

# ***CULTIVATING THE “OIL OF INTIMACY” (MT. 25:1-11)***

**COREY STARK**

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## ***Cultivating the “Oil of Intimacy” with Jesus as our Bridegroom God***

### **I. THE CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS (MT. 25:1-13)**

A. Mt. 24-25 is ***one teaching*** focused on ***preparing leaders*** for the end-times. First, Jesus taught on the end-times (Mt. 24:3-44), then applied his teaching in three parables to those He called to leadership (Mt. 24:45-25:30), before describing His final judgment (Mt. 25:31-46). In it Jesus stresses ***intimacy with God as a necessity for end-times preparation***. This final teaching is “leadership 101” for the end-times church.

B. The ***greatest revival*** and the ***greatest pressure*** in history will come in the generation the Lord returns (Joel 2:11; Mt. 24:21). The light and darkness, the wheat and tares will increase together (Mt.13:30) and we are to continue in our ministry assignments until the very end (Lk. 12:35-48). Every ministry has the same general mandate of ***building the church*** (Mt. 16:18) and ***obeying the great commission*** (Mt. 28), while impacting the 7 spheres of society. Each may also have ***specific assignments*** that fall under these categories.

***Mt. 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.***

***Lk. 12:35 Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return... that when he comes and knocks they may open immediately.***

C. In Mt. 24-25, Jesus was preparing His people to prevail through the unique dynamics and unprecedented events of the great tribulation with power and victory. The Church is ***raptured at the end*** of the tribulation. The Church will partner with Jesus to release judgment on the Antichrist’s kingdom through prayer in the way that Moses released the ten plagues on Pharaoh. This type of prayer will be used to liberate those being oppressed by the Antichrist’s reprobate oppressors of the nations in the final 3½ years before Jesus returns.

***Mt. 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days...<sup>31</sup> He will send His angels... they will gather together [rapture] His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven...***

D. One of Jesus’ primary emphasis is the ***necessity of cultivating intimacy*** with Him as the ***Bridegroom God*** in the midst of this hour (Dream). Many within the church are not focused on this, but the Holy Spirit will see to it before Jesus returns (Rev. 22:17). Jesus ***eternal identity is a Bridegroom*** (Isa. 62:4-5), yet this is a relatively new global emphasis by the Spirit in the last 10-15 years that will continue to increase.

***Isa. 62:4 You shall no longer be termed forsaken... for the Lord delights in you... 5 And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.***

***Rev. 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”***

E. This isn’t about gender. We are all “sons of God” and the “bride of Christ”. As “sons” we access ***His Throne***, related to His Kingdom, power and glory. As the “bride” we access ***His heart***, related to His emotions, affections and delight. We don’t sexualize our relationship with God in any way. We don’t have “date night” with Jesus as our boyfriend. These realities relieve the pressure of camouflage and candles.

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F. As we approach the coming of the Lord in the end-times the Holy Spirit will emphasize three aspects of Jesus’ personality and ministry - **Bridegroom**, **King**, and **Judge** (Mt. 24-25, Rev. 19; Isa. 61-63; Ps. 45). Jesus highlights these three aspects of His ministry in Mt. 24-25.

1. As a **passionate Bridegroom** we encounter His burning desire and love for us (Mk. 3).
2. As a **transcendent King** we encounter His infinite resources and power
3. As a **righteous Judge** we encounter His wisdom and zeal, as One who intervenes in human history to confront darkness and removes everything that hinders love in preparation for His Father’s coming.

G. Jesus is not only a King with all power, but a Bridegroom with burning desire for His people (Mk. 3). Intimacy with Jesus as the Bridegroom God is not only the **fuel** for the “24/7 prayers for justice” movement (Isa. 62:4-5, 6-7; Lk. 18:7-8), but the **focal point** of it all. Jesus is the end goal of our life (24 Elders trance).

