Sermon Transcript

November 20, 2022

Grace, mercy and peace with you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. So, we have Jesus talking about these ten virgins waiting for the bride groom to come. And if you try to interpret too much or read too much into it really does sound like either the bride... The five virgins are just cruel and mean or else the bride groom himself is cruel and mean. Not letting the five other virgins borrow the oil or not letting them come in after the door has been shut. But we have to remember that the point of the parable needs to be understood is what Jesus is actually trying to say. Not all the specific details. Some parables, every single detail relates to something that Jesus tried to teach us. Other parables, there's one point that is trying to be made and some of the other details just don't really matter as far as the point is trying to made.

So, this is one of those where we need to see what the point of the parable is. Not get into some of the specifics. The five foolish virgins do not enter into the kingdom because everybody else is mean to them and they won't share. They don't get into the kingdom because they're not prepared, because they are reliant upon something that will not sustain them for the end. In other words, they look to their own selves and their own words for their salvation. This is what Jesus is trying to say. We need to be prepared in season and out. We need to be ready for the end of the world or at least our end. A lot of cartoons have got the man with the sandwich board that says the end is near. And the reality is it is near and it always has been. It's not like we're getting closer than we were before, although well to the conservation when Christ comes again, true.

But the reality is the end is here for each and every one of us to this day. Think about it. Do you know the date when you will die? Do you have that all planned out and figured out? Now we have our wish list like I hope to live to a right old age and whatnot, but that doesn't always happen. We know that. Disease and sickness and illness and accidents and all sorts of... War and famine and everything else comes into play. So, in reality, the end is near for each and every one of us because no man knows when the hour or the day is that Christ will come be that when He comes again in all of His glory or when He comes again for you and for me in our death. And so, we are to live as the virgins who have the oil stored up. In other words, we are transformed by the word of God and we know exactly what sustains us and what will carry us to the very end.

And so that is what we put our hope in. That is what we fill our lamps with. That is what is going to sustain us, and that is the word of God and the grace of God given to us as a gift. And so, the five wise versions relied upon the substance of their faith. That Christ died to forgive their sins. They studied the word, they learned the word, they memorized the word, they put the word in their hearts so they would sustain them to the very end. The foolish virgins relied on something else, their own efforts, their own abilities or yeah, I grew up in the Lutheran church so therefore I'm good. I haven't done anything for the last 50 years, but I'm good. I grew up, I was baptized, that's all that matters. Or whatever else we might say, well, I'm better than Jo Shmo or Sergeant Stuffy in the Air Force and I'm better than the other ones. Well God doesn't work on a scale. It's either perfection or not. Those are the only two options.

And when I look at my own life, I realize that I am in the not category by my own efforts and my own abilities. And so, if that's what I hope will bring me to the finish line, I'm going to be sorely disappointed. So, we are all in the not category. We do not live up to perfection, but in Christ we are new creations and we are restored. And we know this. Because we know that Christ is our Lord and Savior because we know that we are children of God because He has adopted us in our baptism and we are made His heirs. We realize this. We are foreigners in this land and we look forward to the day when we will see Christ again, be that in our death.

We know that we are foreigners in this land and that there is nothing that we have to look forward to in this world for all eternity. In fact, we recognize that this world is temporary. This world, we're not trying to save the world. Because we already know that this world is going to be destroyed. Now we're called to be good stewards of the gifts that God has given to us, but we're not called to save it. We're called to share the good news with other people so that they might be saved individuals, people, but not the world. And we put our hope and our trust in God and in the hope of the eternal life. I mean we have this breastplate of faith and love.

We live in a world that we know is temporary, that is going to be destroyed by God and he is going to create an even better one. I mean this one isn't bad sometimes. Sometimes it's actually pretty good, but a lot of times not so much. But we're looking forward to the hope of the future. That is where we put our trust. We don't put our trust in the things of this world. We don't put our trust in the government or in the rulers or in our economic situation or the peace in our times. Because the fact of the matter is if your party won a hundred percent of the entire nation, it would still not save you or anybody else. Vote your conscious of course as we did. But the reality of the matter is our political parties, our banks, our financial situation, our security, whatever it is, none of that is actually going to save us in the end.

Because even if we got the best leaders we could possibly find to lead in every single position, the fact of the matter is they're still human beings and they are still sinners like you and me. Can they make it better for a while? Yes, absolutely sometimes. But the reality is our hope is not in this world. Our hope is in Christ because we know our citizenship ultimately is not here, but it is in the new world. And what a wonderful and glorious place that will be a place where no longer will a child die a couple of days old. No longer will we be racked with cancer and other illnesses that we cannot cure. No longer will we die unexpectedly because of accidents or anything else. No longer will there be strife or wars or famines or anything else. Isn't that something to look forward to? Isn't that something we'd want to take place? And so, we hold fast to that. And so, as we live in this world waiting for the new world to come, what are we to do?

I don't know about you, but I have a temptation when I turn on the news one to quickly try and turn it off again, but two, when I hear the news and I see what the problems are in this world, I get pretty discouraged sometimes. Sometimes I even get very angry and frustrated at the way things are going. And yet, if I allow those emotions and that to control how I act and how I interact with everybody else, I'm not going to be a very good witness to the Gospel because I've taken off the breast plate of faith and love and I've taken off the helmet of the hope of salvation and I put on fear and anger and irritation instead.

We are called to be different in this world. If we live with a breast plate of faith and love in our lives and we live with the of hope in our salvation, then we ought to stick out like a sore thumb in this world because we can walk around with joy, no matter what. We are filled with hope. Even when this world is desperately trying to take away all hope there is. We are not hope less. And so we are to keep our eyes on Christ not upon the particulars of any individual given day and the frustrations and the horrors and the fears of that day. We're to keep our eyes on Christ,

Where to keep our eyes with the hope of our salvation. Yeah, we know the end is near. Sometimes we're convinced it's very, very near, but that's not something that we are afraid of. It's something that we see as an opportunity for us to proclaim why we have hope for tomorrow. And so let us live in the confidence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the confidence that He will come again to take us home where we will be at peace, where we will be free from the cares and the worries and the sorrows of this world. May that hope and that love and that faith be and abide with you always now and forever more life everlasting in Jesus Christ. Amen.