

The Kingdom of Heaven

*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish...and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage. - Matthew 25:1-2, 10*

This parable speaks of ten virgins in the kingdom of heaven who went out to meet a bridegroom—Jesus. They took lamps with them, not knowing when He would show up; to provide light along the way should they journey in the dark. Although all belonged to the same kingdom, not all were of equal understanding; five were foolish and five were wise. The five foolish ones were not admitted into the wedding (not everyone who considers himself to be a believer will be admitted into the marriage with Jesus at the end of time) while the five wise ones were.

The ten virgins represent people who want to be saved; who have no desire to reside with Satan in that lake of fire, and who probably attend the hearing of His word and study it regularly. They are steadfast in their faith and they inhabit the kingdom of heaven on earth. There are countless others who are not in this kingdom, but this parable addresses just the kingdom. This does not mean that some people are not allowed in the kingdom, it just means that some have counted themselves to be “...unworthy of everlasting life...” (Acts 13:46).

Each virgin took a lamp; the foolish took no oil while the wise did. A useful lamp must have oil (Holy Spirit) in it. Such oil is not acquired by good works but comes as a gift from God to all who repent and are baptized (fire) in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins; to all who can gladly receive this gospel message (Acts 2:38, 41). Jesus began His ministry stating that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is through repentance, “...Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:18), and He followed that up saying that sins are forgiven by His church on earth using the keys of the kingdom of heaven to release penitent souls from their sins (Matt 16:19). Moreover, these lamps (of faith) are never to go out, “Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually” (Leviticus 24:2). The foolish virgins had let their lamps run dry, making themselves unacceptable to Jesus, “...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”

(Romans 8:9), which did not seem to concern them on their journey.

Along the way both the wise and the foolish virgins slept, tiring from their journey and from their long wait for the groom to appear. When least expected, there came an awakening cry to arise and meet Jesus; “Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps” (Matthew 25:7). It was then that the foolish virgins discovered that they had no oil and unsuccessfully tried to borrow some from the wise. In their panic to buy oil elsewhere the door to the marriage was shut and, even though they feverishly knocked on the door upon their return, they heard God say “...I know you not” (Matthew 25:11).

God calls all people, “The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Some, like the ten virgins, are drawn to Him while the rest of the world rejects Him. For those in the kingdom of heaven it is impossible to distinguish one virgin from another. All appear to be alike. However, some virgins grow tired of the word and begin to discount the value of the Holy Spirit (oil) received from God through repentance and faith in the proclaimed gospel message of forgiveness. Those who tire of this teaching may find it impossible to return—they may find the door of heaven eternally shut.

Dear reader, do not wait, as did the foolish virgins, to find no oil in your lamp. Pray to God that He would awaken you to your plight before it is too late. While it is yet called today “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning” (Luke 12:35)

God’s Peace,  
Charles Korhonen

July 7	Ken Storm	Holy Communion
July 10	Finnish Minister	7pm
July 14	Chad Kuivanen	
July 21	Ken Storm	
July 28	Nathan Ruonavaara	

**September: we will have Erik Enkvist from Larsmo Finland holding services in the local congregations. He will be in Tapiola on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>**

Church Cleaning: Matt and Nola Olson

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH  
P.O. Box 531  
Houghton, MI 49931

Contact Information: Ken Storm, Pastor (906)482-3234 Church (906)334-2766  
Website: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org>

Location: 17602 N. Lake Ave. Tapiola, MI