

Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Matthew 25:10

Tuesday, October 20, 2026

“While they were going off to buy it, the bridegroom came. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.” (Matthew 25:10)

Jesus told this parable of the ten virgins as part of his great prophecy about the sign of his presence. The main point is that being ready is not a single moment of effort but a steady habit. As the day's text says, the discreet virgins came prepared to wait as long as needed, even late into the night, and they brought extra oil in case the bridegroom was delayed. In the same way, anointed Christians who stay vigilant and faithful

until Christ comes will be judged worthy to join the Bridegroom, Jesus, in his heavenly Kingdom.

1 **“Discreet”: Wisdom That Plans Ahead** (*φρόνιμος*, *phro'ni·mos*)

The Greek word *φρόνιμος* (*phro'ni·mos*) means discreet or wise. The study note on Matthew 24:45 explains that it carries the idea of insight, forethought, and good judgment, or wisdom “in a practical sense.” It is not book learning; it is the kind of sense that thinks ahead and acts on it.

That is exactly what set the five discreet virgins apart: “the discreet took oil in their flasks along with their lamps.” (Matthew 25:4) Jesus used the same word for the man who listened to him and obeyed: “Everyone who hears these

sayings of mine and does them will be like a discreet man who built his house on the rock.” (Matthew 7:24)

- Real wisdom shows up in preparation. The discreet virgins did not know when the bridegroom would come, so they planned for a long wait.
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2 “Keep on the Watch”: Stay Awake (γρηγορέω, *gre·go·re'o*)

Jesus closed the parable with this command: “Keep on the watch, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Matthew 25:13) The Greek word γρηγορέω (*gre·go·re'o*) literally means “stay awake.” The study note says that in many places it means to be on guard and watchful, and that this call to stay awake spiritually is the basic message of the parable.

In Bible times, a wedding procession was often slow, and people waiting along the way could get drowsy. Even all ten virgins “became drowsy and fell asleep” while the bridegroom delayed. (Matthew 25:5) What made the difference was not that the discreet ones never got tired, but that they had what they needed when the shout came. Paul gave similar counsel: “Let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses.” (1 Thessalonians 5:6)

- Staying awake spiritually means keeping our lamps supplied day by day, so that a long wait does not leave us empty.

3 “Ready”: Prepared Beforehand (ἔτοιμος, *he'toi·mos*)

The Greek word ἔτοιμος (*he'toi·mos*) means ready or prepared, describing someone who has made things ready in

advance. It is the word in our theme text: “The virgins who were ready went in with him.” Just before this parable, Jesus used the same word: “You too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.” (Matthew 24:44)

Notice that the moment of decision came suddenly. While the foolish ones went off to buy oil, “the bridegroom came,” and “the door was shut.” Readiness cannot be borrowed from someone else or bought at the last minute. Those who were ready shared in a joyful feast, which reminds us of the words: “Happy are those invited to the evening meal of the Lamb’s marriage.” (Revelation 19:9)

- Being ready is something we build now, through our own steady faith and faithfulness, not something we can hand off to others when the time comes.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Planning Ahead:** Like the discreet virgins with their extra oil, what am I doing now to strengthen my faith for a wait that may be longer than I expected? (Matthew 25:4)
- **Staying Awake:** Are there signs that I am becoming spiritually drowsy, and what one habit could I strengthen this week to stay alert? (Matthew 25:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:6)
- **My Own Oil:** Am I building my own relationship with Jehovah, rather than leaning on the faith of my family or friends to carry me through? (Matthew 25:9, 10)