

**FAST FORWARD PART FOUR
LIVING READY
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Intro:

We've been going over the Olivet Discourse – the conversation that is recorded in Matthew 24-25 Jesus has with Disciples (best to look at this text as 1 complete conversation)

Matthew 24:1 (disc. are in awe of the temple – Jesus changes their perspective)

Roger – went over the 3 questions the disciples asked about the, spent the last three wks looking and exploring what the Bible has to say about Jesus' 2nd coming – the signs – prophecy's in Revelation and Daniel that have connection to this discourse

→ you remember Roger talking about the 70 x 7's in Daniel concerning the timing of all this happening
→ he drew that picture of the Metallic Man - how the stone (Jesus) that will come and strike the ten toes alliance of nations predicted in the Daniel prophecy –...i can't draw like Roger – so, i found a picture...
(picture of ten toes)

-if you haven't been here or you're interested – you can check out the pod casts...

Today – I want to bring some of this home – into practical expression of what this means to your life, my life and we'll finish up the Olivet Discourse today...

Jesus changes the disciples' perspective on how things will change – then he goes into giving them some pictures in these parables – **changing their perspective to live ready!!!**

You gotta keep in mind:

Prophecy is given as a call to Holy Living – the giving us a glimpse into the future is to motivate our present everyday living...

Matthew 24:36, 42

verse 42 is the key verse in the Olivet discourse...chapter 25 could really have begun here...

it's important to note: *Your Lord* – Christ is telling his followers there is a relationship here one of submission and beauty – we don't belong solely to ourselves...(you are his & he is yours) this connection is here...

Jesus then goes into four quick parables that begin to illuminate this watching – this heart attitude that we're to have as his followers concerning the end...

...It all centers on what I learned in Scouts...

Q how many of you were in Girl Scouts – Boy Scouts

Q what is the motto of girl scouts (besides: *please buy some cookies*)?

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.(1912)

Q anyone know what the motto of boy scouts is:? (be prepared)

→ there are these 2 camps – as it comes to living and navigating life: prepared or procrastinates

Preparation vs Procrastination: (quiz) (elaborate descriptions)

getting up in the morning: those of you get up in plenty of time to prepare – those hyper speed to get out...

Y2K – how many of you stocked up – how many were ready to stretch 1 can of chunky soup?

Paying bills -- how many pay ahead – wait ‘til last minute pay online night before?
 Renewing you auto registration → or going to emissions testing facility – (1st of month / end) ?
 Sign your kids up early for sports – vs -- rolling up to the counter last hour of registration?
 Doing school/work assignments in advance – vs—all nighter’s / day before?

T

There is nothing nec. wrong with doing ‘last minute’ in some things. This isn’t about guilt trip theology. But not everything is good to save for the last minute
 You can put together your wardrobe for the day last minute...but
 Putting together a family vacation on the last minute doesn’t always work out the best...
 Pulling off a wedding proposal last minute – I wouldn’t recommended...you’ll want to put some thought into guys! (more than popping the question as you roll thru the jacknbox drive through on the way to a movie – so, you wanna get married or what?)

Perhaps what Jesus is saying to us today – to people who are investigating the spiritual life Jesus invites us too – is don’t wait ‘til the last minute – we’re never really guaranteed a last minute...are we?

What you have to notice is: Jesus begins pressing it upon his followers the importance of wisdom to be ready

→ **to watch for Him & be prepared for THAT day...as you life in THIS DAY...**

Throughout this Olivet Discourse is this **theme: of readiness!**

3 stories in Mt 25 (2 parables – 1 account)

1 – wedding – presents this theme of wisdom in being prepared for christ’s return
 2 – talents – theme of responsibilities entrusted his followers prior to his return
 3 – sheeps/goats – (not a parable) clearly a scene that will play out – but it does fit with the 4 parables from Matt 24:43-25:30 emphasizing importance of caring for Jesus’ followers – the same as caring for him...

Turn with me to: **Matthew 25 – verse 1**

I want to look at one of these parables gives to his disciples that hits at this theme – unpack it a bit and then draw some conclusions from this whole text – some applications for everyday living...

This is technically the 3rd parable Jesus quickly launches into after verse **24:42...**

This is about a wedding!

Q how many of you have been in a wedding or too a wedding?

-there are some great things that happen during a wedding (*sunsets, carriage rides, boat*) – some very moving, beautiful moments // there are also those moments that make memories – am I right?...strange things – things that wind up on America’s Funniest Home video’s...

→ I’ve been to a wedding where ...groomsmen come in with Mohawks

→ where flowers / stage décor caught on fire ...high stress weddings...

