

Lessons About The Holy Spirit From The Ten Virgins

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Over the past several Sabbaths we have been talking about God and Christ. Two times before last we talked about the fact that there is no trinity and proved that out of the Bible and then talked about the unity of the Father and Son, how they've always been together for an eternity. They work together in harmony. They worked together in the Old Testament and worked together in the New Testament.

We also talked about the holy spirit and the fact that it is not a being, not part of the trinity. The fact remains that the holy spirit is one of the most misunderstood concepts in all of the Bible. The Trinitarians believe, as we talked about two times ago, that the holy spirit is a substance in an essence; a hypostases in an ousia, if you want to get into the Greek. The fact is that it is a very convoluted Trinitarian explanation that the holy spirit is not a separate being, but neither is Christ or the Father. They are all of one substance, but they're different essences and it goes on and on and on. That's one belief.

Many believe, they certainly did at the time that the King James Version was translated, that the holy spirit is this ghost-like substance or being. It was translated holy ghost back in the 1600s.

Then we have the protestant belief that when someone gives their heart to the lord that you are given a fixed amount of God's spirit. It's taught in the protestant seminaries. Back in 1992 or 1993 that belief that when we are baptized we have a fixed amount of God's holy spirit given was brought into the church by some men, because they studied and received a master's degree in theology at Azusa Pacific University. They brought into the Worldwide Church of God this protestant teaching. I was out in the audience when I heard it. The church has never taught that, but they brought it into the church. This doctrine of having a fixed amount of God's holy spirit is part of the protestant once saved, always saved teaching that when you give your heart to the lord you are given a fixed amount of the holy spirit. No matter what your actions are after that; you can go out and sin, you can choose to not follow God because once you gave your heart to the Lord then you are saved, because you have this fixed amount of the holy spirit inside you.

With these misunderstandings and errors in mind let's go to Matthew 25:1. It's one of the most famous parables that Christ ever gave. It's the parable of the ten virgins. We are going to see that this parable reveals a great deal about the workings of the holy spirit, what the holy spirit does and what the holy spirit is. What we are going to do in the sermon is two things: (1) we are going to examine the parable of the ten virgins, and (2) we are going to see what lessons we can learn from that parable about the holy spirit.

Matthew 25:1. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, ... (KJV)*

This is talking about getting into God's kingdom.

1b) ... which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (KJV)

We see here that all ten are virgins. Strong's number 3933 is the Greek word for "virgins" and it means *a maiden, by implication an unmarried daughter, a virgin*. We see here that all ten were virgins and their goal was to go out and meet the bridegroom.

Who are the ten virgins? Let's let the Bible define the Bible. Revelation 14:3-4.

Revelation 14:3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*
4) These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (KJV)

We see here that the hundred and forty and four thousand are virgins. Christ is talking about ten virgins. It is not a stretch at all to connect those two. We understand very clearly here that the parable of the ten virgins is about the church. Christ is talking about the church.

They all had lamps and they needed lamps to light their path. We are told that the commandments are a lamp in Proverbs 6:23.

Proverbs 6:23. *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: (KJV)*

They needed lamps to light the way. They all had oil in their lamps. We will see that in Matthew 25:3 when we read it. We all know that oil is a symbol of the holy spirit. That's a whole sermon in itself, but you can check in Zechariah 4, if you want to study that independently later.

We see here in Matthew 25:1 that all ten virgins were converted members of God's church, as we are going to see at the end time, because the bridegroom is coming. Let's go to Matthew 25:2. Now we have a problem.

Matthew 25:2. *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (KJV)*

We need to look into this to see what Christ is really referring to when he says five are wise and five are foolish. The Greek word for "wise" is Strong's number 5429. It means *thoughtful, that is discerning, implying a cautious character*. They thought before they leaped. They were cautious and careful in what they did. Zodiates in his Complete

Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says, “to think, to be prudent, to be sensible.” So, it gives us an idea of what Christ means when he is referring to the five virgins that are wise.

Now let’s look at the Greek word for “foolish.” That is Strong’s number 3474. It’s an interesting word. It’s the Greek word “moros.” We get the English word moron from that word, so it kind of gives you an indication of where we’re going with this and where Christ is going with this. In Strong’s it means *dull or stupid, heedless or even a blockhead*. I was surprised when that popped up. It gives you an idea.