**Isa. 62:4 You shall no longer be termed forsaken... for the Lord delights in you... 5 And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. 6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night.**

H. “**Learning from our Father’s**” - The Twenty-Four Elders, as the most powerful, mature and highest ranking men in authority within the government of Almighty God, spend their strength **beholding** the beauty and glory of God (Rev. 4:4; 5:5-6; 7:11; 14:3) unto **transformation through revelation** (2 Cor. 3:18), effortlessly producing **worship** or agreement with Who God is (Rev. 4:10; 5:8-10, 14; 11:16-17; 19:4), **intercession** or agreement with God’s purpose (Rev. 5:8-10) and **proclamation** or making known the knowledge of God with an invitation to encounter Him (Rev. 4:11; 5:4-5, 8-10; 7:13-17; 11:16-18) as the primary means to **advance the Kingdom** (12x Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4).

1. **Rev. 4:4 Around the throne... I saw twenty-four elders sitting... (Rev. 5:6; 14:3)**
2. **Rev. 4:10 The twenty-four elders fall down before Him... and worship... and cast their crowns...**
3. **Rev. 5:8 The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp [worship music], and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song...**
4. **Rev. 5:14 The twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.**
5. **Rev. 7:11 The elders... fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God...**
6. **Rev. 11:16 The twenty-four elders who sat before God... fell on their faces and worshiped God...**
7. **Rev. 19:4 The twenty-four elders... fell down and worshiped God... saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”**

I. Jesus emphasized **knowing Him** “as the Scripture said”, as being vital to our maturity (Mt. 16:15-19; Jn. 7:38). The end-time Church will effectively partner with Jesus, having a **vibrant spirit** (Dan. 11:32; Jn. 7:38; Eph. 3:16-19), being **victorious over darkness** (Mt. 16:18) and having **authority in intercession** (Mt. 16:19) to the degree we understand the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is both **fully God** and **fully Man**.

**Mt. 16:16 “You are the Christ [humanity], the Son of the living God [divinity]...” 18 On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail... 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom... whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose... will be loosed in heaven.”**

**Dan. 11:32 The people who know their God shall be strong [vibrant in inner man Eph. 3:16-19], and carry out great exploits. 33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many...**

**Jn. 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**

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J. Jesus taught He would come quickly and we are to be ***faithful*** during the time of His delay. The faithfulness He speaks of is more than ministerial, but ***relational*** at the heart level. Relational intimacy is the ***foundation*** that the church is to be founded upon (Mt. 16:15-19). Operating in both, power or prayer without relational intimacy is foolish and presumptuous (Mt. 7:21-23; Lk. 9:51-56).

1. Parable #1: ***Jesus’ delay is shorter than expected.*** The parable of the good and evil servants in Mt. 24:45-51 contrasts two types of leaders in the kingdom. The wicked leaders worked with ***wrong motives*** that abused their God-given blessing and authority. The good servants are the leaders who are both ***wise*** and ***faithful*** as they feed God’s people.

2. Parable #2: ***Jesus’ delay is longer than expected.*** The parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Mt. 25:1-13 emphasizes the necessity of staying connected to the Spirit and cultivating intimacy with Jesus as our Bridegroom God. Some leaders who began wise with good motives will end up being foolish by working with ***wrong priorities***, which causes them to neglect to maintain their intimacy with God.

3. Parable #3: ***Jesus’ delay is harder than expected.*** The parable of the faithful steward in Mt. 25:14-30 focuses on being faithful in our ministry assignment in the times when it seems ***insignificant***, ***unnoticed*** and ***challenging*** (Mt. 25:21, 24). The majority of ministries have a small assignment. Those responding wrongly worked with the ***wrong evaluation*** and despising their assignment, they simply neglected it.

K. Jesus’ primary exhortation for us to be prepared in the end-times is to “***watch***” or develop a ***heart connection*** with the Spirit and be ***aware***, ***alert*** and ***act accordingly***. We are exhorted 10 times (Mt. 24:36, 42-44, 50; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36; 1 Thes. 5:6; Rev. 16:15). Jesus’ answer is so simple it’s offensive. Watching isn’t the only thing to do in preparing for the end-times, but it is the ***primary*** one, because if we get a ***heart connect of intimacy***, then all the wisdom we need will come to us as we need it.

