

Which of the Virgins Do You Want to Be?

By Anand Peter

The condition of the foolish virgins is typical of people who are ill-prepared for something inevitable. Ill-preparedness can stem from many factors, some of which may be beyond understanding or control. That was not the case with those five foolish virgins. They knew the bridegroom would soon arrive. Like the wise virgins, they could have carried with them sufficient oil for their lamps. It was a case of utter negligence and indifference.

They tried to piggyback on the wise virgins, but failed. What we learn from this parable is that every person is responsible for his or her own spiritual condition. We are not told, for good reason, when the Second Coming of Jesus will take place. When He returns to take us with Him into His glory, to be with Him in His new creation, we must be ready. Spiritual preparation is not like making instant coffee. On His arrival, we cannot run to a priest and receive Holy Communion, foolishly imagining that all will be well for us. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. It is a lifelong relationship with Jesus, in which we learn to walk with Him; we practise the fundamentals of His teaching and are good Christians.

The Parable of the Talents teaches us, in principle, the same lesson (Matthew 25:14-30). Merely showing up at church services, whether in person or online, is like a lazy servant remaining in the company of faithful servants. God has bestowed upon us time, gifts, and plentiful resources according to our abilities. The talents represent such skills, abilities, and resources as we possess. Regardless of the extent of our resources — the question of more or less being relative to what others possess — there is always the possibility of investing what is available to us wisely and gratefully. We are merely trustees of what belongs to God. As trustees, we should max out what God has entrusted to us, and be as productive as our resources allow. That is all that Jesus expects of us.

The master was pleased when the servant with five talents doubled them to ten. He was equally pleased with the servant with two talents who doubled them to four. What we see here is that the master valued both at the same level. He did not expect the one with two talents to produce ten, as the first servant had. Jesus sets His expectations of us according to what we are able to do, and expects nothing more.

He is coming again, and that is not in question. Before our time runs out, we should put to full use all the resources He has placed at our disposal, for the Kingdom of God, to the fullest extent, and do everything as unto Jesus (compare Colossians 3:23). Max out on the gifts of God.

Amen.