Zodhiates in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says *silly, stupid, foolish*, but he adds *morally worthless*. He draws a very important distinction here. He says, it is a more serious reproach than “raca.” Remember, Christ said in Matthew 5:22, if you call your brother raca, that means that you are subject to the Sanhedrin. You are answerable to the counsel. So, Zodhiates says, *it’s a more serious reproach than raca, which scorns a man by calling him stupid, whereas moros scorns him concerning his heart and his character*. We see here that the foolish are not only dull, but they have a character problem. They have a moral problem. With the foolish, instead of ready, aim, fire it’s ready, fire, aim sometimes. If you have heard of Murphy’s Law, the 50-50-90 rule, it says any time you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right you have a 90% chance that it’ll go wrong. That kind of applies to the foolish. There is a proverb that sums up the wise and the foolish in one proverb. Let’s go to Proverbs 22:3. This sums up what Christ is talking about and drawing a distinction between the wise and the foolish.

Proverbs 22:3. *A prudent man ... (KJV)*

One of the definitions of wise is *being prudent, careful, cautious*.

3b) ... foreseeth the evil [thinks ahead], and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. (KJV)

Simple means the stupid or the dull or the foolish. We see here that the foolish go where angels fear to tread and the wise think very carefully before they go off and do something.

Notice in Matthew 25:2 that Christ is not talking about good versus evil. He’s not talking about righteous versus bad. He is talking about the fact that there are five thoughtful, sensible virgins and then there are five heedless virgins that lack character, that have a moral problem. Now let’s go to verses 3-4.

Matthew 25:3. *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*

4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (KJV)

There is a distinction here. We have the lamp that has oil in it, but then the wise took another vessel with more oil in that.

Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 8, Page 513 says this:

The lamps here are either small oil-fed lamps or more plausibly torches whose rags would need periodic dousing with oil to keep them burning. In either case the prudent would bring along a flask with an additional oil supply, not just relying on the oil in the lamp or in this torch.

You see, the wise had a completely separate container with additional oil.

Clark's Commentary says this:

They took care to make proper provision beforehand and left nothing to be done at the last minute.

So, this tells us that the wise looked ahead and they planned.

The foolish had oil in their lamps. We are going to see that in verse 8 when we come to it. They didn't take any reserves. They just went out with what they had.

It is very clear here when we draw the analogy between oil and God's holy spirit that the wise had more of the holy spirit than the foolish. They had a reserve that the foolish did not have. Continue in verse 5.

5) While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (KJV)

All ten slumbered and slept. The New International Version says:

5) The bridegroom was a long time in coming ... (NIV)

I remember a sermon back in 1973 from one of my favorite ministers who is dead now. He said, "we will want Christ to come long before he does." It is truer today than back then. Let's go to Matthew 24:48-49. Notice what Christ said previously about this before he got into the parable.

Matthew 24:48. *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; (KJV)*

This is just like we are talking about with the ten virgins. Notice what he does.

49) And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (KJV)

What the foolish do, because Christ doesn't come when they think he is going to come, or when they are told he is going to come is they begin to relax spiritually and they go back into becoming carnal, as they were before they came into God's church. You see the wise planned for a long journey. The foolish did not plan at all.

The fact is today we are in a marathon. We are not in a sprint. I think you can say this with absolute certainty that none of us who came in the church in the 60s and 70s ever thought we would be here in 2017. If you had taken a survey, people would have thought we were crazy if you said we would still be here in 2017.

In Matthew 25:5 we are told that they all slumbered and slept. These are two different words and it's interesting to note the difference. The Greek word for "slumbered" is Strong's number 3573 and it means *to nod*. I think, if we are honest with ourselves and we look back, how many times in services over the years have we been sitting there and maybe we didn't get a good night's sleep the night before or we had a bad week or whatever and we start to nod. Every once in a while you can look around and you see somebody nodding. All of a sudden somebody's chin goes down to their chest and they jerk up with a big snort. People are looking around at him. Somebody fell asleep, nodding off so to speak.

