

# The bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him

## (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Feeling so much to need the Lord's merciful and gracious help, I must venture this evening in directing your thoughts to the chapter that we have read together, the 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, and reading verse 6.
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- And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.
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- Amen. We have before us this evening a very solemn subject, which I am sure we have listened to a good many times in our lives, this subject with regard to the wise and the foolish virgin.
- [ 1 : 43 ]     I feel sure of this. In a right way we can never be searched too much regarding the things to do with our never-dying souls.
- And every one of us here this evening possesses a never-dying soul. Oh, have we really been made aware of this by the teaching of the Holy Spirit?
- Has the solemnity of possessing a never-dying soul been born home upon our hearts?
- Have we been made aware of the solemnity and the reality of eternity? Our life here is spoken of by the Apostle James like this.
- It is but a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanishes away. And how true it is that the place which knows us now will know us no more forever.
- [ 3 : 11 ]     None of us here this evening know how soon death may come to us. It has been so rightly said the old must die, but the young may.
- And how we need to be rightly concerned about the hour and article of death. Dear friends, do we know what it is to be burdened about our end?
- You know, left to ourselves, we tend to live as though we are going to live forever. Oh, what full and sinful creatures we are.
- And how we so need the reality of eternal matters to be born home upon our hearts.
- May the Lord then help us to rightly divide the word of truth.
- [ 4 : 25 ]     And this solemn parable is left on record. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- I feel I would have to say that this first verse has arrested my thoughts today more than ever before.
- There were ten virgins. Ten professing Christians.
- They were first named Christians of Antioch, we are told. And what is a Christian?

What it is to be a Christian? May we then our hearts assure, vain is all our best devotion, if on false foundation built, true religions.

[ 5 : 52 ] More than notion, something must be known and felt. But we might rightly say, I believe that here we have before us ten virgins or ten professors of religion.

And the thought seemed to stand out today in this first verse. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

You know, many are found here. What is our hope for heaven built on? You know, many are found in a dead profession.

And what a solemn thing that is. To have the lamp of profession and yet not to possess the life of true profession, the oil of grace in our hearts.

I am aware that I am speaking this evening in a very solemn way.

[ 7 : 28 ] But if I might tell you this, I feel to need it in my own heart. We constantly need searching as to the reality of our religion.

I feel to need it more and more. Because true religion is more than notion. Something must be known and felt.

And oh, what an awful thought for any one of us. And if we have made an open profession, because that in itself, that in itself, only as we are found in Jesus Christ will stand the solemn test of death and eternity.

Many will say, and as we have read in this chapter, when the foolish virgins returned to find that the door was shut, and they came, and they said, Lord, Lord, open to us.

You see, they addressed the Lord in this way. They said, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.

[ 9 : 03 ] Now, for your encouragement, if such truths and thoughts as these search your heart, it is an evidence that you're exercised about it.

Because those that are in a dead profession are unaware of it. They're quite satisfied with their religion. And they go on in such a way until they come to the end.

And to my heart, to come to the hour and article of death, and then for it to be proved that we are nothing more than a hypocrite.

How awful is the thought. It was John Bunyan who spoke of ignorance. And he came to the gate of heaven and he was asked for his certificate.

And he fumbled in his bosom but he couldn't find it. And Bunyan said that he perceived that by the very gate of heaven there was a way to hell.

[ 10 : 24 ] This will search our hearts if there's life in our souls. We shall be very searched from time to time. And we are constantly being reminded about death.

Quite recently with us at Eastbourne a dear friend was in the house of God on the Lord's day. He came to the prayer meeting on Monday evening.

But that same night he was taken ill and then was taken even more seriously and early on Friday morning he passed away.

You see he was in the house of God on Monday evening at the prayer meeting but the following Lord's day he had been taken we believe to be with Christ.

There was the evidence that it was he said to me on the Monday evening after the prayer meeting how burdened he was about his soul.

[ 11 : 39 ] Seventy six years old I believe this was his age. And yet still burdened very burdened that Monday evening he said to me oh I feel so burdened and I sensed although he said very little but I sensed that he was burdened about his end.

