

“Long Time Coming”

Matthew 25:1-30

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July 15-16, 2017

Truth #1: THOUGH CHRIST’S RETURN IS DELAYED, LIFE IN THE KINGDOM MUST NOT BE DEFERRED.

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ⁹‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ ¹²But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ ¹³Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Matthew 25:1-13 (New International Version)

- ten “virgins” = two different kinds of people = spiritually wise and foolish
 - the wise = those who love God and live in obedience
 - the foolish = those who don’t love God and live in disobedience
- “bridegroom” = Christ and His coming

Truth #2: WAITING FOR CHRIST’S RETURN MEANS HIGH RISK AND HIGH EFFORT, AS WE WORK FOR THE KINGDOM.

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ ²¹His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a

few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²²The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' ²³His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²⁴Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' ²⁶His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

"bags of gold" = Greek, *talanton* = all the resources with which God entrusts us

Qualities of "Good and Faithful" Servants

- Enthusiastic and quick to obey
- Work hard in the Kingdom
- Willing to take risks
- Motivated by love for the Master

"When Jesus speaks of someone being thrown into the darkness outside, where people weep and grind their teeth, we must never forget that he was himself on the way into the darkness, where even he would sense himself abandoned by God." (from "Matthew for Everyone, Part 2" by N.T. Wright)