The Greek word for "slept" is Strong's number 2518 and it actually means *to lie down to rest or to be asleep*. So, it says they were all either nodding off or they were just sound asleep. Let's understand that it is not talking about physically nodding off or being asleep. Christ is talking about spiritually nodding or spiritually asleep. What is the trademark of the Laodicean era at the end time? It's lukewarm; need nothing, being spiritually asleep. A very good friend of mine, who is a pastor from another group, not long ago said "my greatest fear is that we are putting the brethren asleep." He said that's the thing I fear most. Let's see a reference in Daniel 7:25 about what's prophesied to happen in these end days. Daniel is talking about the head of a false church. I think we know who that is. Notice:

Daniel 7:25. *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High ... (KJV)*

Wear them out. Now, being worn out means fatigue and fatigue equals sleep. It's not a stretch to think about being worn out and being asleep. There is an effort by Satan through this false religious organization to wear out God's people over time and to put them to sleep. Vince Lombardi once famously said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." He was referring to football players that weren't in condition. In the fourth quarter with the game on the line, if you are tired you don't block as hard. You don't tackle as sharply. You don't throw the ball as well when you are tired. His teams were famously known to be in better condition than any other teams in the NFL and they showed it in the fourth quarter. So, being worn out equals fatigue and fatigue equals sleep. The proverbs tell us that if you faint in the day of adversity, guess what? Your strength is small. That is in Proverbs 24:10.

If we all are honest with ourselves, if we look at ourselves over the time we have been in the church, all of us have gone through times when we have been spiritually asleep. We have nodded off or we have just been sound asleep spiritually. God in His mercy always gives us a wakeup call. When we go to sleep spiritually, God will bring something to pass that is a two by four between the eyes that gets our attention. Let's go to Matthew 25:6.

Matthew 25:6. *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (KJV)*

The Greek word for "cry" is Strong's number 2906 and it means *an outcry in notification*. Zodhiates says it's *an outcry usually for public information*.

Back when the King James Bible was written the little towns, hamlets even in London had town criers. In the evening they would go out and say, all is well, or they would go out and put the lamps out. If some big event was going to happen, they would make an announcement. This is what it's referring to. There was a cry that was made that the bridegroom is coming.

At our juncture right now it is impossible for us to say if this is a literal cry that we will hear with our own ears or if it a series of visible warnings, heavenly signs, visions, dreams. We just don't know. We'll know when the time occurs. It could be unmistakable circumstances that God brings to pass that wake people up and say, "Hey, I'd better get with it because the end is almost here." Regardless, we see here it is a wakeup call. If we look at our past when we've been spiritually asleep, all of us have had wakeup calls. It could be a health trial. It could be a job trial. It could be a family crisis. It could be a church crisis. We've had plenty of those. What God is doing is just thumping us on the head and saying, "Wake up! It's time to wake up. Look at what's going on." We've all been through that.

Through trials we maybe see something in ourselves that we have never seen before and God is trying to get our attention. We may see pride. We may see not putting God first in our life. We may see selfishness. We may see not loving our brother or our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. I'll have to admit in times past I have been guilty of all of the above. You see, the fact is that most of us only learn through pain. We need to heed God's wakeup calls. If we're stubborn, pain is a result and that is the thing that gets us awake. The fact is that here in Matthew 25, the ten virgins, this call comes when it's least expected. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, refers to this very time that Christ is talking about in this parable of the ten virgins. Paul is telling us something very important.

1 Thessalonians 5:2. *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

3) *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, ... (KJV)*

That tells us when things are looking good out in the world, maybe employment is up, wages are up, unemployment is down, factories are humming, there seems to be no imminent crisis in the world as far as a war, peace breaks out here and there, that's just when Paul says we had better beware because it comes like a thief in the night. That's exactly what this parable of the ten virgins is telling us. At midnight the call came all ten were asleep. After it came, look at the reaction in Matthew 25:7.

Matthew 25:7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (KJV)

So, the five wise and the five foolish all woke up and they all responded to the call. They heard the call and they responded to the call. All were seeking Christ. All knew that time was short, because they heard the cry. It's obvious. At this juncture when now they're all awake, all had oil in the lamps and their lamps were burning brightly. There was a problem with half the virgins, as we've seen. I can remember Mr. Armstrong before his death on many occasions going back into the 1970s at ministerial conferences would slam his fist on the desk and say, "I don't think half of you are converted." He would say it at the Feast, too. It turned out to be true. Continue in verse 8 from the New King James Version.

8) And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' (NKJV)

The flame was starting to diminish, which told them that the oil was running out in the lamp. You see, only then did the foolish realize that they were in spiritual trouble after the cry went out. They might be saying "I don't know if I can do this." Times are tough. The cry goes out and we all of a sudden suffer some persecution or we have to go places or do things. They say "I don't know if I can do this. I need help. Please help me." The foolish did not have a reservoir of God's holy spirit. Clark's Commentary says, "When the oil that was in their lamps burned out, they had none to pour into the lamp to maintain the flame." They didn't have a reserve and the flame was starting to flicker.

