

WEEK 24: PARABLE OF THE WISE & FOOLISH VIRGINS

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

How do we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ?
When do we hear this parable in church?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 327-339

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 214-221

Volume IV - The Virtues:

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/spirituality/the-virtues/the-virtues>

Great Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday by Fr. Alkiviadis Calivas

<https://www.goarch.org/-/great-monday-tuesday-and-wednesday>

PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Vocabulary:

- **Lamps:** At this time, people would use small, earthenware lamps which held oil and a wick. This parable may refer to an oil torch (lampas) and the oil would burn for about 15 minutes before needing to be replenished.
- **Bridegroom:** the man being married (this parable is referring to Jesus)
- **Bride:** the woman being married (the Church)
- **Virgins:** Young, unmarried girls who would process with the bride to the bridegroom's home.

Holy Tuesday:

We hear this parable in the gospel reading on Holy Tuesday each year during the Bridegroom service.

Read Matthew 25:1-13

During this time, Jewish weddings were held at night and the arrival of the bridegroom at the bride's home would be the start of the wedding feast. The bridegroom would bring the bride and her attendants back to his home in a procession, whereby the wedding feast would commence and last for days.

In this parable, for whatever reason, the bridegroom was delayed and everyone took a nap while waiting for him. At midnight, someone who was keeping watch for the bridegroom, yelled out, "Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!"

The virgins would be young, unmarried girls who would most likely be the bride's sisters, cousins, or extremely close friends. They would be there for the support of the bride and wait with her as she anticipated her bridegroom - just like bridesmaids today.

Remember, the Jewish wedding would occur well after the sun has set and electricity and batteries are a long way in the future. People would carry around oil lamps or torches. The lamps were small earthenware vessels which held some oil and a wick. They would also use sticks wrapped with a type of cloth dipped in oil and then used it as a torch. Either way, the lamp would not last long without having more oil. As part of the procession, the girls were helping to light the way from the bride's home to the bridegroom's home. Half of the girls were prepared and had brought additional oil for their lamps while the other half of the girls did not have any extra oil for when their lamps burned out.

Parables are stories that provide us some understanding about our relationship with God. In this parable, we learn the Bridegroom is Christ, the bride is the Church as a whole, and the attendants are all of us. The lamps are our souls and we need to continuously be prepared for our death. We do this by keeping alert (guarding ourselves against the passions) and diligently keeping the commands given to us by Christ (we have been learning from Christ in the gospels) because we do not know when the moment of our deaths will occur. Therefore, we must always be prepared for our death. Everyday, we can diligently work towards acquiring the characteristics of Jesus - and we call these characteristics the virtues or the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Will we be prepared when Christ comes again or will He tell us, "Assuredly, I do not know you."? Why would Christ not know us?

THE VIRTUES -

In what ways do you find yourself working towards these characteristics in your daily life?

- **FAITH:** confidence or trust in God
- **HOPE:** in a good outcome of our lives as we have faith in God
- **KNOWLEDGE:** of God
- **WISDOM:** one who see clearly and deeply into the mysteries of God
- **HONESTY:** to always be truthful and never a hypocrite (say one thing and do another)
- **HUMILITY:** (Meekness) to be gentle, kind, selfless, and not seeking earthly glory
- **OBEDIENCE:** to voluntarily do the will of God (does not mean submission unto slavery)
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- **GENEROSITY:** care and concern for everyone around us
- **GRATITUDE:** content and thankful for everything we currently have
- **LOVE:** the greatest virtue of all - to love God and one another

VIRTUES

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

In the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, we learn that we should always keep our lamps (souls) ready for the Second Coming of Christ by working towards acquiring the virtues. We also learned last week that no one knows when this will occur. Therefore, we act as though today is our final day and wake up tomorrow thanking God for another day.

