

Matthew 25:1-13

‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Sermon

Well, after this week, we can all certainly understand the plight of the bridesmaids who found themselves waiting. They had to wait long past the time when they expected for the bridegroom to arrive at the wedding. Perhaps you too found yourselves up past midnight waiting this week. Perhaps you too found yourself nodding off, or even falling asleep in the midst of all your hopes and worries and expectations as our country waited to hear results of elections.

We might feel like we can identify with the bridesmaids in their waiting. And some of us might have a sense of what it feels like to celebrate the arrival of what they were hoping for. But, the truth is that we still have not reached the end of Jesus’ parable. We still have not found our way to the end of our story, or the end of our waiting. None of us have entered in to the wedding banquet yet. And none of us have yet been left outside.

Still we wait. For we know that our hope was never in the left or the right. Our salvation will not come from the Elephant or the Donkey. The prophets of the scriptures did not call us to hold out hope for Democrats or Republicans. But, our hope is in the Lord, the God who made heaven and earth. Our salvation was won for us through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ and we will only find the fullness of it when that bridegroom comes again.

So still we wait. For Christ’s return. And we wait with bated breath. For we trust that with him will come the Kingdom of God. With him will come the fulfillment of our hopes and a banquet so great that all will celebrate it together. People from every place and time. From every political party. From every socioeconomic status. This kingdom was meant for all.

And, as long as any despair, we know that the bridegroom has not yet arrived, but is still on the way.

For the banquet that we are waiting for will not be the inauguration gala of a winning politician who beat the other side. It will not be the victory parade of a warrior who has conquered their enemies. But, it will be a wedding banquet. The sanctification of people coming together, of

people who commit to care for one another for richer and poorer, through sickness and health. It will be a celebration of love.

And I'm sorry to tell you, but the wait is not over. And the wait we are called to is not a passive waiting, but an active one, working to bring that wedding feast to fruition. Seeking to learn about love and practice it. To study it and perfect it. To share it deep and wide until that love feeds the hungry and heals the sick. Until our love reconciles enemies and liberates the oppressed. Until all may see the truth and look with expectation toward that bridegroom from who God's love flows.

But, the good news, my friends, is that we do not wait alone. But, God's Holy Spirit waits here with us, as the oil in our lamps that fuels a flame of love that will never go out. So let us wait together, for that great wedding feast with faith and a hope so great that we start the celebration of love early. That we share the good news of it with our neighbor. That we invite them to come and wait with us, no matter who they voted for. For all who let God's light shine in them will be welcomed in. To that celebration of love, for which we wait in faith.

Amen.

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