

# The consequences of professing and possessing real religion (Quality: Very good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ] to bring to you this morning. You will find in the chapter that we read, that is Matthew chapter 25, and I will ask your attention particularly to the sixth verse.
- And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.
- Amen. When we come face to face in our Bibles with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, we face absolute perfection.
- The perfection of instruction that we may be wise unto salvation. My friends, this parable of the wise and foolish virgins is a very appropriate passage from the lips of the Lord himself because his concern as he taught was the welfare of the souls that were under his instruction.
- Now, he's talking to us about the kingdom of heaven being like ten virgins. You know that virgins have the characteristic of purity.
- [ 1 : 50 ] In scripture, they're referred to again and again in the light of purity. And here we have the ten virgins brought forward and they had lamps and they together went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- There was much general similarity in that position and condition.
- They had the same characteristic. They all had a lamp and they all unitedly went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- But there was a distinction between the ten. A line that was drawn exactly down the middle of these ten virgins.
- Five were wise and five were foolish. I firmly believe that the Lord's mind in this particular centred around the condition of the church of God.
- [ 3 : 18 ] That is, the professing church. They weren't some in that sense indifferent to the things of God.
- They had a lamp. They made a profession. They identified outwardly with the general appearance of profession in the context of wisdom.
- But my friends, the ongoing teaching defines the difference between natural wisdom and spiritual wisdom.
- The natural profession and the actual possession of that which is necessary ultimately to save us.
- And I believe one of the purposes of this portion being in our Bibles is to teach us to examine ourselves relative to the possession of oil with our lamps as against just having a lamp of profession which is in itself insufficient to secure our souls and leaves us exposed to the just judgment of God finally.
- [ 4 : 52 ] What is it to be wise? In the things of this world it's shall I say a general ambition to gain wisdom and knowledge isn't it?

But how much more in the more far-reaching concerns of eternity do we need to possess that wisdom which secures our place with God in heaven forever and forever for ultimately the Lord pronounces come ye blessed of my father that we may inherit the kingdom prepared of the Lord for his people in his presence eternally.

well now five were wise and five were foolish and he deals first with they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them.

Really they were capable in and of themselves of that characteristic of virginity and having a lamp and to all outward appearances being as it were consistent with the title of discipleship.

how far can we go with an external profession without the internal necessity of the grace of God to salvation and coming to a congregation such as we have here this morning one would say in these days beware of externals in religion what you are capable of maintaining by an outward profession you come to chapel you read your bible you attend to a form of prayer and you listen with a measure of interest to the variety of preachers that come to speak in the name of the

[ 7 : 38 ] Lord and you have shall I say a natural interest in the principles of truth and a natural interest in the church of God those that meet together with you in the house of God and you can in a natural way distinguish the difference between some and others you may look down the congregation and you're well satisfied that some are wise people they've been made wise by the grace of God they've got a lamp and they've got oil that enables them to show that true light that lasting light that oil the oil of grace in the heart requires or produces and so yes numbered with them would I be now and to eternity it's the last clause of that that I would bring home to you as the great necessity in life the great necessity in religious interest to have in your heart that which will ensure your safety forever and forever to many the wise and the foolish virgins would appear to be very similar but my friends there's a secret of the

Lord that is with them that fear him there is an internal necessity of the grace of God to motivate our hearts in religious exercise and fervent desire that which the Lord alone can meet a real religion is not a man made religion and it's not a creature sustained religion it's amazing how far we can go in the name but it's the ultimate destiny the consequence of our profession and possession that is vital as we examine ourselves in the light of this particular parable which the Lord so wisely and graciously used in his day and is still using down to these days wherein his spirit uses these truths these parables to edify to sanctify his people even unto himself well now they all were together the wise the foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps and the great distinction that divides the assembly right down the middle is the possession of oil or the lack of it the wise had oil with their lamps the foolish had but an exterior appearance that may have deceived themselves and deceived many but basically the vital necessity of the grace of

God to salvation was absent in their hearts the devil doesn't mind how much religion we have that would fall into the category of a religion destitute of oil profession sometimes is most zealous in the keeping of certain practices the upholding of certain relationships and even contention for certain facts and necessities in the church of God and there's quite a strong argument presented by those who are just possessed of lamps acquired by their environment their knowledge of things in a general and natural sense oh how sad to be left to think that we're right with

