

Youth Teaching Resources

November 8, 2020



The Right Stuff

Matthew 23:1-12—“The Right Stance”

Matthew 25:1-13—“The Right Preparation”

Matthew 25:14-30—“The Right Investment”

Psalms 100—“Good God!”

Christmas Letters

1 Corinthians 1:1-9—“Every Good Gift”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

“The Right Preparation”

Matthew 25:1-13

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

Create a countdown to Advent across your social media platforms. Add things that you look forward to about Advent to your posts throughout the week.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Be Prepared” from *Hoodwinked*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What does Red want from the mountain goat?
- 2) What does the mountain goat provide for Red? Does he give her what she needs?
- 3) How as Red prepared?
- 4) How prepared do you usually feel?
- 5) How does your faith help you prepare for what happens in life?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Matthew 25.1-13. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony’s commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What was the role of the bridesmaids during this time? Why is this important to know when reading the passage for this session?
- 2) Why did the bridesmaids not share their oil? Would you have shared the oil? Explain.
- 3) Who do the different characters in this story represent?
- 4) How is Jesus calling us to be ready?
- 5) What did Jesus want the hearers of the text to understand from this parable? Is it applicable for us today? Explain.

Information *continued*

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the “Digging Deeper” portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) How do these parables mirror the Sermon on the Mount?
- 2) What kind of lamps did the people of Israel use?
- 3) Why would the groom be negotiating with the father of the bride?

You may also want your group to discuss “The Hardest Question” if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as “The Hardest Question”: Does the bridesmaids’ supply of oil represent good works?

Transformation

Conclude the session by introducing the social media challenge for the week:

Create a countdown to Advent across your social media platforms. Add things that you look forward to about Advent to your posts throughout the week.

Allow time for students to brainstorm things that they look forward to during Advent and ways they can represent these across their social media platforms.

Close with a prayer thanking God for providing the tools for us to live out our faith and the perseverance to live it out.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Another sermon on the mount?—Matthew 24:3-25:46 is sometimes described as the “Second Sermon on the Mount,” because the author places it in the context of Jesus speaking to his disciples on the Mount of Olives. The section begins with an apocalyptic discourse in which Jesus speaks of trials and tribulations that would precede the end times, when Jesus would return in glory (24:3-44).

The discourse implied that such things would happen soon: “Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place” (24:34). He went on, however, to insist that no one knew the exact day or hour when he would return, insisting that his followers must be ready, “for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (24:44).

This is followed by four stories, all of which counsel readiness for Christ’s return. The first, concerning an overseer of other slaves who grows negligent in his duty while the master was away, was probably directed at church leaders (24:45-51). The second, our text for today, is the account of wise and foolish maidens awaiting a bridegroom and his wedding feast (25:1-13). It was directed toward church members in general. The third parable, concerning servants entrusted with varying amounts of financial responsibility while their master was away, urged believers to make maximum use of their abilities while awaiting Christ’s return (25:14-30). The fourth, concerning the “sheep and goats” judgment, connected the verdict to our willingness to serve Christ by serving others, apparently as a mark of genuine faith (25:31-46).

Only Matthew—Both Mark and Luke include stories about the importance of watching while waiting (Mark 13:33–37; Luke 12:35–38, 13:25-28), and the accounts include some elements similar to this one (sleeping, weddings, alertness). They are sufficiently different, however, to indicate that Matthew derived the story from his own special source.

Lamps—The English word “lamp” comes directly from the Greek word, *lampas*. First century lamps were typically simple vessels stamped or molded from clay and filled with olive oil, into which a wick was inserted. One of the reasons olive oil was so important to the ancients is that it was used for lighting as well as cooking.

Negotiations—Ancient Hebrews, like many societies, had a custom in which the father of a prospective bride would receive a gift (known as a *mohar*) from the groom or the groom’s representative as a way of sealing a betrothal, which was a more serious arrangement than many engagements today. Though sometimes referred to as a “bride price,” the transaction was not seen as a straightforward purchase. Still, the gift helped to offset the financial loss of a daughter who was no longer contributing to her parents’ household.

Marriages typically took place among people of similar social and financial status. Often the dowry given to the bride was roughly equivalent to the betrothal gift, so there was little effective transfer of wealth.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Does the bridesmaids' supply of oil represent good works?

We suggested in the printed commentary that connecting the virgins' supply of oil to good deeds is pushing the allegory too far. If that were the case, we would have to imagine that good works could also burn out, be stored up against future needs, or bought from a store.

Those who believe the burning oil lamps represent continuous good works as a required element of readiness for the kingdom often point to the heartsick cry of the foolish virgins who had come too late and found the door shut. They cried "Lord, lord, open to us," but the bridegroom responded, "Truly, I tell you, I do not know you" (vv. 11-12).

The interchange calls to mind an occasion in which Jesus warned against false followers, saying, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father 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 deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'" (Matt. 7:21-23).

We note that both interactions suggest the context of the final judgment, and in both cases those who say "Lord, lord" are turned away and told some version of "I don't know you." In Matthew 7, however, those who are turned away have apparently done good deeds, even to the extent of prophesying, casting out demons, and working miracles in Christ's name.

It is not what they have done that counts, but what was in their heart. There is more to "doing the will of my Father in heaven" than preaching or performing mighty works. The skeptical among us wonder if the false believers Jesus spoke of would have been telling the truth in their claims: knowing their hearts and self-directed motivation, would Jesus have allowed them to prophesy, cast out demons, and perform miracles in his name?

Whatever preparation is required for meeting Jesus, it is not defined by the steady accomplishment of good works right up to the decisive moment. Otherwise, what would be the point of grace? Deeds done in hope of reward may accomplish good things but grow from a selfish motivation.

The parable does not spell out for us precisely what it means to be prepared when Jesus comes. At the least, being ready must have its roots in a heart that is focused on living out the grace we have received, knowing that any day on the calendar could be the day we meet Jesus.