The foolish thought that they could get to the marriage supper using the lamps of the five wise. They thought their lamps would light the way, or they could follow the five wise into the kingdom of God. They wanted to use the lamps of other people. What does that mean today? I have heard people say, this leader is going to get me into the kingdom of God, or all I have to do is attend in this particular place and when the cry comes to go to the place of safety, this group is going to go and everybody else is going to be left behind.

That attitude is the very attitude that the five foolish had when they said give us some of your oil or let us use your lamp. You see, the foolish did not have enough of God's holy spirit. They did not have a reserve of God's holy spirit to carry them through. They reacted at the last minute with no planning whatsoever for what was lying ahead.

Here's the big thing. The foolish had not been putting in the time and the effort to grow God's holy spirit in them. It takes time. It takes effort. They were coasting spiritually. The five wise were. The five foolish were just treading water spiritually. Continue in verse 9. The wise had an answer, but not what the foolish wanted to hear.

9) But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. (KJV)

You see, the wise had prepared for the long run. They prepared for the marathon. They prepared in advance by doing the prayer, the study, the fasting, the good works; getting close to God over a long period of time.

Now we see here in this parable that the foolish got off of the path. They had to turn aside and they had to go at the last minute and try to buy God's spirit at any price. They had to find a place where it was sold and pay any price for it. I'm sure when the time comes, there will be people who would pay any price to make up for the fact that they didn't plan in advance and they didn't spend the time and the effort to grow God's holy spirit. Let's go to 2 Timothy 4:3-4 out of the New International Version. It's clearer, a good translation. Paul is telling us there's going to come a time when this very thing that Christ is talking about is going to happen.

2 Timothy 4:3. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. ... (NIV)

This is a prophecy, because he's saying it's not happening now. He says there is a time to come.

3b) ... Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (NIV)

Guess what? We have that great number of teachers now through the internet. You can go anywhere and read about any kind of crazy, weird doctrine on the internet. I'm sure when Paul wrote this he obviously didn't have a clue about how great a number of teachers there could be.

4) They [teachers] will turn their [brethren] ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (NIV)

This is just like the five foolish virgins turned aside. They got off of the path and we see here they turned to myths, to fables, to things that aren't true. The Greek word for "turn away" is Strong's number 654 and it means *to turn back, to go backwards and literally or figuratively to pervert*, meaning there will be those who will pervert what they've believed and been taught. At the last minute they will go back to fables and myths. As I said, the internet is just full of that. We also see in 1 Timothy 4:1 that at this very last time some are going to turn aside. It doesn't say a majority. It doesn't say a minority. It just says some will turn aside. This is specifically talking about our day.

1 Timothy 4:1. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, ... (KJV)*

Notice how they do that.

1b) ... giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (KJV)

You see, the five virgins departed from the path. In the 1990s in God's church over fifty thousand departed from the path. They left - no more to be heard from. There were probably more if we knew all of the numbers. God knows. That departing continues to this day. You see people just drifting away, turning over to this or that, turning off of the path that they've been taught.

You see, the fact is for the foolish it was too late to spiritually turn themselves around. That is one of the keys to this parable, you see. It was too late for them to study, to pray, to fast, to get close to God. All of that takes time. It has to be built up over time, over years, over decades of building a relationship with the Father and the Son through study and prayer and fasting and proving to ourselves that Satan's way doesn't work and God's way does work.

We cannot buy or borrow our way into the kingdom at the last minute. That's another big lesson this parable is telling us. You can't go buy or borrow our way into the kingdom. We can't get into the kingdom on the coattails of somebody else. We can't get into the kingdom just because we warm a seat here or we tithe there or we attend a Feast there. A passport will not make the difference. I have known personally of people in this area going around saying to widows, for example, that you better get a passport or you won't go to the place of safety as though God is somehow limited by human passports to get people to where He wants them to be.

