

"Watch Therefore"

❖ Demons

- *The story of told of three apprentice devils being trained by Satan. 'What are you going to try today?' asks the leader.*
- *The first apprentice replies, 'I'm going to tell them there is no God.' 'Well,' says Satan, 'you can try. A few fools will believe you. But the universe shouts the existence of God. There is evidence all around and you'll not do very well. Indeed, even in the secular twenty-first century you may find your self witnessing the slow death of atheism.*
- *Any other ideas?' The second apprentice tries this: 'I'm going to tell them there's no judgment.' 'That's a better idea,' says Satan. 'You will persuade more people of that, especially some of the clergy. But human beings have a gut sense of accountability, that actions have consequences. They know what it is to feel guilty even when there therapists tell them not to. So I think you'll find it an uphill struggle.*
- *Anyone else have an idea?' The third apprentice pipes up, 'I'm going to tell them there's no hurry.' 'Brilliant,' says Satan. 'That is just what you want to say. You will have great success. Let them listen to the word of God and whisper in their ears, "This is good stuff. One day you ought to do something about this. But tomorrow will do."*
- Christopher Ash, [*The Priority of Preaching*](#) (A Mentor Commentary) (Norhaven: Christian Focus, 2009), 65.

- Life was at stake
 - there was urgency
- Now, Jesus is coming
 - all lives at stake.
 - there must be urgency
- In a world
 - racism
 - violence
 - looting
 - anger
 - pandemics
 - political polarization
 - media antagonism
- Many can see
 - signs of Christ's coming.
- House Hunting
 - Spending hundred k's?
 -

MATTHEW 25:1

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

❖ KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

- Expression used exclusively by Matthew
 - (31 times) in the NT
- Similar to “Kingdom of God”
 - Purpose of Messiah
- **Luke 4:43**
- But he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”
- Established at first advent
- Jesus is King,
- Subjects - those who believed
- Territory - hearts and lives

❖ VIRGINS

- represent purity
- all of those who profess the pure faith of Jesus.
- They believe in the soon coming of Jesus.
- **Revelation 14:4**
- It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

❖ LAMPS

- It was their version of a flashlight
- Bowl of **oil** with wick
- It gives **light**
 - Light is a symbol of truth
- **Psalms 119:105**
- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

HIKING HALF DOME

- **John 17:17**
- Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

❖ TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM

- Weddings during this time
 - Marriage Covenant
 - Bridal Chamber Prepared
 - Wedding Announced
 - Bride Cleansed
 - Wedding Ceremony
 - Consummation
 - Marriage Feast

❖ **John 14:1–3**

- ❖ “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

- ❖ **BRIDEGROOM**

- Jesus Himself
- **Mark 2:19**
- And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

MATTHEW 25:2–4

Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

- ❖ **FOOLISH**

- What made them foolish?
 - Had lamps
 - But not enough oil
 - What do lamps symbolize?

- ❖ **OIL**

- = Holy Spirit

- ❖ **Luke 4:18**

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

- Foolish
 - Has some oil...
- They received Word
 - Received some HS
- Lives did not change
 - Rejected the HS work
- **Ezekiel 33:31**
- And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain.

- ❖ **WISE**

- Why?
- Took extra oil
- Used lamps a lot
- Allowed HS to change them

MATTHEW 25:5

As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.

❖ DELAYED

- Why delay?
- **2 Peter 3:4**
- They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”
- **2 Peter 3:9**
- The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
- Is God behind schedule?

❖ Habakkuk 2:3

For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late. (HCSB)

- There is an appointed time
- It seems to be delayed
- But it will happen
- Jesus won't be late!

- Who says,
 - “The Master delays”?
- **Matthew 24:48**
- But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’
 - Many say
 - Is Jesus Coming?
 - ◆ 1 year
 - ◆ 5 years
 - ◆ lifetime
 - All great prophets
 - Adam and Eve
 - Paul
 - ◆ believe in immanent return
 - “We who are alive and remain”

- There is a
 - tarrying time.
 - ◆ right now.

- - Where are we
 - on the timeline?
 - Right here!

 - After proclamation
 - before groom arrives!

 - How should we live?
 - ever ready!

- But what happened?