***Mt. 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.***

L. We “watch” to position ourselves to ***receive strength*** from the Spirit to love God and love people. It is the place we are ***empowered*** to obey and love. It is presumptuous to seek to do this without being connected to the Holy Spirit, especially as times get more difficult (Mt. 7:21-23; Jn. 15:1-8; Rev. 3:17-18). It’s like taking time to put fuel in our car instead of pushing it. Most would readily admit this doctrinally, yet their schedule betrays them (Lk. 10:38-42). We must also “take heed” we don’t lose fuel. Regardless of what we do (marketplace, family, ministry) we will exert significantly more energy and getting far less done.

***Jn. 15: 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit [life of God]; for without Me you can do nothing.***

***Mt. 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’***

***Rev. 3:17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed...***

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## **II. KINGDOM LEADERSHIP AT THE END OF THE AGE – DEFINING WISE LEADERS**

***Mt. 25:1 Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.<sup>2</sup> Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.***

A. ***Then:*** We ask, “When is then?” The word “then” points back to the end of the age theme in the generation of the Lord’s return that He just emphasized in Mt. 24. This is when the kingdom functions like virgins meeting the Bridegroom. In the generation the Lord returns the Holy Spirit will universally emphasize the need to cultivate intimacy with Jesus as the Bridegroom God (Rev. 22:17).

B. ***Virgins:*** All born again believers are virgins before God and are made pure and clean through Jesus’ blood and free gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:17).

***2 Cor. 11:2 I betrothed you to one husband...I present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.***

C. ***Lamp:*** Each of these virgins had a lamp, which spoke of a ministry that brought God the light of God’s truth to others (Mt. 5:15-16; Rev. 1:20; 2:5; 11:3-6; Zech. 4:2; Is. 62:1; Jn. 5:35).

D. ***Bridegroom:*** All these ministries had a revelation of the intimacy message and understood Jesus as the Bridegroom God earlier in their ministries. These are ministries who went out to meet, or who encountered, Jesus as the Bridegroom God, speaking of His burning desire for us to be with Him where He is because He delights in us (Isa. 62:4-5; Jn. 17:20-23).

***Rev. 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”***

E. In this parable, Jesus’ warning is that the wise can become foolish if they neglect to continue to cultivate intimacy with Jesus by going out to “meet” or encounter the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:1). Anointed intimacy-based ministries can lose their way or “first love” (Rev. 2:4-5) if they neglect cultivating intimacy with God in the midst of the mounting pressures of the end-times. Here the pressure isn’t from the Antichrist, but the increased busyness, workload and ministry opportunities that come from the outpouring of the Spirit in revival. We can overemphasize our importance (if I don’t go, who will?) and underestimate our weakness.

***Rev. 2:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.***

## **III. FIVE WISE VIRGINS: ACQUIRED OIL AS THEIR MINISTRY LAMPS SHONE**

***Mt. 25:2 Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.<sup>3</sup> Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,<sup>4</sup> but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.***

A. The “oil” speaks of the presence and life of the Spirit touching our heart as we cultivate intimacy with God by “spending time” with Him (2 Cor 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

***1 Jn. 20:27 But the anointing [oil] which you have received from Him abides in you...***

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B. The oil of the Holy Spirit touches our hearts in different ways:

1. ***It tenderizes our heart***, enabling us to feel more of God’s desire for us.
2. ***It enlarges our desire*** for Him by encountering His desire for us.
3. ***It illuminates our understanding*** with revelation of God’s beauty.
4. ***It imparts zeal for righteousness***, which helps us in our struggle with besetting sins.

C. The foolish took their lamps (ministry), but ***took no oil***. In other words, they pursued ministry as their first priority, instead of acquiring oil (heart) in their relationship with Jesus. They have more confidence in their own strength than they should, imagining that it’s never ending. We must minister, but not at the expense of our heart connect. This is what the Ephesian church was corrected about (Eph. 2:4-5).

D. The wise ministries ***took oil*** in their vessels with their lamps. In other words, they pursued acquiring oil as their first priority before seeking to expand and network their ministry.

E. Our relationship with Jesus is our most important “dream,” not our ministry assignment. Jesus definition of being “wise” is so simple you can almost miss it. From Jesus’ perspective: “wise” = heart connect as your first priority and “foolish” = ministry assignment as your first priority. There is more to being wise, but if we get this into divine order, everything else will come into alignment. The two witnesses are called the “sons of oil” (Zech. 4:14).

