

Matthew

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Date: 13 December 2010

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] You'll find in our second reading in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, and reading verse 10.

I may have ventured this same subject here before. Verse 10 in Matthew 25.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

Shut eternally. Nevermore to be opened for those whom the Lord leaves to live and die in their sins.

And I feel too that this subject, and I'm aware of it in measure, is very solemn. That as I have said, I have come from an open grave.

[1 : 32] An old lady of 98 years of age and almost 99. And there I stood at the head of her grave, with the Lord's help, to commit all that was mortal to the grave.

And yet, although she was a lady who perhaps had hardly ever spoken of any word of assurance that she had been granted, and yet, as far as I was concerned, I was not without any hope of her eternal standing.

I think perhaps one of the most solemn sermons I have ever heard preached from this subject was in Ebenezer Chapel, Old Hill, years ago when we were there, or in that area, on holiday.

And I would feel that all of you here tonight, in measure, know that it is a very solemn subject.

While I believe I have already quoted this verse in prayer tonight, and yet, oh, how true it is, how stands the case, my soul, with thee for heaven?

[3 : 28] Are thy credentials clear? Is Jesus' blood thine only plea?

Is he thy great forerunner there? Is that a burden to us? Is that something that you want to know?

And if you've known it, you'll feel your great need to be favoured to know it again. Well, may I be granted every word that the Lord would have to be spoken from this, I would feel, a very well-known parable.

And may we all of us realise at once that the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking. May we feel that he's speaking. May we feel that he's speaking to us here tonight in this Bethel Chapel Rye.

Here we have a very solemn exposition regarding the reality of an open profession.

[4 : 48] That they will not leave out any who have not, in a right sense, who have not been led to make an open profession.

It has been the Lord's will that not everyone does. The Lord knows why. When Mr. George Brooks, whom some of us know, and perhaps all of us know, was baptised at Braebourne, however many years ago now, Mr. Tyler, who baptised him, spoke about the strict Baptists.

He spoke of them as being dry Baptists. And I think perhaps there are those here tonight, and I join with you in this, you know, in some of our chapels.

And it is so still today. There are those who have never been brought.

I say that because I know it's true. They've never been brought to make an open profession. And I can tell you what is needed if they're going to.

[6 : 22] And that is the Lord's own word in Psalm 110. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

The latest real evidence of this we have more recently known through mercy in our chapel at Eastbourne.

the Lord's own word. But when that moment came in the case of this comparatively young woman, it was on the Monday morning after the day before when the Lord had been in his house through his own word.

the subject and the subject that day and it so transpired and the Lord I trust would have it to be so was really that two days after I had been allowed to reach 80 years.

And I so longed that it might be made a day of real thanksgiving. and I had to venture that day with these well-known words in Psalm 115.

[7 : 58] Not unto us O Lord not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth I can to think that the Lord should favour even me on my 80th birthday with another real token.

I'd no thought I was going to say this but it has come so I venture with it and on that Monday morning the telephone rang about 10 to 7 in the morning and there was this dear lady a telephone to say I must tell you that I must come and venture to tell you what the Lord has done for my soul a day of power had come there are those of you here tonight who can remember such a day as that as I can and the thing was that there was such a burden in her heart about it that she said can I tell you you think of it 10 to 7 in the morning she had 4 children she said

I've telephoned because they're not awake yet her husband had gone to work can I tell you now of course she could it was all she could do well I do need guidance I've needed it today and I always need it but I tremble really to even venture again to speak from this word while they went to buy that is the foolish virgins the foolish virgins and what was it that was lacking in their profession because all 10 of these virgins had made a profession they had made a profession of the name of Jesus 5 of them were wise and 5 were foolish before I even begin to mention what I believe to know is the solemn difference between these 5 foolish virgins and the 5 wise virgins they had all made a profession in the very fact that they all had the profession of religion in the sense that they all had lamps they all had lamps what then was the difference you've all heard it before what then was the difference between the wise and the foolish virgins it was this the foolish virgins had no oil in their lamps the lamps

I'm sure speak of an open profession they had no oil their lamps had gone out surely there is nothing more solemn for any minister to even venture to speak they'd made a profession they had a lamp each but they had no oil in those lamps and their lamps had gone out so the surely the secret of a real religion is that those who have made a real profession of their faith in Jesus Christ they then have life in their souls given to them by none other than the Holy

Spirit how is it with us here tonight the Lord knows now with the Lord's help then may I be unable to speak about evidences of a real religion what are they as recorded in this parable and another solemn thought about this parable is this then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps they'd made an open profession and went forth to meet the bridegroom they all were going forth to meet the bridegroom who is the bridegroom none other than the Lord

[14 : 07] Jesus Christ hail thou bridegroom bruised to death who hast the wine press tried the Lord Jesus Christ is the bridegroom of his beloved bride the bride is his dear people there is a sense in which I believe it could be said of those that have not made an open profession but if they are a child of God they will have oil in their lamps they will have oil in their lamps they will have spiritual life and oh what a thought dear friends for all of us here tonight our old friend in Bethesda