→ ...bride was wailing/crying... inside your head is just this little voice saying ‘awkward...’

→ where people just fainted on stage – the worst ones, are when no one does anything and you can just feel the tension bldg in the audience of “what are they going to do, should I do anything?”

Q turn to the people around you (3-4) people and ask them either: most beautiful memory (girl) at a wedding or strangest thing at a wedding (guy)?

T weddings have a lot of beauty and imagery (maybe not all the best)...

To understand this parable around a wedding you have to understand weddings back in Jewish times – Palestinian weddings... 1st century...

We go to our weddings today: cake, songs, rings... You understand that the whole wedding cake – wedding ring on the 3rd finger of left hand – comes from the Romans – from Rome's influence – you won't find a verse on rings in the bible (guys, I recommend that you don't bring that up to your fiancé)

There are 3 parts to a Jewish / Palestinian Wedding:

1) Engagement: formal settlement between respective fathers of the bride and groom (*2 chickens, goat and a gift card to the local blacksmith*)

2) The Betrothal: Ceremony held in home of the bride's parents. This is where mutual promises were made and recorded by each family and a binding contract was sealed. The bride and the groom were bound to one another legally, though they were not yet married.

3) The Marriage: after about a yr... bridegroom and friends went to fetch the bride from her father's house and brought her back in the procession home where marriage feast was held... He'd show off his bride at this party that lasted 7 days. Bridegroom's would give a two week notice for his arrival – then these virgins (or BRIDESMAIDS) would be ready with lanterns/torches to light the way for the bridegroom back to the banquet.

This wedding procedure is the backdrop for this parable

→ it gives a perfect picture of Christ and his church.

1) engagement: Christ's 1st coming – agreement for our salvation was arranged **Ephesians 5:25**

2) we're in that betrothal state now: awaiting Christ's return for his bride (term 4: church often in scripture)

3) Christ's 2nd Coming is (marriage ceremony) – He returns to bring us home with him, wedding feast...

T Let's read thru this parable – point out some things along the way – draw some applications....

Matthew 25:1-13 (*read thru it, then come back and pick it apart*)

*remember you can't over analyze a parable – there is usually one main theme/pt...

1-4:

these are invited guests – bridesmaids (*these lamps are theirs – personal property, not rented*)

10 is a complete number of witness – nothing specific about ½ 5 and 5

All went out to meet the bridegroom – wanting to be a part of God's kingdom

Deliberate notation b/t those who are wise and those who are foolish (Greek: fool=moros; where we get our word: moron – to be, inattentive, unthinking)

By a lack of preparation in this life, the 5 foolish bridesmaids reveal a lack of respect for the Messiah – **reminds us: how a person sees Jesus is the key to his or her eternal destination**

5-6

Jesus is perhaps indicating that this is a delay – longer than expected – all 10 fell asleep

Sleep is difficult to hold off when you've been waiting along time

How many of you have ever gotten to that point in driving – where your eyes are heavy?

Represents the stretch of history b/t the Messiah's 1st coming and his return

"the cry rang out"...v. 6

The announcement comes as a surprise – remember back to what he said in **24:44**...

Q have you ever been surprised?

Some surprises are good: reach in pocket find \$ // breakfast in bed // kids clean their rooms w/out told

Some surprises aren't that good: cell phone bill every month // find a ticket on your car upon your return

Jesus is continually calling people **to not** be caught by surprise...be ready, be prepared...

7-12

→ If you give away oil – all the lamps will go out in reality – these aren't lanterns – they're torches that need continually doused with oil to stay burning...

Often in scripture 'oil' refers to the Holy Spirit – living in the spirit, being filled, empowered (as Paul often alludes to)

You and I can not gain what is necessary from someone else – this is a call to self-preparation...each needs to make up their own mind to be ready for the Messiah's return – your relationship with him

Non-transferable –

don't miss out on your opportunity...your invitation to be a part of the banquet

Illustration: a wall sign that reads, "Lack of preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part."

→ When it comes to our eternal destiny, you are responsible for you.

13:

This closing exhortation is the central application

Almost the same wording in v. 13 as 24:42...(constantly be alert, keeping watch)

→ our preparedness for Christ's return demonstrates our personal trust and respect for him!

You don't want to wait 'til it's too late...

Applications:

T

throughout this whole conversation – throughout all these parables is **this theme: of readiness** - Jesus is giving a picture of the kind of people we're to be – the kind of heart we're to have...

b/c:

WHEN YOU LIVE WITH THE END IN MIND, IT IMPACTS YOUR LIVING IN THIS PRESENT TIME

we're to be active while we wait:

Parable of the talents and the in Matthew 24 → there is this reality/focus of the talents we've been given – responsibilities we've been entrusted with. We're to be about the work God has for each of us ...

