

I'm Here for the Party

Introduction

ILLUSTRATION: The Hard Working Minister:

- *"I don't know what has come over our Pastor."* said a deacon, *"He has been working lately as if there were no tomorrow."*
- *"I think we ought to have a word with him,"* said another deacon. *"What if he KNOWS something?"*

What We Don't know: When Christ will Return

There have been people who thought they knew.

After 14 years of studying the Bible, William Miller became convinced that Christ would return in 1843. When Miller announced April 3 as the day,

- some disciples went to mountaintops, hoping for a head start to heaven
- Others were in graveyards, planning to ascend in union with their departed loved ones.
- Philadelphia society ladies clustered together outside town to avoid entering God's kingdom amid the "common herd."
- When April 4 dawned as usual the Millerites were disillusioned
- but they took heart. Their leader had predicted a range of dates for Christ's return.
- They still had until March 21, 1844. The devout continued to make ready, but again they were disappointed.
- A third date--October 22, 1844--was set, but it also passed.
- Miller eventually died
- On his tombstone was written, "At the appropriate time, the Lord will come."

What We Know: The Return of Christ is Certain.

The fact is, it will happen.

Just as the Old Testament is saturated with prophecies concerning Christ's first advent, so both testaments are filled with references to the second coming of Christ.

- ✚ One scholar has estimated that there are 1,845 references to Christ's second coming in the Old Testament,
- ✚ 17 OT books deal with it as a main theme.
- ✚ In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 318 references to the second advent of Christ.
- ✚ 23 of the 27 New Testament books refer to this great event.
- ✚ For every prophecy in the Bible concerning the Birth of Christ, there are 8 which deal with His return.

PASSAGE: *Matthew 25:1-13 NKJV* "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (2) Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (3) Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, (4) but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered

and slept. (6) "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' (7) Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' (9) But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. (11) "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' (12) But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' (13) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

- ✦ The Bridegroom is Christ.
- ✦ The Virgins are the followers of Christ.
- ✦ The lamps represent faith
- ✦ The oil represents the Holy Spirit.

Observations:

Observation 1: They were all virgins serving the same bridegroom.

Observation 2: They all started out with oil in their lamps.

- At one time they were all ready.
- The thing that calls my attention to my own dependency on God so often is the failure of others I thought were so godly.

**Observation 3: They all slumbered while waiting on the bridegroom.
It is easy to drift.**

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 NKJV (1) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, (2) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. (3) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first,

- We are told repeatedly to watch and be aware.
- We are living in a day where the things of God are optional to many who label themselves people of God.
- Many have compromised to such an extent that they no longer know right from wrong.

ILLUSTRATION: Evolution Sunday

- A university professor from Wisconsin used his school's website to encourage churches and Christian leaders to support evolution.
- On February 12, last year, he organized what he called "Evolution Sunday."
- Over 400 churches in 49 states signed up to participate in celebrating Darwin's birthday! In 2007, over 580 churches in all 50 states participated.
- Various resources were recommended for the pastors to use as they prepared special messages that day.
- Some of the resources came from an organization led by a known atheist!

Observation 4: They all heard the cry and woke up and trimmed their lamps.

- We do not need to walk around feeling our spiritual pulse,
- but we do need to be aware of where our focus is,
- as well as the enemy's schemes.

Observation 5: The foolish virgins were only as prepared as they had to be at the moment. (It was on their terms.)

- They were only interested in being ready when they needed to be.
- They had the experience but not the relationship.

Observation 6: The wise were prepared for his coming or his tarrying. (It was on his terms.)

- They were ready to live for Him.
- They lived on God's terms not their own.

Observation 7: When the Bridegroom came, the wise were focusing on the bridegroom, the foolish were focusing on their lamp.

- The wise were burning with love for Him.
- The foolish were still trying find the oil.
- They busied themselves trying to find what they should have already had.
 - ✎ This happened because they wanted just enough oil to get by.
 - ✎ They didn't want to be bothered at the time with extra oil.

Examples: People always jumping from church to church; always looking for something to satisfy their needs.

Examples: People content to sit and observe while other people do the work of the kingdom.

This happens because:

- Jesus is not their Lord, He is simply their fire insurance.
- Church is what they do, not who they are.
- They are satisfied with walk with God and do not desire to go deeper.
- They feel they have nothing to offer.
- They have misplaced priorities.

Bottom Line:

- The lamps went out because there was no oil.
- The lamps that had oil did not go out.
- The wise virgins represent Christians who walk according to the Spirit daily.
- The foolish virgins represent religious people who have tried to lived their Christian life based on one past encounter with God.
 - At some point in their walk they said, "Thank you for saving me God, now I'll take it from here."

Mark 13:33-37 HCSB Watch! Be alert! For you don't know when the time is coming. (34) It is like a man on a journey, who left his house, gave authority to his slaves, gave each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to be alert. (35) Therefore be alert, since you don't know when the master of the house is coming--whether in the evening or at midnight or at the crowing of the rooster or early in the morning. (36) Otherwise, he might come suddenly and find you sleeping. (37) And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Be alert!"

Conclusion

ILLUSTRATION: The Jingling Keys:

- Jerry Falwell – “Years ago we had a janitor named Robert King Creasy who had a key chain with almost 100 keys on it, a key for every door in the church before we purchased a master lock and a master key.
- Creasy lived here in the church, knew everything that was going on in church, and kept it spotlessly clean.
- Every once in awhile when Robert Creasy would sneak up on kids and catch them where they shouldn't be, or catch them doing things they shouldn't do, he'd always jingle his keys to let them know he was coming.
- That way the kids could straighten up before Mr. Creasy got there.

Every now and then, I believe God jingles His keys.

ILLUSTRATION: On May 19th, 1780 the sky of Hartford darkened ominously,

- The House of Representatives was in session and some of the representatives glancing out the windows, feared the end was at hand.
- Quelling a clamor for immediate adjournment, Colonel Davenport, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives rose and said,
- ***"The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought."***

God has a job for each of us to do.

- † He has given you unique gifts and abilities.
- † If you are seeking Him honestly, He will show you what you He's called you to do.

QUOTE: C. S. Lewis wrote, “All that matters is that when Jesus returns, He should find us at our posts -- whether it's leading a great crusade against slavery or tending the pigs.”

If Christ were to return right now, would He find you doing what He's called you to do, or sitting down making excuses?

If Christ were to return right now, would He find you depending on Him daily or trying to work in your own strength, running low on oil?

ILLUSTRATION: (Unfaithfulness) A young man, who was to return home and be married, came sooner than was expected. He did not notify his bride-to-be of the exact time. He desired to please her with a surprise. He loved her devotedly and had worked hard and saved his earnings in order to purchase a home for her. It was about midnight when he arrived, but, with a happy heart, he felt he must go by her home. However, when he came near he saw the house was all lighted up. As he came nearer he heard music. Still nearer he saw dancing. Finally looking through the window he saw his bride-to-be in the embrace of another man. His heart sank within him and he went away never to return.

If Christ were to return right now, would He find you anticipating Him, or would He find that your affections were in love with something else.

How is it with you and Him?