God to think that because we are who we are and we do these things in a very conscientious fashion we attend the means of grace we find our place as it were in the company of the Lord's people we know the difference to a great extent between truth and error by our familiarity with the teaching of God's word and the familiarity with the doctrines that are propounded in the preaching of the gospel by the faithful ambassadors whom the Lord sends with his word but my friends the secret is the oil isn't it the secret is the oil that's where wisdom comes in the realization of the security that grace produces he will give grace and glory no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly and uprightly in that context is not just maintaining a certain standard of profession it's walking before the

Lord in the fear of the Lord it's the influence of grace on our total outlook a realization that our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags we need a righteousness of God to clothe us we need the precious blood of Jesus Christ which only is sufficient to cleanse us from the sin within us and those evidences of sin that from time to time bring just condemnation to us yes the wise have oil with their lamps and that oil is the gift of God the grace of God through Jesus Christ it's not a profession it's a possession and the

[ 16 : 23 ] Lord by his spirit gives into possession his for his people from the very beginnings of his work to salvation in their hearts they begin as it were to awaken to the solemnity of eternal things they have to set aside their practices religious practices as in and of themselves no lasting value and they come to this give me Christ or else I die the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and when we are awakened by the spirit of God to the reality of our true situation then my friends we begin to seek earnestly not just to have a name among men not just to be as it were satisfied with an association in the true church of God but we want the secret of salvation made known within us by the power and teaching of the

Holy Spirit of the living God five five were wise and five were foolish I don't doubt that some of those that were foolish considered themselves to be satisfactory they considered in the years of profession that they were safe and all was well with them but my friends there is such a thing as a gracious sense of insecurities of his people now while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept that seems to me a very solemn consideration that because the bridegroom didn't appear quickly a kind of lethargy spread throughout the entire company and the true church seems in that way to be identified in very many respects to the nominal professor there just doesn't seem any exercise there doesn't seem any lively seeking and calling upon the name of the

Lord and coveting those blessings of the right hand of the most high as he bestows his grace on the hearts and lives of his people they all slumbered and slept my friends it's amazing how lethargic we can become even though we are not ignorant of the exercise of life spiritual life in our hearts sometimes we come into most cold and distant and prayerless and indifferent attitudes of heart and spirit we may maintain certain outward practices that would lead the people of God to think that all is well with us but inside our own hearts we're made conscious that all is not well with us we're in a sleepy and slothful condition we're not as it were on the stretch for those things that are comforting and assuring to the soul that all is well through the possession of God's grace within the bridegroom while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept and at midnight there was a cry made behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him at midnight the cry was made there they were ten of them sound asleep when suddenly unexpectedly the cry reaches them and they awaken to the situation that they must go out to meet the bridegroom and my friends we know from scripture that the time of the lord's return is indefinite to all but god himself even the angels in heaven are not conscious of the exact timing of the lord in this particular when the lord will return in power and great glory he will come not in the comparative quietness and silence of

Bethlehem's first coming but his second coming it will be in power and great glory and it will be seen from all the ends of the earth that he has fulfilled that which has been so clearly prophesied in scripture that ultimately the lord will come the second time without sin unto salvation now here we have and at midnight things are very dark things are very comparatively inactive there's a kind of silence deathly silence in the midnight hour but how solemn that the church has degenerated into a condition that so easily identifies them with those foolish virgins that lacked the essential oil of sovereign grace but the ensuing experiences very clearly show the distinction between those that are foolish and those that are wise and it centers in particular with the lamps and the oil that was in possession by the wise and the required necessity of oil that was made so obvious to those who had but a lamp of profession they may have with the wise trimmed the lip the wicks when the cry came but there was no continuation there was no maintenance in their religion of the grace of God within their hearts and that security which is afforded to sinners through the grace of God in Jesus

Christ freely and sovereignly made known the bridegroom cometh surely this will be the greatest day in history when the Lord returns the Lord returns the greatest day in the experience of those who by God's grace are wise and prepared for that time the day and the hour knoweth no man not even the angels of God as I've already said it's suddenly we have it here and at midnight a cry was made behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him then they began very solemnly and searchingly to consider their situation the foolish said unto the wise give us of your oil for our lamps have gone out there's nothing enduring there was nothing lasting their profession was but a temporary situation and soon the necessity of oil was brought home to them and they realized that they were wanting they were lacking this that the wise had in possession that enabled them to continue showing forth the light as produced by the oil in the lamp what an awful awakening give us of your oil for our lamps have gone out realizing realizing there's a deficiency there's a deficiency and realizing when it's too late there is a deficiency seek ye the Lord while he may be found call ye upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous man his thoughts you see now is the day of salvation now is the time as it were to assess relative values you say ah but