And as I went to see him on the Wednesday morning in intensive care what I felt proved to be the case he said oh I wondered if the Lord was going to take me well the Lord did take it.

and I do not believe he was unprepared. You see if we are really concerned if we are among the wise virgins that will be one mark that we are among them because we shall be very concerned about ourselves the reality of our religion.

We shall not be able to rest upon the fact that we come to chapel even as we may come and how good it is when people do but to come to every service that's possible to always be in our seat or to have gone a step further in making an open profession and that perhaps for many years and yet not to be right when we come to die does this concern us I'm sure it does but they all went out to meet the bridegroom the five of them were were foolish five of them were unprepared to meet I'm aware that all of us here I'm sure we've heard these solemn truths many many times but I ask you all dear friends do they really affect our hearts we're drawing nearer and nearer to the end and oh how we need to be right how we need to be found as the wise virgins with oil in our vessels with our lamps as I understand it they would have all been dressed the same on the surface they would have all looked the same and yet there was this solemn dividing line that runs through the subject and what is it well the word of

God tells us and five of them were wise and five were foolish now it seems as though I must just tarry with this first verse a little longer then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps which speaks of a profession and went forth to meet the bridegroom it would seem to me as though it's right to say that they thought that they were all right they thought that they were prepared to meet the bridegroom oh what an awful thing for any of us to think that we are prepared to meet the bridegroom solemn thought if the bridegroom if this word should be fulfilled you know our friend that I've mentioned it was just after midnight that he was taken ill and we would all I think we would all know this that midnight literal midnight with us in that sense if you're awoken at midnight after you've been asleep perhaps for an hour or two and how dark midnight is literally and oh how dark will our midnight be if we're unprepared arms we're told then and five of them were wise and five were foolish and they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them this was the secret of their trouble oh they had a lamp of profession and I would be careful how I speak and yet

[ 16 : 29 ] I must be faithful to your souls and my own but let none of you rest behind the fact that you have not made an open profession you know there are those who do hide behind that fact well of course I've never made an open profession well the Lord knows why you haven't but never hide behind it I am aware that if we have made an open profession we in a sense our case is more solemn because we have made an open profession now let us look as the Lord may help us then into this very solemn summit they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them they were unconcerned they were not really concerned with the fact that they didn't have oil and that's just how it is with people that are in an empty profession they are unaware of the very fact that they do not possess oil or they do not possess the grace of God yet they think that they are prepared oh how many people are resting upon their works for salvation many many people are still resting upon their works for salvation but that is what that will be and proves to be like a rotten prop and it will be even more so when such come to die

I think I have told you and perhaps the Lord might use it here this evening of a lady who had worked and worked and worked in her case among the the Anglicans in the church of England and yet the Lord would have it that when and as that poor and yet proved I believe to the Lord to be so merciful but in her last days in hospital a dying woman you see and there was the request would a servant of God go and see her which he did and the Lord enabled him to speak to that lady and it was evident that the poor woman had been brought as it were to see and to feel that all her works all her religion all that she had sought to do in the name of religion she was proving you see that there was nothing in it that would hold her up in the swellings of

Jordan and God's servant was moved he stood by her bed and he said Lord and this is a true story I heard it from God's servant's own lips he stood by her bed and he said Lord what am I to say to this poor woman and the Lord moved him to begin to go through top ladies a sacred hymn rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flow be a sin the double cure cleanse me from its guilt and power you know you believe that the Lord used that hymn in that poor dying woman's case and brought her in a dying hour to see that her only hope was in Jesus Christ and all the profession of her religion was swept away in a dying hour and dear friends so it will be and so it is and how solemn if it should be like that with us now we have then this very searching word first of all the contrast between the five foolish and the five wise they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps

I'm sure that many of us here this evening look back in our lives to days when we too used our oil lamps and they had we had to keep filling them didn't we think of the winter season and our oil lamps and it was a daily concern because without oil in our lamps in those days we would have had no light of course we might have had a few candles which we did have those lamps were of no use without oil and at times they went out you see the oil the importance of the oil and what does that say to us spiritually the importance of the oil of grace within the heart that is what is so needed what does the apostle

Paul say in writing to the church at Ephesus he tells us very plainly let me read it to you you've heard this over the years many times but it's very vital and important truth and this is what he must write to the church at Ephesus for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should bow you know you will never find a true believer boasting I mean boasting about their religion many people do oh they will boast about their religion boast about their works but oh do we have to come to this and we have to say

[ 23 : 24 ] Lord I've got nothing to boast about oh how much I have to mourn over how much Lord I have to confess oh how short I come and we shall be brought into the truth that lovely hymn that is for the most part sung at baptizing services but I wonder I remember we were holding of that tithing service at Grove Road some years ago and dear Mrs.