Having a stash of money is not going to make the difference. This is a true story. Years ago I had a couple call and say we know the place of safety is in Petra. We have some money and what we want to know is do you think we should cash out our money, fly over to Petra and bury our money in the sand over there? I am not kidding. They were dead serious. As though thinking somehow that having a stash of money over there is somehow going to help them and God can't. God can't work all of that out through miracles and on His own? As we have said before, every time there has been a flight in God's church, whether it's the exodus or going to Pella in 70 A.D., angels have been involved. Miracles have been involved. God and Christ have been involved. So, we can't buy or borrow our way into God's kingdom by some physical means.

The answer is we have to be filled with God's holy spirit. We have to change from the old man to the new man or woman. If we're going to marry Christ, Christ has to look at us in the eyes and say, I know you. I recognize you. You are kind of like me. You want to be like me. That comes, as we're going to see, through exercising God's holy spirit,

but it's a process that takes time. Being filled with the holy spirit is the only way we are going to be in God's kingdom. Now, in verse 10 we are getting down to crunch time.

Matthew 25:10. *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (KJV)*

Those that were ready went in and with the foolish it was too late and the door was slammed shut and locked. Christ warns us of this very thing in Matthew 24:44. He is using this parable to illustrate this principle.

Matthew 24:44. *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

When there is peace and safety and everything is going right, guess what? Christ is saying, I am warning you. That's the time I am going to come.

With this parable as a background, let's ask this question. I ask myself this question all of the time. Have we ever felt that we're on a spiritual rollercoaster? That means that we are up and then we're down spiritually not so close to God and then we're up and we're closer to God. A while later we are down again spiritually; up and down spiritually yet, overall staying in the same place, not making progress. We can't seem to make any lasting progress; having the same basic problems today that we had five years ago or ten years ago or twenty years ago. In counseling brethren sometimes after the initial explanation of what the problem is, sometimes I have to say, remember the conversation we had back when? This is the same conversation we had back then. You are dealing with the problem you had five years ago and another five years before that. You have to look at yourself. Are you making spiritual progress or not? Mr. Armstrong said many, many times there is a cause for every effect. There is a reason why some make it and some don't. That is what this parable is addressing; why some make it and why some don't.

What we want to do now in the second part of the sermon is ask ourselves the question: What can we learn about the ten virgins? What is Christ trying to teach us? What are the takeaways from this parable? There are many more than we can cover, but we're going to hit the high spots.

One huge question is: How did the wise get enough of God's spirit? What did they do that the foolish did not do? That is the key if we want to be in God's kingdom. The Bible tells us two things that we have to do if we want to grow God's spirit.

First, they asked. What a concept. How simple is it to just ask for more of God's holy spirit. Let's go to John 3:34 where we are breaking in to where John the Baptist is speaking. He is referring to Jesus Christ.

John 3:34. *For he whom God hath sent [Christ] speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him [Christ]. (KJV)*

The New Living Translation says;

34) For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God's Spirit is upon him without limit. (NLT)

Therefore, if Christ had unlimited amounts of God's holy spirit and he was God himself on earth, then it's obvious that we don't have an unlimited amount of God's spirit in us. We look at the conduct of ourselves personally and people in the church. It is obvious that that is the fact. We don't have an unlimited amount of God's spirit in us. What happens then? Let's go to 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. We are going to see that we are given a small amount of God's spirit at baptism. As a reference, it's also repeated in chapter 5:5.

2 Corinthians 1:21. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God [the Father];

22) Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (KJV)

So, we have been given an earnest of God's spirit in our hearts. What does the word "earnest" mean? A hundred and fifty years ago the word earnest was used all of the time. It's not used very commonly today. It is Strong's number 728 and it means a *pledge given in advance as security for the rest.*

The New Living Translation says, "the first installment."

Today, of course, we don't use the word earnest. We use the phrase "down payment." It means when we buy a home, we pay a down payment and, guess what, that's a down payment of money where we promise there's going to be more money to come in paying off this house. So, to the bank that's lending the money, the down payment says I'm going to give you more money over time to pay off this house. You see here that when we are given the earnest, if we ask, more is to come, because the subject is the holy spirit.

How do we get more of God's holy spirit? Notice what Christ says in Luke 11:9-13. These concepts are very simple, very easy to understand. They are not convoluted. They are not complex. Christ says it just about as plainly as you can get. He is speaking here.

