

THE FAITHFUL FIVE

Daniel 2:24-45; Matthew 25:1-13 / Psalm 45:1-17

I. People Like to Party

A. Jesus begins with the happy story of a wedding celebration; people like to celebrate at weddings. “Then shall *the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins*, which took their lamps, *and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*” (MATTHEW 25:1)

In classical times the ceremony was performed commonly in open air, on the banks of a stream. Both the bridegroom and bride were attended by friends and escorted by four or more persons. A feast followed for seven days if the bride was a virgin or three for a widow. This feast was celebrated in her father’s house. The groom then conducted the bride, with great pomp and splendor, to his own home.

1. Jesus began His ministry at a wedding celebration. “And the third day *there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee*; and the mother of Jesus was there:” (JOHN 2:1) “*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee*, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” (JOHN 2:11)

2. Jesus was so interested in people that His enemies attacked Him for partying with the worst sorts. “And it came to pass, *as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down* with him and his disciples. And *when the Pharisees saw it, they said* unto his disciples, *Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*” (MATTHEW 9:10-11)

3. Those who refuse to believe will find an excuse one way or another. “They are like unto *children sitting in the marketplace, and calling* one to another, and saying, *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.*” (LUKE 7:32)

B. Some people cared more for the party and others for the marriage. “And *five* of them *were wise*, and *five were foolish.*” (MATTHEW 25:2)

C. Some prepared and others had better things to do. “*They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*” (MATTHEW 25:3-4)

II. Parties Do Not Happen Spontaneously

A. When the party started, preparation mattered. “While the bridegroom tarried, *they all slumbered* and slept. And *at midnight* there was a cry made, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh*; go ye out to meet him. Then *all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*” (MATTHEW 25:5-7)

B. People who wait for the last minute assume someone else will bail them out at the critical moment. “And *the foolish said* unto the wise, *Give us of your oil*; for our lamps are gone out.” (MATTHEW 25:8)

C. Some things take more than presumption. “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.” (MATTHEW 25:9)

D. Life does not always come with a second chance. “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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, *Lord, open to us*. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, *I know you not.*” (MATTHEW 25:10-12)

III. Don’t Miss the Party

A. Presumption, indolence, and disobedience can be disastrous. “*Watch* therefore, for *ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*” (MATTHEW 25:13) “And to *wait for his Son*

from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”
(1 THESSALONIANS 1:10)

B. More is at risk than fun. “For *the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous*: but the way *of the ungodly shall perish.*” (PSALM 1:6)

C. Jesus was calling people to prepare for the end of the world and the end of their own opportunities. “Behold, *he cometh* with clouds; and *every eye shall see him*, and they *also* which pierced him: and *all kindreds of the earth shall wail* because of him. Even so, Amen.” (REVELATION 1:7) Human history moves from marriage in Eden to marriage in Paradise.

D. The same celebration which will be so sad for those who miss it will usher in incalculable eternal joy for those who are ready. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for *the marriage of the Lamb is come*, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for *the fine linen is the righteousness of saints*. And he saith unto me, Write, *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” (REVELATION 19:7-9)

E. Jesus’ message is as personal as it is prophetic; will your lamp be of any use to you? “The *light of the righteous rejoiceth*: but *the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.*” (PROVERBS 13:9)

+ Dr. Edwin P. Elliott, Jr.