❖ ALL SLEPT

- How many?
 - Wise and Foolish
- Jesus repeatedly says:
- **Matthew 24:42–44**
- Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:2–4**
- For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.
- Sleeping
 - Opposite of being ready

Christ Object Lessons p. 408

- In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh,” ... many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit....
 - How is your
 - spiritual life
 - ◆ during this time
 - of waiting?
- The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.
 - You are not saved by
 - being SDA
 - being at church
 - memorizing text
 - exposure to truth

- But
 - seeking God
 - ♦ with all heart.
 - allowing truth
 - ♦ change your heart

MATTHEW 25:6

But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

❖ MIDNIGHT

- Symbolically,
 - The darkest hour

Christ Object Lessons p. 414

- The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history.
- The hour
 - When all sleep
 - Are unprepared
 - Are unholy
 - "Nothing Good Happens after 11pm"
- **Isaiah 60:1–2**
- Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

❖ CRY / SHOUT

- What is this?
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16**
- For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a **cry** [**shout**] of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- Announcement of arrival
 - Too late to prepare

Hay Stacks

- A preacher was walking down a country lane when he sees a young farmer struggling to load hay back onto a cart after it had fallen off.
- "You look hot, my son," said the pastor. "Why don't you rest a moment, and I'll give you a hand."
- "No thanks," said the young man. "My father wouldn't approve."
- "Don't be silly," the minister said. "Everyone is entitled to a break. Come and have a drink of water."
- Again the young man protested that his father would be upset.

- Losing his patience just a little, the clergyman said, “Your father must be a real slave driver. Tell me where I can find him and I’ll give him a piece of my mind!”
- “Well,” replied the young farmer, “you can tell him whatever you like just as soon as I get this hay off him.” (Mikey’s Funnies)

MATTHEW 25:7–9

Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’

❖ **“GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL”**

- What was the answer?
 - No
- Why?
 - It is impossible.
- Oil is not just the HS
 - It is character
 - That HS creates in us
- **Matthew 22:11–13**
- “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
- Spiritual Leeches
 - They live on others
 - Have no life of own

Christ Object Lessons p. 406

- Character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working.

MATTHEW 25:10

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

❖ **BUY**

- You cannot buy
- Character not transferable
- Not based on parents
- **Ezekiel 18:20**
- The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the

son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

- At 2nd Coming
 - Character is fixed

❖ MARRIAGE FEAST

- Happens after
 - Bride moves in
 - Purifies herself
 - Big party
- **Revelation 19:7–8**
- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

❖ SHUT DOOR

- Close probation
 - No forgiveness
 - Too late
- Foolish repent?
- **Hebrews 12:16–17**
- ... like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.
- Repented of consequences
 - Not sin
- They don't enjoy heaven.
 - They enjoy - world
- Shut out
 - by their own unfitness.

MATTHEW 25:11–12

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

❖ “I DO NOT KNOW YOU”

- Many,
 - Know about God
 - But don't know Him
- **Matthew 7:21–23**
- “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

- We have to know him
- How?
 - The Word
 - The Holy Spirit
- **John 17:3**
- And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

MATTHEW 25:13

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

❖ THEREFORE

- What is therefore
 - There for?
- Key, Concluding Statement
 - The Solution
 - How to be wise

❖ WATCH

- Watch?
 - Watch what?
 - Watch how?
- **Mark 13:32–37**
- “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Bissel's Ride

Thanks to the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, everyone has heard of the "midnight ride of Paul Revere." But few have heard of Israel Bissel, a humble post rider on the Boston-New York route.

After the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, Bissel was ordered to raise the alarm in New Haven, Connecticut. He reached Worcester, Mass., normally a day's ride, in two hours. There, according to tradition, his horse promptly dropped dead. Pausing only to get another mount, Bissel pressed on and by April 22 was in New Haven--but he didn't stop there! He rode on to New York, arriving April 24, and then stayed in the saddle until he

reached Philadelphia the next day. Bissel's 126 hour, 345 mile ride signaled American militia units throughout the Northeast to mobilize for war.

APPEAL

John 14:1–3

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

- Wedding Festival
 - Payment
 - Build room
 - Bride Fetched
 - Bride Cleansed
 - Wedding Ceremony
 - Consummation
 - Where are we?
- Many rooms
 - Bridegroom built
- He is coming
 - To get bride
- Mean time
 - Get ready
 - Purified
 - Put on garment
- Marriage Supper
 - In heaven

APPEAL

- ❖ Watch!
- ❖ Pay Attention
- ❖ Be Ready
- ❖ Seek Truth
- ❖ Invite Holy Spirit
- ❖ Be Changed

- ❖ Urgency!