

Matthew 25: 1-13 The 10 Bridesmaids  
Where did they do wrong?

In this story there are 10 bridesmaids who are waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom. Some biblical scholars suggest this setting was part of an ancient Hebrew wedding ceremony where the bridegroom went to his bride's family home and then brought her back to **his** family's home. The maids were part of this huge celebration and that is the reason they were outside waiting for the bridegroom to arrive.

Five of the maids were confident they had enough oil in their lamps while they waited, and five of the maids brought extra oil just in case. As luck would have it the bridegroom took longer than expected to get back. Five bridesmaids ran out of oil. Now I think that many who read this story think that the maids with the extra oil should have shared. They were not being stingy; the fact was they could not take the chance that the bridegroom and his bride would end up in the dark.

What is the message behind this story? The most obvious message is that we should always be prepared and living a good life because we do not know when we will meet the Lord. But I want to get away from the idea that we should be good and faithful people simply because we want to get to Heaven or because we are afraid of the alternative. All of us need to search

deeper into our hearts and try to understand what Jesus is asking of us and why we should be willing to do it.

Remember **all ten** of the bridesmaids became drowsy and slept. That is what happens to all of us. There is no one here who is perfect, always making the right decisions, and never faltering in their faith. A few years ago a term that was so popular was WWJD “what would Jesus do”. We would see those letters on bracelets, t-shirts, and bumper stickers. Well I for one did not really like that phrase. What would Jesus do? Well, He always did the right thing. He is God. Even when we **know** what is the right thing to do, we don’t always do it. Our humanity gets in the way and so sometimes we are jealous, greedy, judgmental and so on and so on. We fall asleep just as those bridesmaids did. So what should we do? Every one of us needs to strengthen our relationship with God and ask to be made better.

We should pray that when we encounter someone who has harmed or disappointed us we are more forgiving; that we are more understanding when we do not agree with our neighbor’s actions or beliefs; ask God to help us trust when life is just not being kind.

There is a welcome statement found in St. John’s bulletin, “In the name of Christ we bid you welcome. May those who sorrow find comfort; the weary, rest; the troubled, peace; the stranger, a friend; the unhappy, joy’

and to all the sense of God in this Holy Place.” As members of this community we promise a lot to anyone who enters this church. But there is nothing in that statement that cannot be provided if every one of us takes our responsibility as a Christian seriously.

Let’s face it, some days our light will shine brighter than other days...but the point is that our lamp should always lit. We should always being ready to give more than we are asked and forgive more than we think we are able. And why should we do this? Because every single one of us is valued and cherished by a God whose love for us is **unimaginable!**

Amen