I had a telephone conversation on this certain Friday evening ever long ago now not very long and the person I was speaking to said I feel I must tell you that Miss Edie Charlie is dying in her Bethesda she wanted me to know the Lord knows why he wanted me to know and that was on the Friday evening she died on the Saturday evening whatever the time was she had only one more day to live when I came away from that telephone call I can't help telling you this that I had such a feeling came over me does it mean that I will be asked to take her funeral so that in that sense I was not unprepared to have another telephone call from the old deacon at Galeed

Brighton the following Monday morning and I knew I felt I knew he wanted to ask me that question would you be willing to take this lady's funeral now I feel the Lord had prepared me for it in that way and all I could say was with the Lord's help I will hope to do it now what about these ten virgins then I'm aware you've all heard it before but friends isn't it true isn't it true that we can hear a very very solemn sermon and it will have no real effect upon our hearts I'm sure there are those of you here tonight will agree with me in that we can hear very solemn truths and yet unless the

Holy Spirit accompanies the word in our heart that is preached I could use an expression it is like water on a duck's back it just runs off and we can go out of the house of God after listening to one of the most solemn sermons that have ever been preached and it has no effect upon us why two things really either we possess no oil in our lands or we have become very cold and dead and lifeless we may have backslidden very badly and that happens to every real child of God could any of us here tonight say that we have never backslidden oh Lord though our iniquities testify against us and how often they do do thou it for thy name's sake for our backslidings are many we have sinned against thee we can get you know in an open profession we can get in a very cold careless dead state and we can be unmoved by the most solemn preaching that there can be now I'm saying that from my own heart because I've known it now then here we have these ten virgins and we are told we are told in the first place and five of them were wise and five were foolish now I've already tried to tell you the trouble with the foolish virgins was they had a lamp of profession they had no oil their lamps had gone out the life of God within them they didn't have it they didn't have it oh dear friends how solemn that is a real religion it is more than notion something must be known and felt and I'm being made to feel that I'm getting nearer my own end and therefore these things are born home

I hope through mercy with greater emphasis upon our mind our heart now another thing that's in the parable is this may we listen verse 3 they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them and yet they went forth to meet the bride oh is there anything more solemn than any one whether they make a profession or not coming to our end and proving to be a hypocrite proving to be a hypocrite and I'll tell you friends that will be a real burden to you when the Lord makes it so we will not be allowed to rest on an open profession we will not be allowed to rest on an open profession we will not be allowed to rest on the fact that we've been to chapel all our life we need something more than that we need spiritual life which only can be known by the divine power of

[21 : 24] God the Holy Spirit and I'm reminded of this word as I venture a little more where what does the Bible tell us about a real religion know ye not do we know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost what a thought your body my body my body the temple of the Holy Ghost spiritual life implanted your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which ye have of God and ye are not your own oh when that is born home upon the heart of a believer and ye are not your own when we're made aware of it and why for ye are bought with a price and there are those of you here tonight you know what the price is the price of redemption thine own heart's blood the blood of Jesus

Christ God's son cleanseth us from all sin oh then how real this parable is and then of course the next verse says but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps they took oil in their vessels with their lamps but what does it say in verse 5 while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept how searching that is but dear friend I have to acknowledge I'm often in a sleepy condition the Lord makes me aware of it there are times when I am expected to preach in the week or on the

Lord's day or whenever and the Lord makes me very aware of how lifeless and how dead I am and there's even that within me that I don't hardly know what word to use but there's that within me that would be freed from the solemn fact of being expected to preach because of the state of my own mind and my own soul friends perhaps this is a word for you dear hearers here tonight oh don't ever think that the Lord's servants are always in the spirit don't ever think that because they're not they're like you hot and cold sweet and sour sometimes grave in Jesus school sometimes light and play the fool what a motley wretch am I full of inconsistency and that is where the Lord brings his dear people we have to keep being brought there and the

Lord uses what he brings into our lives he sanctifies our lives he uses what he brings us into to stir us up to make us pray to feel our need to be made aware and we shall tremble lest after all perhaps of years of a profession we shall prove to be a hypocrite have you ever been tempted that you're a hypocrite I have have you ever been tempted that you're a hypocrite the devil has tempted me and my own wicked heart has tempted me at times and you dare to go in the pulpit and I'm tempted that I'm a hypocrite solemn you know isn't it and yet these are the Lord's method the Lord's way of maintaining life in the soul of his dear people and there are those of you here tonight and you know this is true what the

Lord uses to stir you up to stir us up again we have to cry again God be merciful to me a sinner well another thought then which is very searching when it's made known to us while the bridegroom tarried and in a sense friends with all of us here tonight the bridegroom is tarrying we're all of us getting nearer and nearer our end but while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept all ten of them had made a profession they all slumbered and slept would I be wrong to say that I feel in the day in which we live there is a lot of sleeping

