

A close-up photograph of a lit wooden oil lamp. The lamp is made of light-colored wood and has a small flame burning from a wick. It is placed on a wooden surface. The background is dark and out of focus.

Therefore keep watch, because you
do not know the day or the hour
- Jesus

November 8, 2020

Introduction

Invitation

Prelude

Call to Worship:

Let us worship our God who loves us and lifts us up! Let us remember that we worship together as the Body of Christ! Let us be prepared for God to touch our lives today and every day!

Hymn: "Christ Beside Me"

Reading the Word: Matthew 25:1-13

Ministry of Music

Message: "Being Prepared"

Prayer:

O God, we look for you in our lives, but there are times when we are sidetracked, distracted, involved in too many projects, or just too busy to remember to watch for you. Help us to be like the five bridesmaids who were prepared for the arrival of the bridegroom. Remind us of the need to be watchful and to live our lives knowing that you will act at any time and in any place. Thank you for your promise to be with us in all life's circumstances. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn: "Seek Ye First"

Blessing

Matthew 25: 1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.





**SERMON TRANSCRIPT
GIVEN BY
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson**

“Message “Being Prepared”

Rev. Dr. Debra Hanson

Matthew 25:1-13

Waiting is challenging, isn't it? Most of us don't like to wait, and yet, we sometimes end up standing in line at the grocery store, the bank, and even to vote, as many did on November 3rd. Then there are also times when we wait for something to happen in our lives, and there can be a mix of emotions that go with those circumstances. Depending on our situation, we may be filled with anticipation, joy, fear, dread, or any number of emotions that go with what it is we are expecting.

And then, of course, there is the LENGTH of time we have to wait. Sometimes, waiting can seem to last for hours, when in fact, it is only a few minutes. When we sit at a stop light, depending on where it is located, we might think that it is the longest stop light ever. Several years ago, I found myself being impatient while waiting for a red light to change to green, and I realized that the time sitting there really wasn't all that long.

What seemed like a long time was actually a few minutes, so I started timing how long I had to sit at a red light. I think the longest one may have been three minutes. Of course, I haven't been at every stop light everywhere, but I was struck by my impatience at just sitting for one, two, or three minutes when that amount of time in another situation, such as shopping in the grocery store, flew by.

In today's parable about the ten bridesmaids, we find these women waiting for the bridegroom to arrive so they can escort him into the wedding hall. They waited a long time, and apparently, it was tedious and exhausting for them. All ten of the bridesmaids followed the same process: they bought oil for their lamps; they all waited and waited and waited; and, they all fell asleep. When the Bridegroom did finally arrive, the only difference between them was that half of them hadn't bought enough oil, so they had to leave to buy more. They had not prepared for a long wait.

Jesus told this parable after he had entered Jerusalem where he would eventually be arrested and put to death. It was a time to teach his disciples about being prepared, about watching for his return, and about what they were supposed to do in the meantime. They would wait for his return, but it would not be a static inactivity where they did nothing. They were expected to carry on his work. The point that he made to them in this parable was that they needed to be alert and watchful for his return, and be prepared for that to happen any time.

Many Christians today have moved away from the idea of watching for Jesus' return. We don't stand and look into the sky expecting Jesus to show up. But I think there is a call to the church in this parable that is important for us as we live our lives following Jesus' teachings and recognize the importance of carrying on his ministry. It is a call to be awake and alert so we recognize the face of Christ on others, and how we are to minister to those who are in need, who long for a kind word, who seek to know that someone cares, who need hope. We can bring the light of Christ to a hurting, wounded, and lost world.

As you know, these past months and even years, we have seen a nation divided, polarized by anger, violence, and political separations. As we wait to hear election results, we may find ourselves anxious and worried, or maybe angry and afraid. No matter what the outcome, the church, I believe, can become the bridge to communicating the love of Christ to others. We can make a difference by showing kindness in the face of insults, compassion for those who are in despair, and to bring words of encouragement and hope to those who feel discouraged and let down.

We hold the lamps that can light the way. We wait, but we wait with the work we are supposed to be doing. We shine those lights, lighting the way for the holy Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. We are called to be reconcilers, even when we don't agree with someone else. We are called to be the voice of truth and to call for justice for those who are most ostracized, marginalized, and ignored by a world that often seems to be judgmental, selfish, and uncaring about others.

You know, there are many, many people in our world who really are caring and loving and kind. We just don't necessarily hear about them, but we can be part of making that happen. Let us seek to manifest Christ in the world through who we are called to be as the Church of Jesus Christ. Let us seek to bring a sense of calm, hope, and peace in the midst of what feels like chaos and upheaval. Let us seek to find ways to mend, rather than tear down, to heal rather than harm. That, to me, seems to be how we will wait for Christ - by actively continuing to carry on his ministry in this world, prepared at any moment to hear the call to act.

May God bless each and every one of us, and may we wait actively in the name of Jesus. Amen.



PRAYER LIST

Steve & Colleen Nelson
Fickenscher Family
Dennis Hoskins
Glenn
Maria
Erika
Earl
Jim
Delores
Juliann
Jayne Griffin & Family
Jim Slater
Charles Gilman
Amelia and Michelle
Barbara Glidden
John
Gil Stebbins
Danny Westbrook
Dan Strange
Bobbie Noble
MariaAnne Coffey

Those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Our Denomination
Our Church Family