Jupp was there Mr. Jupp's wife and as we were singing this hymn and after the service this is what the dear lady had to say till then nor is my boasting vain till then I boast a saviour slain and oh may this my glory be that Christ is not ashamed of me and you know she said it was such feeling ashamed of Jesus when yes I may when I have no guilt to wash away no tear to wipe no good to crave no fears to quell no soul to save till then nor is my boasting vain till then I boast a saviour slain you see this is where the Lord brings his dear people only in him

I'll make or can make my boast he came to seek and save the last Christ you never forget the dear lady saying this especially and oh may this my glory be that Christ is not ashamed of me now this is where the Lord brings his dear people and if there's life in our soul we shall know and feel our great need of life we shall feel our great need of this precious oil it's the life of God within the soul and the foolish virgins didn't possess it all they had was a lamb all they had was an empty profession and yet oh the difference with the wise virgins but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lambs it is then our great need there's a reality in real religion you'll be searched about your standing for eternity do you know what it is to be searched about your religion do we know what it is to be searched have you been shown the vital need of real things to be found in Jesus

Christ to be found upon the rock of ages and to know indeed and to be able to say from our very heart this is my beloved and this is my friend it was Jesus my friend when he hung on the tree that opened the channel of mercy for me oh it's this knowledge of Jesus Christ that we all need and yet there's a hymn that puts it like this and I'm sure there are those here this evening you'll say yes I understand what you're saying for tis of thee I little know and are still less enjoyed I remember the late dear Mr.

Collier coming to preach in this pulpit in his old age as you would remember he did in the May services and after many many years of preaching should never forget him saying in this pulpit how searched he had been as to whether he'd ever really preached Jesus and he was drawing near to the end of his life after many years in the ministry and I remember how it searched my heart this vital knowledge of Jesus Christ and to be able to say with the apostle Paul I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day oh we shall be compelled to put up many prayers regarding our death you know what it is to feeling me pray prepare me gracious

[ 28 : 45 ] God to stand before thy face thy spirit must the work perform for it is all of grace I went to see a lady some a year or so ago who had felt to be felt to be very near to her end and she said this she said I've only been able to go just so far without him and it's been prepare me gracious God to stand before thy face oh the reality of this to stand before thy face out of Christ God is a consuming fire I am aware that I am saying some solemn things here this evening but in a right sense the word of God will never be too solemn it will never be too solemn and while it will search us it will never be too solemn to you because you'll realize the solemnity of it and if we're enabled just for a few further moments to consider the subject like this we each have a never dying soul and when we die our souls will leave our bodies all that will be left is our poor body and our souls will leave our bodies and it will be either to enter into heaven or into hell and dear friends eternity will never end our lives will end however long we may live our lives are coming to an end but eternity will never end and there are only two eternal destinations spoken of in the word of God one is heaven and the other is hell oh is it a daily concern to us now coming a little closer to this particular verse what do we read in verse five and this is to me another very surging verse while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept think of it the five foolish virgins slept slumbered and slept and so did the wives in the previous chapter in the chapter 24 here we have this watch therefore for ye know not what hour your

Lord does come but know this that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up therefore be ye also ready for in such coming quite recently we had a thief came to our door and stole our milk and other few things that we had ordered from the milkman and we came down in the morning to find the whole thing was gone a thief had been and oh how it brought home upon my heart the reality of this and I thought yes oh if you had been awake you would have been there you would have been watching but the thief came and our goods were gone and the Lord uses this I thought yes if I'd known a thief was going to come

I would have been watching and I would have been waiting for whoever it was that came to our door in the dark and took these things these few things away but oh it brought this home upon my poor heart and I thought yes you would have been watching if you'd known the thief was coming well how searching that is for us all and especially so regarding our end watch watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come and 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 well do we know what it is to be exercised about this friends do we know what it is to be exercised about our end you know what it is to be made aware that you so need to be right