Luke 11:9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11) If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12) Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him? (KJV)

It is very plain. If we had a fixed amount in us, why would we have to ask, because we would already have all that we're going to get? Christ is saying if you want more of my spirit, all you have to do is ask. In 2 Kings 2:9 Elisha asked for a double portion of the spirit that was in Elijah. Given the works that Elijah did, that was not any human spirit. That was the spirit of God in Elijah. Elisha witnessed that. He saw what God did through Elijah. He said, get me a double amount. If you have a fixed amount, how could that happen?

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6:19. Here is another principle that tells us a little bit about how God's spirit works in human beings. Paul is trying to tell these Corinthians that were way off track in so many ways. You read 1 Corinthians and you just kind of slap your forehead and say, how could this go on in the church? The fact is that worse than that has gone on in the church.

1 Corinthians 6:19. *What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy ghost [spirit] which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (KJV)*

He says your body is a temple of the holy spirit. An analogy would be that our body is like a reservoir of God's spirit, a receptacle of God's spirit. If you use the analogy of a reservoir, a reservoir ultimately goes dry if it's not replenished. That would be a good analogy referring to the holy spirit in us. So, Christ is saying, please ask for more of my spirit. That tells the Father and the Son if we ask that's what we want, to have more of His spirit to be more like Him, to have the mind of Christ, the mind of the Father, the words, the thoughts, the deeds of the two of them. We exhibit that by asking. We exhibit that by letting them know that I want to be more like you.

Asking is not enough. It's like somebody wanting to lose weight. We can ask to lose weight. We can plead with God to lose weight. We can want to lose weight, but asking to lose weight doesn't get it done. We must expend the effort to lose weight. We have to change our diet. We have to exercise. We have to do a whole bunch of things. We have to have deeds that show that we want to lose weight.

The second point is the wise, in addition to asking, exercised the holy spirit they had already been given. Let's go to 1 John 3:22. This scripture sometimes trips people up, because of the word "because." Some people read certain scriptures and say what we just read about the father is not going to give his son a scorpion or something like that. He said that whatever you ask you will be given, but there are some qualifiers to this. 1 John 3:22 tells us what that qualifier is.

1 John 3:22. *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (KJV)*

If we do the things that are pleasing in his sight, we are exercising God's spirit inside us. If we behave in a way that pleases the Father, the only way that's going to happen is exercising God's spirit in us.

God also tells in principle in Romans 1:20 that the invisible things of him, the Father, can be clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, by the creation. What God tells us is if you will just look around, you can learn about Him by looking around at what He has made, His creation. So, it's very simple. We can look around and see analogies that might help us to understand how the holy spirit works.

A good analogy would be our physical bodies, our muscles and physical exercise. We grow a muscle by overcoming resistance. If we want to build a bicep, we take something heavier than we normally lift and we start pumping the iron and lift and lift. Guess what happens? After a while you get a big burn right in that muscle. It feels like somebody just put molten lead in that muscle. It just is on fire. What's happening is the muscle tissue is being torn apart, actually being broken down. After you stop exercising over the next few days it builds up stronger than it was before. It's like a broken bone. At the juncture it builds up stronger than it was before. So, it builds strong. That means it gets a little bit bigger. You repeat it and repeat it and repeat it and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. The opposite is true. If we don't exercise it, guess what? It will go away. It will get so then that muscle will be almost nonexistent. I visited people in hospitals who have been sedentary for long periods of time and their bicep is about as big around as a wrist, because there's just no muscle there. It has atrophied. It has gone away.

I have a friend who jokingly says, and this is a direct quote, "When I feel the urge to exercise, I lie down until the feeling goes away." That's what happens with a lot of people. When they get in their 70s and 80s they can't walk up the stairs. They can't get in and out of cars, because the muscles have atrophied to the point that they just can't bear the weight of their body. Let's go to 1 Timothy 4:7 and see where Paul uses the analogy of exercise to teach us about how the holy spirit works. It will be quoted out of the New King James Version. He is teaching this young minister about things that he needs to be aware of when he is dealing with the brethren that he is taking care of.

1 Timothy 4:7. *But reject profane and old wives' fables, ... (NKJV)*

These are myths, the things that turned the five foolish aside.

7b) ... and exercise yourself toward godliness. (NKJV)

Now that Greek word for "exercise" is very important, because it's Strong's number 1128 and it refers back to the fact that in those days in the Greek culture, and we know that the Romans adopted Greek culture, to the time of the Olympic games that were started in Greece. It means *to practice naked in the games that is to train*. We know in the original Olympics women weren't allowed to compete and the men competed naked

without any clothes on, because the Greeks worshipped the human body and the Romans followed suit to a degree. This word “exercise” is talking about physical training, physical exercise. Notice verse 8.