[ 27 : 50 ] I think I'm alright I think I do those things that please God I wouldn't neglect certain religious exercises and attendances no I'm very careful to maintain a reasonable profession I don't say I'm free from guilt I find shortcomings in my profession which shape me sometimes at the very foundation but generally speaking I'm satisfied with the righteousness of my own making well now my friends they said our lamps have gone out our lamps have gone out but the wise answered saying not so they've got none to spare they've got none to spare oh the little that a righteous man has it's it's the grace of God is not so plentiful that we have enough to give away we are thankful if the

Lord by his spirit has begun that good work of grace exercised our hearts relative to the one thing needful brought us into a consciousness of the magnitude of our sin the filthiness of our garments by nature and brought us as it were to cry to him that he will exercise his sovereign prerogative to our advantage that is wash us bring pardon and peace into our souls through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ there's no way to heaven but by the blood of Jesus that's the only thing that can make us fit to enter heaven to be washed in sin atoning blood my friends it's a great mercy when knowing that fact we seek the

Lord that he will show us that our sins are pardoned we are verily blessed with this wise ingredient in our profession the pardon of our sins for Jesus sake say unto my soul I am thy salvation well now the wise had got enough oil for themselves the grace of God is security the Lord never loses one of his people for the want of prevailing grace to salvation all that the father giveth me shall come to me the

Lord in that atoning sacrifice waited till the work of salvation for every child of God was perfected then he cried justified in that blessed cry as before his father as well as before the church of the living God it is finished and oh how many many souls have been thankful for that cry of the Lord in the completeness of salvation's plan when he could say with all the purity and power of the expression it is finished and he bows his holy head and dies is it nothing to you or ye that pass by you see you say well yes

I know the doctrine I know that Christ came into this world born of a woman made under the law I realized that he lived the allotted span of 33 years to perfect that which the father gave him to do under the sun and in due time he was crucified by wicked hands and slain and paid the penalty of the sins of his people that were charged to him by imputation while his righteousness is charged to them in purification the oil of salvation the oil of the spirit the wonderful teaching that brings souls naked to

[ 34 : 00 ] Christ save or I perish my friends you know I was going to say there's a childlike simplicity in the cry of the heart when souls are under the pressure of just condemnation and they realize there's just one way to escape there's only one answer to their need I've quoted it give me Christ or else I die surely surely that from the heart of any sinner by the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit is oil oil or the oil of wisdom in a heart made wise unto salvation a heart made wise to the way

God saves and the only way God saves through the person and merit of his own dear son now I must draw to a close but the wise answered saying not so lest there be not enough for us and you but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves 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 the five were shut in they were wise they were shut in but the foolish were shut out listen afterward came also the other virgin saying

Lord Lord open to us but he answered and said verily I say unto you I know you not I know you not what a terrible thing some in the day of Jesus Christ will say we've done this and that and that in thy name it's all within the limits of fleshly ability a profession a man made profession a self made profession and it's that that one would lovingly and faithfully warn against you don't want a religion of your own making because that won't save you you want a religion of God's making

God's gift to you in a personal token of his grace and ultimately the promise of eternal glory I say it must be an awful time when those that think they're right come and find the door shut I can't think of any experience on earth that would be more terrible than to realize despite all we're not right in the end what a blessed thing to make our calling and our election sure to seek by God's grace and according to the influence of that holy oil that things are right with us we don't want to leave it to the end we don't want to prove it when it's too late we want to now come to the

Lord for the witness of his spirit and made known by the fruits and influences of his grace in the heart and in the life of a believer my friends there's something real in religion in the want of it and there's something real in the gift of it when the Lord hears the cries of those that feel their need and ultimately arises in the power and grace of his spirit and bestows his favour upon them in answer to their prayers I hope I've said enough this morning to distinguish between those that are true believers and those that are but professors and if you feel you're a stranger to the realities of real religion my friend don't leave it any longer don't leave it any longer because life is an uncertainty life is an uncertainty resist any inclination to divert to other interests of a worldly nature all this matter of salvation is the matter of greatest moment that can enter into the experience of any person what a wonderful thing for the

[ 40 : 08 ] Lord himself to answer all our questions I love thee well my child heaven in the promise of God will be heaven forever more amen