is the groom and the church is the bride. In this parable, the five wise bridesmaids prepare for the time when the groom comes. They are well prepared. How can we be prepared and stay ready to see Jesus in our everyday lives? What do you need to do to re-fill your oil in your own lamp?
3. The five foolish bridesmaids are not allowed to borrow oil to follow the groom. Nor are they allowed in when they were unprepared and late. What does this say about our own decision making about following “the Groom” in our own lives?
4. This parable has a difficult ending for five of the bridesmaids. Why do you think the groom says what he says to the five foolish bridesmaids? How do you feel about the end of this parable?
5. What does Jesus mean when he says in verse 12, “Truly I tell you, I don’t know you?” Today, what does it mean to be known by Jesus? How can we be sure we know Jesus and he knows us?
6. Dale Bruner has suggested that the oil in the lamp might be experiential Christianity, and the reserve oil is disciplined Christianity. Do you tend to focus on one or the other?

Telling your story:

Brian McLaren says “questions unlock a person’s story.” Remembering the parable from last week, consider this question when telling your story.

How have you been able to serve the least of these? (elderly, sick, physically or mentally-challenged, the poor, people of minority races or religions, refugees, prisoners, strangers, outcasts)

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Upcoming events at ZPC:

- > Serve on the Mission Commission. Contact Steve Wright [steve.wright83@yahoo.com; 317.696.5378]
- > Provide food for ZPC’s High School Ministry. Contact: Linda Forler [lindaforler@gmail.com; 317.402.9613]

Background for home group leaders:

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats last week and the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids challenge us in our understanding of how we are to live for Jesus. Facilitate your group with good discussion on what these words from Jesus mean for the members of your group and their daily walk with Jesus.

[Question 1] In the parable, the bridesmaids have to wait for the groom and the bride to come. They have to wait so long that they become drowsy and fall asleep. Today, we are not accustomed to waiting. What can waiting do in a positive way for us? How can it teach us patience and perseverance?

[Question 2] The five wise bridesmaids took extra oil with them, prepared to re-fill their lamps. We might be more prepared by studying God’s word, through prayer, and by obeying Jesus’ teachings to live out our faith. Through spiritual disciplines, we grow in our faith and are more prepared to be a light for Jesus and will be ready to meet Jesus when he comes.

[Question 3] The five foolish bridesmaids were unprepared. One way to interpret the fact that they are not allowed to borrow oil is the idea that we can’t borrow our faith from others – such as mature children can’t borrow their faith from their parents. Each person must be responsible for their own choices, especially the choice to follow Jesus or not.

[Question 4] In the parable, it is very late at night, and the five unprepared bridesmaids are very late to the party after they have purchased extra oil. Because of the lateness of the hour and their being late to the party, they are not allowed in. It is a sobering reminder for us to be ready to meet the Groom – Jesus – when it is our time to meet Him.

[Question 5] To know Jesus is to have faith in Him. You might look at Romans 10:9-10 for a basic understanding of salvation. But to know Jesus and to love Jesus is more than just salvation. It is loving Jesus and then loving others as Jesus loves. Jesus knows us – we can have assurance of knowing Him by committing all our heart, mind, soul and strength to Him.

[Question 6] According to Dale Bruner, experiential Christianity is an experience of Jesus such as a time of worship or a weekend retreat. Disciplined Christianity is obedience to Jesus’ teachings. Which one of these do members of your group tend to focus on? Both are important to encourage worship, learning, and growth in our faith.

Telling your Story

You may remember at our leader meeting we discussed the importance of telling your story. We want our Home Groups to be more than social opportunities. One of the best ways to go deeper with one another is to share our stories in such a way that we are honest about our flaws, and we are not afraid to be vulnerable. We want to encourage your groups to be doing this, because when we do this and we are open to God using our stories, they can impact lives—both ours and others.