8) For bodily exercise profits a little, ... (NKJV)

We can take that to mean for a little time in this physical life.

8b) ... but [exercising] godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. (NKJV)

We see here an analogy between physical exercise and growing God's holy spirit. By exercising God's holy spirit, you see, we put it to use and we grow in His holy spirit. God could be saying to each one of us, “I'm not going to give you more of My spirit, because you are not exercising what you already have.” Some people think, I don't have to exercise it. I'll just ask for more. Well, it doesn't work that way. When we exercise physically, guess what? To rebuild that muscle we have to take in more food, hopefully good food. The analogy holds true, too. When we exercise God's holy spirit, then we're using God's spirit and we need more of it. You see, God is saying to us through these analogies, “Look, you need to do more exercise.”

The fact is, the more we study the more we want to study. I think we have all been there. When we get into a pattern of studying, it becomes more and more and more important and we wouldn't back off from that for anything. The opposite holds true too. If we neglect study, it is easier to neglect it again. The less we study the less we want to study. The same thing holds true for prayer, for fasting. The more you do it the more you want to do it. The more we exercise God's spirit, the more we follow God's way. That is up to us. When we have the urge (and we have all had it) and think, “I just really need to talk to God right now, I need to pray right now,” and if we say, “No I'll do it tonight,” or “I need to get this done first,” what we are doing is we are saying no to God's spirit. The next time it will be easier to say no and the time after that it will be easier to say no. What the five foolish virgins did over a period of years is they said no more often than they said yes. They didn't exercise God's spirit. Just like a muscle, if we don't exercise it, it diminishes over time and eventually will just disappear. Let's go to Acts 5:32. Here is a principle about the holy spirit.

Acts 5:32. *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the holy ghost [spirit], whom God hath given to them that obey him. (KJV)*

In the King James translation it says “whom,” but the Greek can also mean “which.” You see, God gives us more of His spirit the more we obey. Why would God need to give us more of His spirit, if we have a fixed amount? This plainly says that the more we obey, the more He will give. Obviously, we have to ask. Now let's go to 2 Corinthians 4:16.

2 Corinthians 4:16. *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. (KJV)*

What is this talking about? The Greek word for “renewed” is Strong’s number 341 and it means *to renovate*. When we renovate something, we make it new. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon says *to add new strength and vigor*. How can the holy spirit be renewed day by day if we have a fixed amount? The point I’m making here is the holy spirit varies in us day by day depending on how much we are asking and how much we are exercising. What we learn from this parable is five were asking and exercising and five were not. The key that this parable is telling us is that it’s our responsibility to grow God’s holy spirit. It doesn’t happen with anybody else. The five foolish virgins were wrong. It is our own responsibility to grow God’s holy spirit and we need to do it before the end time call occurs otherwise it will be too late.

Next is something very important. There is nothing permanent about the holy spirit in a physical body. Unlike the protestant doctrine of once saved always saved and you are given a fixed amount and you have it for the rest of your life, there is nothing permanent about the holy spirit in a physical body. A former minister was trying to reassure all of the ministers saying, “Once you’ve got it, you’ve got it. You never lose it. It’s always there. We’re humans. We make mistakes. We sin, but it’s always there and you’ll be saved. That’s the good news.” That is not the good news. That’s a cruel hoax. You see, if we don’t spend the time and effort to ask for and exercise the holy spirit, it will diminish over time. Remember, David talking to God after he had sinned so horribly, said don’t cast your spirit away from me in Psalms 51. Why would he say that? He absolutely knew that when we sin, we separate ourselves from God. Isaiah says that in chapter 59:2. When we sin we separate ourselves. He had sinned so badly and so much that he was worried that God was going to take what spirit he had left away from him.

Then we are given this admonishment in 1 Thessalonians 5:19. There are only four words, but something that we should take deadly seriously. This is a warning to all of us.

