

Wednesday — The Ten Bridesmaids
Read Matthew 25:1-13
Join me on Facebook Live @ 7pm

We don't know what Jesus did on the Wednesday of Holy Week. Jesus and his disciples may have rested in Bethany in anticipation of Passover. Because Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead there, many people had placed their faith in him. He was welcome there, and he may have stayed with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

— adapted from Holy Week Timeline by Mary Fairchild

Today, since we assume this is a day Jesus rested, I wanted to talk about one of my favorite passages—the ten bridesmaids. Five of them were prepared, and five ran out of oil. What does it mean for us to store up “oil” in our lives of faith?

The bridegroom was delayed—Jesus hasn't returned to earth yet. But when he comes...will we be prepared? In other words, do we continue to cultivate a close relationship with Christ or are we satisfied with simply professing Christ as Lord and Savior and getting our ticket to heaven? One passage we looked at in Facebook Live Bible study last week was the parable of the sower—the seed fell on a path, a rocky place, among thorns, and then finally...some fell on the good soil, where it produced fruit. As Christians, we want to be “good soil,” and want Christ to work through us as we seek to share the gospel and help others through outreach and service.

Five of the bridesmaids had enough oil to light their lamps for a while. They looked good on the outside. They were doing what they were supposed to be doing, which was lighting the path (in Matthew 5 we are called to be salt and light). But they didn't have enough oil to sustain them.

The other five trimmed the wicks of their lamps, and most likely added oil at that point. They had extra with them. Meaning, they did not take their faith for granted. They cultivated a relationship with Christ.

What are ways we can do that as we are staying home? Again, I realize many in our congregation are working at home or are still going to work—so by no means am I suggesting adding one more thing to already-busy schedules. But as we are inundated with news that is often fearful, what can we do to lean in to God?

A few ways:

- Spend time worshipping God with music. There is plenty of worship music free on the web, and many of you have your own collection. But this is a way to put things into perspective—God has not changed, He is in control, and He is with us.

- Spend time in scripture. We can read a Psalm to start the day, or work through a book of the Bible slowly. Some of you are tuning into Bible studies from Monday-Wednesday on Facebook Live or watching later, or even having Bible studies on Zoom. There are also plenty of free online studies available.
- Spent time in prayer. I am so glad we had a chance to talk about Lectio Divina before we went to online worship, because we practiced it during Lenten Sunday School and worship. This is a way to ground us...take some short passages and read them through slowly, and use this time to pray to God. Some verses that deal with not fearing are: Isaiah 41:10, Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:27, 1 John 4:18, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 23:4.

This is an uncertain and anxious time, but one thing is certain and steady, and that is our relationship with God. In the next few days, we will explore what Jesus went through in order to save us from our sins. Take some time today to meditate on your own relationship with God. Do you have oil saved up? Do you feel like you are continually growing in your relationship with Christ? If not, what do you need to change in order to grow?