I remember some of you will remember him dear Mr. Richard Brotherwood a farmer who used to attend this chapel and one Sunday afternoon I went round the side he used to come here on his bicycle and we had been listening to very searching truths and the dear man he said this in his own quaint way he said the thing is are I right are I right and he used to say how he felt and believed that he'd been quickened into life by his father's grave but the thing with him was in simple words am I right and yet you see that is a mark of grace if we really have that exercise it's a mark of grace if we are really exercised and to be found ready and I would just think of it like this and at midnight there was a cry made behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him you know the lord often sends warnings to his people that their end is drawing nearer however long that might be

I wonder how many of us here tonight have known what it is to have warnings when perhaps the lord has sent affliction of one kind or another upon us maybe those here tonight you may have known what it is perhaps in the night or one time or another you may have felt very ill and you may well have felt is the lord coming and the lord does he does prepare his dear people for their end he does prepare them think of that that has transpired here during this very year and I would be careful what I say but I cannot refrain from saying this thinking of dear David Baas behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him and I believe that dear David was made aware of this in the hospital there and I believe there are those his dear ones that were also made aware of it and I'm sure that he was made aware of it and the lord spared his life didn't he for that little while and that time that god spared him was that time of further preparation for his end and I'm sure that he was made aware of it and I could say regarding that particular the word of god that he said to me with such feeling he felt that it had been written all those years before for him been written all those years before the word of god and preparation for death

[ 38 : 06 ] I hope you'll bear with me this evening dear friends in this solemn subject but you see it's this and I thought of it today again behold the bridegroom coming I wonder how many of us here tonight have felt this we've had warnings perhaps what a mercy to take notice of such warnings and oh how blessed to be prepared to die to be waiting to be waiting this is the religion that we also need so that we might be able to say with the hymn writer death is no more a fightful foe since I with Christ shall reign with joy I leave this world of woe for me to die again friends that is the religion that we also need do you feel to need it and to be able to say yes

I shall soon be landed on yonder shores of bliss and there with my powers expanded will dwell where Jesus is and I think of that word the Lord may be pleased to use it and I I feel and have felt with regard to dear David Buss's death as I believe I mentioned in prayer when dear Mr.

Gibb his prayer was Lord give us men and the Lord did do so and I think of John and David Buss and my cousin John Mercer and myself and there were the four of us within a few years and the three of them now are gone and there are those of you here tonight you look back do you not to other church members that may well have been baptized with you and now they're gone and how it brings it home upon our own hearts concerning our own standing but I think of this word oh spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more the Lord add his blessing to these few thoughts behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet him you see what a mercy if we're ready if we're prepared for this behold the bridegroom cometh to be prepared to die and to be waiting behold the bridegroom cometh going out to meet him and oh what a mercy if we're favoured with that vital godliness within our hearts that real religion and to be ready to be prepared and to be found in Jesus

Christ I feel it would be a mercy if we all go home from chapel this evening with this and have to go on praying you know we need prayer oh how we need it we need it for ourselves we need it for others but oh how good it is what a thought it is when death is the porter at the heavenly gate to let the pilgrim in oh may we be favoured all of us here with such an end as that amen amen amen we conclude by singing hymn number 666 and the tune is

Millennium 551 hymn number 666 with great and awful power Jesus the judge shall come to bid his foes depart and take his children home how will the wicked quake and fear when they before him must appear poor soul what is thy hope on what dost thou depend art thou a stranger still to Christ the sinner's friend soon we must leave our all below and then oh then what will we do hymn number 666 666 606

[ 44 : 00 ] I'm lebih fast but we are going è close to a unnotchar jaev and beThis country was inside my sky in the night we should no one who is six hundred and sixty-six Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 47 : 28 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Lord, we have ventured with thy holy word.

Lord, we can but pray that we shall be rightly searched in our hearts regarding our standing for eternity.

And Lord, when we think of thy word, behold at midnight, there was a cry made. Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

And Lord, may we be favoured with such an end as that. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God be the communion of the Holy Spirit.

[ 48 : 58 ] Be with you all. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.