1 Thessalonians 5:19. *Quench not the Spirit. (KJV)*

The Greek word for “quench” means *extinguish, put out*. He tells us not to do that. You see, quenching the holy spirit is not like throwing a light switch. You can’t just do one thing and, bam, the holy spirit is gone. It doesn’t happen at the throw of a switch. It happens over time. If we neglect to ask and to exercise, if we neglect to use God’s holy spirit, it will diminish over time. It will go down and down and down and down gradually becoming less and less until it leaves from neglect. Basically what we are saying to God is, “I don’t want Your holy spirit. I don’t need Your holy spirit. I have a better way,” whatever that way might be. Again, that’s why we don’t have a fixed amount, because over time it will diminish meaning we have less and less and less of God’s spirit. Yet, as astounding as this concept might be to us, I’ve seen people over the years that have done just that. They have allowed the holy spirit to die in them, either through neglect,

through weakness or through outright rebellion. They just don't want God's way anymore. That happens over time. They allow the holy spirit to diminish and die. We need to ask for it and exercise God's spirit, because if we don't it will diminish and die. Therefore, there is nothing permanent about the holy spirit in a physical body.

The third and last point is what the parable of the ten virgins is telling us in summary. Not everyone will be in the kingdom of God. That parable is very clear. If we wait too long to grow God's spirit, we won't have the time. That's exactly what happened with the foolish virgins. They were told to go and buy and it was too late. That's the lesson. Let's go back to Matthew 25:10-12, where we were before. This time I'm going to read it out of the New Living Translation. We are drawing to a conclusion here in this parable.

Matthew 25:10. *But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.*

11) Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

12) But he called back and said, 'I don't know you!' (NLT)

I can't recognize you. You don't look like me. You don't think like me. You don't act like me. I don't know you. Christ warns in verse 13.

13) So stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return. (NLT)

Now the King James Version and the New King James Version say "watch therefore." Okay, that's a way to translate it. I've been taught, when we saw that phrase it meant that you have to watch world events. You have to watch the evening news. You have to watch this program or something like that, because we have to know what the signs are so that we can be ready to jump on a 747 and go to Petra or something like that. Look at the context. Whether it is "stay awake and be prepared" or "watch therefore," what are we supposed to watch? The context clearly shows we're supposed to watch our spiritual state. We are supposed to look at ourselves and ask, "Am I ready to be the bride of Christ? Do I have what Christ is looking for as far as my character and my thoughts and my actions? Am I compatible with Jesus Christ in order to marry him?" We have to stay awake. We have to be prepared. We have to watch ourselves. We must be filled with the holy spirit to answer the call.

We must come to the end time connected directly to God, closer than we've ever been, not only with our lamps burning with the holy spirit, the oil in the lamp, but also a reserve as the parable tells us. Yet, developing the reserve, developing what's in the lamp takes time. It is a process. We need to make sure we're doing that now.

Let's close. To be at the marriage supper, which we all want to do, here's what we have to be doing now. Let's go to Ephesians 4:22-24. Rather than fixating on world events.

The latest thing, I guess, is a Planet X coming with its solar system and it's going to screw things up for us and that's the reason things are going to go haywire. It just boggles the mind. Here's what we need to be doing. All of that other stuff gets our mind and our focus off of what we need to be doing.

Ephesians 4:22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man [or woman], which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (KJV)*

Yes, our human nature is that way.

*23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
24) And that ye put on the new man [woman], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

The Greek word for “renewed” again means *to renovate or to reform*, to change our mind, to reform our mind. We know that that is done through the power of the holy spirit. The holy spirit is a spirit of power. That's a sermon in itself. Remember what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7.

2 Timothy 1:7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)*

We see here we have to be renewed in our mind. Let's go to a final scripture in Ephesians 5:15-16. This tells us what we need to be doing.

Ephesians 5:15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, ... (KJV)*

That means cautiously, carefully just like the definition of the wise.

15b) ... not as fools, but as wise, ... (KJV)

I might add the word virgins, wise virgins.

16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (KJV)

The Greek word for “redeeming” means *to rescue from loss*. We can't afford to waste time. We have to spend the time necessary to get close to God in prayer, study, fasting, good works, having our mind on God and not on the world and not on the pride of life and the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh. You see, God is calling us to fill our lamps, to fill our reserve lamps, to stop any spiritual rollercoaster we might be on, to awaken, to ask for more of His spirit, to exercise more of His spirit in us. He is appealing to us to be ready to hear the call. Be ready to go in. You are going to watch that door shut and you are going to hear some pounding on the other side of that door. We will be inside if we exercise, if we ask for God's spirit and we put it to use in our lives. That is what God wants us to be doing now to change from the old person to the new person which is in the image of Jesus Christ.