## **IV. THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY IN THE END TIMES: THE THREEFOLD CRY**

***Mt. 25:5 While the Bridegroom delayed, they all slept. <sup>6</sup> At midnight a cry was heard: “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, go out to meet Him.” <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.***

A. At the midnight hour of history, forerunners will cry out with a threefold message to the nations (Isa. 40; Dan. 11:32-33; 12:10).

B. First, ***“Jesus is coming”*** refers to His manifest victory and power, as He asserts His kingship over all nations (Rev. 11:15-19). Jesus will “come to us” by progressively releasing waves of revival that win the lost and transform society. These waves will build and intensify more and more until Jesus comes in the sky to rapture the Church.

C. Second, Jesus is coming, not only a Transcendent King with all power, but He’s ***coming as a Bridegroom God*** with burning desire for relationship with us.

D. Third, we must ***go out to meet Him*** or to make the necessary effort to position ourselves in worship, obedience, prayer, the Word, and fasting to ***encounter*** Jesus. Make the time and effort.

E. They all slept and all trimmed their lamps. Sleeping in this parable is not bad. The wise and unwise both sleep (Mk. 4:27). This speaks of “cultivating oil” in the natural processes of life. We sustain intimacy with Jesus in the midst of the rigors, routine and mundaneness of life.

***Mt. 25:5 They all slept... <sup>7</sup> all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.***

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## V. JESUS EMPHASIZED THE GREAT NEED TO CULTIVATE OIL IN THE END TIMES

A. The warning of this parable is that the ***wise can become foolish*** IF they esteem the work of ministry above their intimacy with God. The foolish ministries recognize their mistake in neglecting oil.

***Mt. 25:8 The foolish said, “Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out.”<sup>9</sup> The wise answered, “No, lest there’s not enough for us and you; but go to those who sell, and buy for [invest for] yourselves.”***

B. Many “ministry lamps” will go out because they will lack the spiritual vitality of the Spirit’s oil to meet the need in that hour. They asked the wise to ***give them oil*** to “bolster” their ministries. The wise understood their limitation knowing that their spiritual history, connectedness and preparedness is ***not transferrable*** it’s personal. Christian “self-help” sermons and “cotton candy” Christianity will not meet the need of the hour in that day. We must be a voice that pursues the truth in our secret life and not just an echo of other’s ideas.

C. Jesus exhorts us to “buy” by engaging in the God-ordained process of acquiring intimacy with God. We do this by spending our most valuable asset – ***our time***. We do not earn this, but ***invest ourselves*** in a costly way and get that which is valuable and priceless. There is no prayer line to give you a history in God.

***Rev. 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich...***

## VI. BEING PREPARED FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

***Mt. 25:10 While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came [progressive seasons of revival], and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door [of opportunity for usefulness] was shut.<sup>11</sup> Afterward the other virgins came also, “Lord, Lord, open to us!”<sup>12</sup> “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.”***

A. This passage is not a warning about losing salvation. Jesus neither knew nor recognized them as those who engaged with Him as the Bridegroom. When Jesus said, “I do not ***know*** you,” He was describing their ***lack of intimacy*** with Him, not their ***lack of salvation***. He did not call them evil (Mt. 24:48); wicked and lazy, or cursed (Mt. 25:26, 41); neither did he say that He never knew them (Mt. 7:23).

B. The Jewish custom involved celebrating a wedding for several nights (ideally seven nights for a wealthy family). Those closest to the married couple were invited on the first night and subsequently on the following nights. The “waves” of the Spirit activity are building up to the fullness of the end-time revival culminating at the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9).

C. Only those who were ***ready*** by being close to the Bridegroom went in to the celebration. This speaks of those who will be prepared to be powerfully used by God in the end-time revival. Only those who were ready went in to celebrate on the ***first*** night and, therefore, the nights that followed. The others cried out, “Open to us!” – give us a place of usefulness and nearness to You in what you’re doing.

D. Many will miss future opportunities to be used in their fullest way. Jesus’ advice is to ***watch***, or to open our heart and ***develop intimacy*** with Him as the Bridegroom. The most substantial way to acquire oil is by feeding on God’s Word. In the Song of Songs, God calls it the “kisses of His Word.” This positions our heart before God to freely receive.

***Mt. 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor hour in which the Son of Man is coming.***