[27 : 13] Christians and there are times when I may to feel I'm one of them do you know that well what does the Lord do then as recorded in the parable and at midnight there was a cry made behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him and at midnight you know in that lovely hymn that was penned by a ten year old boy on the ordinance of believers baptism what does he pen in that hymn what does he pen in that hymn I know it's altered in our book slightly or whatever tis midnight with my soul till he bright morning star

I need to just read it to you so that I do not misquote it what did that ten year old boy we're told he was ten when he penned that hymn it just shows the sovereignty of God in what he can do even with a young person don't let us forget that he can when I can just find it in verse three ashamed of Jesus just as soon let midnight be ashamed of noon tis midnight with my soul till he bright morning star bids darkness flee and oh don't we often need it I do do you well then they all slumbered and slept and at midnight the darkest moment of the night isn't it

I believe it is you know midnight and at midnight there was a cry made you think of it at midnight I need to be careful what I say but friends what about if that happens tonight with us at midnight at midnight and the Lord should come the poor man who said he pulled down his barns and build greater the Lord said thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee which I have given you that's not how it's worded thy soul shall be required of thee I'm aware I'm speaking very solemnly but oh if it should be tonight tonight well then what happens and at midnight there was a cry made behold the bridegroom cometh friend you know

I do believe this and I venture with it but you know as we draw near our journey's end we shall be made aware by the very fact of how our body is I wonder how many of us here tonight have been made aware that our poor bodies are wearing out and are there not times when you're made to really feel this behold the bridegroom cometh and you're made aware you're made to you're searched about your end you're searched about your standing how stands the case my soul with thee is a burden you you know what it is and the Lord uses he comes from time to time in his dear people's lives as they get nearer their end and the Lord comes in one form of affliction or another one form of affliction or another and then isn't it true then when the

Lord does this it deepens our concern it burdens us more than ever before well we are told then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps but friends if we are searched about our religion it is no use our trimming our lamp unless we put oil in the lamp I'm sure there are those of us here tonight we still remember when we had paraffin lamps in the cow shed we had a hurricane lamp or some form of a paraffin lamp and we would all know this that if you were going to maintain the light of a lamp a paraffin lamp I'm using that way of speaking you would know that it was important to keep the wick clean and trimmed to keep the lamp going and at midnight there was a cry made then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps oh friends if we possess spiritual life we shall be burdened about our standing we shall be burdened about our religion we shall be burdened about our profession if we've made one the lord at times he comes to me like that and he makes me think yes you've been a pastor for however long what is your standing you know the lord does not allow a pastor or anybody else to rest on their profession you can't rest on your profession can you and then we have this solemn testing time and the foolish said unto the wise give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out how solemn too late and the foolish said unto the wise give us of your oil for the lamps for our lamps have gone out and a solemn thought it is that if we have made an open profession it proves that we've never had oil in our lamp so that our lamps have gone out oh I find the lord is searching me more than ever now do you find it so do you find it so but the wise answered saying not so lest there be not enough for us and you they knew very well how important it was that they still had oil but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves and then I venture with the word that I hope and believe the lord gave me to come with at the beginning of today before I had to venture to hope

[35 : 20] Bethesda to take that funeral and while they went to buy the bridegroom came here is the center of the verse and the bridegroom while they went to buy the bridegroom came and dear friends every day he's getting nearer to us every day every moment he's getting nearer to you and I well I've sometimes thought what a mercy if I might be found I hope I will be found inside of the word of God that you'll find in the last chapter in the Bible when the bridegroom the bride is enabled to say from their heart even on a dying bed even so come

I thought as I read it again tonight is there anything more solemn than this for a professing person who's made an open profession to take up this language and the way it's worded afterwards came also the other virgins saying Lord Lord open to us friends solemn thought we can use such language addressing addressing the Lord in such a way Lord Lord saying Lord Lord open to us but it was too late but he answered and said verily I say unto you I know you not could there be a more solemn way to die than that Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Let us close by singing hymn number 640 to the tune Stockwood 501.

Help us to be much in prayer, and upon thee cast our care. Draw us, Lord, by thy sweet power. In temptation's darkest hour, make us cry to thee our friend, and upon grace depends.

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[45 : 38] I believe it is a Greek word that really means setting the truth side by side to preach it O Lord I have known a few occasions when I have listened to very very solemn sermons and I have gone home wondering if I had any religion at all O Lord and yet oh how I need thee to grant me the needed grace to go home tonight at the end of this day when Lord we have we hope with thy help committed the mortal remains of another of thy people to the tomb

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Lord I know that I will be Our next one will satisfy after the hour Lord bye we know how exciting when he comes done and that's how people found hope this is until amiga thing that's how people we know we know how important sound how important we know we know