→ this is not for us to be a spiritual Golden Retriever staring at the door for it's owner to return and it doesn't move from that spot all day...

Apostle Paul writes a letter to the church in Thessalonica about some of the believers there who were quitting their jobs, stopping to work, to do anything b/c they were awaiting the return of Jesus...(get back to work – never tire of doing what’s right – god has things for you to do)

2 Thess 3:11-13

Titus 2:11-13 → *see your insert – some great words for us*

St/ill:

we’re to value what Jesus values – care about what he cares about:

end of Matthew 25 – jesus says some haunting words of how we cared for the Jews in particular – but can be extrapolated out to how did we do at caring for the poor and those searching for hope

...that God wants to utilize his people today to make inroads of His care and love into people that need it...that He’s searching out...

Titus 2:13 // Ephesians 2:10

Acts 1:4, 7-12

**don’t wait around here starrng into the sky...*

→we can get so busy looking for Jesus, that we lose focus on what he said for us to be about...

---you will be my witnesses ...

→ people matter to God and we’re to be living witnesses to that testimony

–active in God’s search party for those that are lost...wandering and waiting to be rescued...

we’re to invest our lives into loving God – and living ready...

→ we find ourselves in that engagement/betrothal period – awaiting the return of our King...the one we’re to have a relationship with – to choose know to put our trust in him...

Part of living with a prepared heart is continuing to live in a love relationship with God.

III

Put it to you this way: I don’t know any engaged couples – who don’t just naturally keep working on and enjoying their relationship = as they live in expectation of their wedding and how much more their relationship is going to be united.

Wouldn’t it be weird to witness a couple that meets, dates, falls in love – gets to the emotion and commitment needed to get engaged – and then never talks to each other, thinks about each other, is around each other until the wedding day 1 year later..?

Jesus is hitting through this whole conversation: I’ll give you some pictures of the end of days, but don’t let that distract you away from living today – in relationship with me.

Keep your focus on me – keep your heart’s affection toward me...

Conclusion:

There is always a curiosity factor with discussing end times...
(pic of end sign)

Illust: (movie: the Bucket List)

→ story follows jack nickelson and morgan freeman on this journey of discovery of cancer, few months to live, these adventures and ultimately this discovery of a deep longing & search their on...

thought provoking about the emotions one might have – as they live with the end sight.

What really matters? What really is the priority?

Jesus begins zeroing in on those answers in this discourse...

Matthew 24:42 (perhaps echoes the words of Jesus in matthew)

“living with the end in mind, impacts our living in the present time”

The purpose of prophecy is always a call to holy living!

Getting a glimpse into the future is to motivate our present everyday living...

End Times prophecy is also to bring comfort and encouragement to those who are followers of Christ:

...endurance for those difficult times right now – b/c he’s coming again and will make it right

...perseverance in the now – b/c he promises to strengthen us

...hope for present day – b/c he gave a hopeful promise of a future day...

I thought it would be good to end with Jesus’ words in the gospel of John...center ourselves here...maybe it would help you to close your eyes and let these words of jesus wash over you...

John 14: 16-18, 1-3

Q isn’t it amazing that: He hasn’t left us alone – given us the Spirit to lead us, guide us, empower us,...

That the God of the universe thinks you’re worth coming back for...

We’re going to close today with some time to reflect through worship...on how amazing God is...

Perhaps you sense God is wanting to remind you that all is well ... You sense God is wanting to comfort your heart right now You want to sing of His amazing power and precision...

Maybe God is tugging at your heart...

Song: Amazed

OUTLINE:

Quick Review

Matthew 24:1

Matthew 24:42

Girl Scout/Boy Scout motto's? → prepared vs procrastinate

Matt 24:42 → followed by 4 quick parables

Wedding Parable

-current weddings

-jewish weddings then

Parable – explain things as we go

3 sections of a wedding

Bridesmaids job

Oil in scripture represents Holy Spirit (be filled with the Spirit) paul talks about this...

Wise/Foolish – compare/contrast (eph 5:

My sheep know my voice and I know my sheep → as the door is shut – rabbinical saying

Application:

-living ready - with a heart prepared for the end and the present

Story of Bucket List – live w/ the end in mind will impact our living in the present time

-value what Jesus does

-focus on what He says too – Acts 1

-watch for Him with a longing heart to know him better

Story of couples engaged –