



WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

KEEP WATCH | Remaining Ready for the King

RECEIVE

Take a few moments to read **Matthew 24:36–51**. This is the context that gives meaning to the principle text Matthew 25:1-12. Read these passages slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Read in such a way that you imagine the Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you. As you read the passage, journal words or phrases that stand out to you. Then go back and consider why those words and phrases caught your attention. Read the passage again imagining motivations and emotions of the characters. Finally, read and consider what these verses might imply about ANTICIPATION and PREPARATION in this season.

REFLECT

1. Jesus is speaking in parables. In this context they each point to being ready. Pastor Dan states that Jesus wants people to know first that He is coming back, second there will be a reckoning when He does and third the desire of the Father is to save the world, not condemn it (John 3:17). How does the use of a wedding and bride and groom enhance the feeling of anticipation? What feelings and thoughts is Jesus trying to paint for the listener? Who are the listeners in the story?
2. What is the contrast in the story? What is Jesus saying about waiting? What is He saying about being ready?

3. The situation was tiresome. They ALL fell asleep. What is the metaphor of the coming of the bridegroom? “..a long time..” “..the cry will ring out...” “...come to meet him..” What was Jesus saying to the audience? What connections do you find in your life of faith here and now?
4. Wise and ready are two messages. What do you recall Pastor Dan saying about that? How do you prepare to meet someone you love whom you haven’t seen in a long time? A spouse on a long work trip? A child returning from their first semester away at college? A parent who now lives across the country? How do you “get ready”?
5. The wise virgins were prepared with extra oil to make sure their light would still burn. What is the equivalent for us—what do you think this symbolizes in our modern world? Do you think they are living in expectation? Are they anxious or enthralled? How does that apply to us? What does it mean for us tomorrow?
6. Ultimately, those prepared enter and are greeted by the bridegroom? The “unwise”, unprepared are locked out. What do you think it means “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you”? What is the implication for us as readers today?

RESPOND

7. The picture of the Bridegroom (Jesus) coming back for the Bride of Christ (us, His church) is beautiful imagery. How real is it for you? How ready are you? How enthralled, how expectant? Journal your thoughts around those words: reality, readiness, expectation, enthralled.
8. This week take some time to brainstorm how you might “keep your lamp lit” for Jesus in the coming year. Pray for ideas and guidance. It might be helpful to look back over this year and think about where you were ready and where you were distracted, where you had oil in reserve and where you were out looking for it at a critical time—you get the picture. The Bridegroom Jesus wants us to be ready and He wants us to WANT to be ready. He has a fantastic gift that He died to give to us. Let’s seek to be aware. Let’s not fall asleep.

RESOURCES

Pastor Dan shared the oil in the lamp signifies a life of prayerful relationship with Christ. Toward that desire consider using one or all of these resources to “keep your lamp lit” in 2022.

[Lectio 365](#): A great prayer app with which to start and end your day.

[Slowing to Hear Spiritual Retreat](#) on February 5: There’s nothing like intentionally spending a day with Jesus to grow your expectation and longing for His return.

[The Bible Project App](#): This newly released app helps you engage with the Scriptures in new insightful ways.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 24:36–51 | New International Version

³⁶ “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.