Using Jesus as the example for how we should act in our daily lives, provide an example of how you would apply each virtue to a situation you've encountered:

Faith	
Hope	
Knowledge	
Wisdom	
Honesty	
Humility	
Obedience	
Patience	
Courage	
Faithfulness	
Self-control	
Generosity	
Gratitude	
Love	

PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS



ANCIENT OIL LAMPS

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Torches (lampas) - stick with a cloth wrapped at the top and dipped in oil

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

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In this parable, for whatever reason, the bridegroom was delayed and everyone took a nap while waiting for him. At midnight, someone who was keeping watch for the bridegroom, yelled out, "Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!"

The virgins would be young, unmarried girls who would most likely be the bride's sisters, cousins, or extremely close friends. They would be there for the support of the bride and wait with her as she anticipated her bridegroom - just like bridesmaids today.

Remember, the Jewish wedding would occur well after the sun has set and electricity and batteries are a long way in the future. People would carry around oil lamps or torches. The lamps were small earthenware vessels which held some oil and a wick. They would also use sticks wrapped with a type of cloth dipped in oil and then used it as a torch. Either way, the lamp would not last long without having more oil. As part of the procession, the girls were helping to light the way from the bride's home to the bridegroom's home. Half of the girls were prepared and had brought additional oil for their lamps while the other half of the girls did not have any extra oil for when their lamps burned out.

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THE VIRTUES -

In what ways do you find yourself working towards these characteristics in your daily life?

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- **KNOWLEDGE:** of God
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PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS



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3RD & 4TH GRADE

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OPTIONAL ACTIVITY -

Acquiring a basic understanding of generosity, self control, patience, and gratitude

Items needed: a sharable, edible treat for the whole class

Generosity: Ask one student to pass out and share the treat with each student in the class. It's important to always be generous with others, especially when we have extra.

Self control: Ask each student to use self control and not eat the treat yet. Continue talking about the virtues as the treat is purposely left untouched in front of each child. Some children will struggle with this more than others. Remind anyone who starts to open or attempt to eat the treat that they need to wait just a little bit longer and then they'll get to eat it.

Patience: Patience goes hand-in-hand with self control - and this can be quite hard at times! One of the ways we learn to be patient is through the experience of enduring through those difficult moments of having to wait for something.

Gratitude: When we learn to appreciate the little things in life, such as an unexpected treat during church school, we learn to appreciate the bigger things in life even more. Did your mom or dad teach you to say, "Thank you" when you received something? This is called gratitude. Sometimes we say, "Thank you" and sometimes we just appreciate something inside of our head.

PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS



ANCIENT OIL LAMPS



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1ST & 2ND GRADE

GOALS

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CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer

PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Summarize Matthew 25:1-13 and explain:

During this time, Jewish weddings were held at night and the (bride)groom would walk over to his bride's home (her parents' home) and then walk her back to their now new home together. There would be a big procession to the wedding couple's new home where they would have a huge feast and lots of family and friends would walk with them. Some of the attendants (the young, unmarried girls) would carry oil lamps to light the way - because remember they didn't have electricity or batteries for flashlights back then - so it was important to have these oil lamps so they could see where they were going. There were 10 girls in this parable (story) Jesus was telling the people. Half of the girls were prepared with extra oil for their lamps and half the girls did not have any extra oil for their lamps. When the the five girls who didn't have extra oil realized that the groom had

arrived, they wanted the other girls to just share their oil with them. The girls told them no because all of them would run out of oil if they did that and then nobody could see where they were going! That wouldn't work either! The unprepared girls needed to go get their own. Unfortunately though, it took too long for them to get more oil and they were shut out from the wedding feast.

Jesus is teaching us that we always need to be prepared for when He might arrive, because Jesus is the groom in this story, and we don't know when we might see Him. We prepare ourselves by learning to have the virtues. These are characteristics that Jesus showed us in the gospels.

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ORTHODOX LIFE SKILLS:

LEARNING RESPONSES TO "CHRIST IS RISEN!"

When we hear our priest proclaim: *Christ is Risen!* How do we respond? *Truly He is Risen!*

For additional languages: <https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/paschal-greetings>

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PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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