

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 22: “Inherit the Kingdom Prepared for You” (Matthew 25)

LESSON GOAL: To prepare for the Second Coming by living righteously, developing talents, serving others.

Timeline of Last Week of Christ on the Earth:

Day	Jew	Last Week Events
Sat		Sabbath
	Sun	Supper (Mary, Martha, Lazarus) and anointing (Jn 12)
Sun		Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)
	Mon	
Mon		Christ cursed fig tree; cleansed temple; healed
	Tue	
Tue		Leaders question Christ’s authority → parables; Jesus to disciples (2 nd coming signs, counsel)
	Wed	Jesus is anointed (Mt); Judas offered to betray Jesus
Wed		Plot against Jesus [Silent Wednesday]
	Thu	
Thu		Prepare for last supper
	Fri	Eve: Last Supper (☉)=Passover (☉); Gethsemane; Night= arrest, Jewish trial (Annas)
Fri	+	Morn: 6:30 AM Jewish trial (Caiaphas), Roman trials (Pilate, Herod, Pilate); 9 AM = crucifixion; 12 noon= darkness; 3 PM = death; Burial before 6 PM
	Sat	Sabbath; Christ ministered in Spirit World
Sat		Sabbath
	Sun	
Sun	☺	1 st Fruits ritual; empty tomb; Christ appeared to many

These three parables, delivered on the Mount of Olives during the week of the atonement, are probably intended to demonstrate the ways in which we must be prepared at the coming of the Lord if we hope to escape the burning and be permitted to remain with him on earth.

1. Jesus presents the parable of the ten virgins. (Teaches us that we must be obedient, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, build our testimonies.)

D&C 45:56-57: And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins. For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

Spencer W. Kimball: “In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps” (Faith Precedes the Miracle, 256).

Consider the following prophetic insights about borrowed light:

Orson F. Whitney: “Many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are true to God and his work. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand . . . Remember these sayings, for many of you will live to see them fulfilled. The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand? (Life of Heber C. Kimball, 450).

Harold B. Lee: Our number one responsibility is to see that **we are converted**, and then to convert others.... The time is here when each of you must **stand on your own feet**. Be converted, because no one can endure on borrowed light. **You will have to be guided by the light within yourself. If you do not have it, you will not stand**" (*Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 95).

Howard W. Hunter: "Preparation for the Second Coming does not require a preoccupation with the future. Jesus taught his disciples to watch and pray; however, **he taught them that prayerful watching does not require sleepless anxiety and preoccupation with the future, but rather the quiet, steady attention to present duties**" (*Thoughts of Howard W. Hunter*, 201).

James E. Faust: "We will not be able to travel through life on borrowed light. The **light of life** must be part of our very being. The voice we must learn to heed is **the voice of the Spirit**" ("The Voice of the Spirit," *Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 8).

Bruce R. McConkie: "Salvation is a personal matter. It comes only to those who keep the commandments and whose souls are filled with the Holy Spirit of God. **No man can keep the commandments for and on behalf of another; no one can gain the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in his life and give or sell that holy oil to another.** Every man must light his own lamp with the oil of righteousness which he buys at **the market of obedience**. Few doctrines are more evil and wicked than the false doctrine of supererogation, which is, that the saints, by doing more than is necessary for their own salvation, build up an immense treasure of merit in heaven, which can be dispensed and assigned to others so they too can be saved" (*Mortal Messiah*, 3:468).

APPLICATION: The oil represents our preparation for the Second Coming. How can we add oil to our lamps?

2. Jesus presents the parable of the talents. (Teaches us that we must build the kingdom.)

D&C 46:11-12: For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby.

D&C 60:13: Behold, they have been sent to preach my gospel among the congregations of the wicked; wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, thus: Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known.

D&C 64:33-34: Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton: "For us to conclude that we have no gifts when we judge ourselves by stature, intelligence, grade-point average, wealth, power, position or external appearance is not only unfair but unreasonable... **It is up to each of us to search for and build upon the gifts which God has given...** Let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. **Among these may be your gifts—gifts not so evident but nevertheless real and valuable.**

"Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of **asking**; the gift of **listening**; the gift of **hearing** and using a still, small voice; the gift of **being able to weep**; the gift of **avoiding contention**; the gift of **being agreeable**; the gift of **avoiding vain repetition**; the gift of **seeking that which is righteous**; the gift of **not passing judgment**; the gift of **looking to God for guidance**; the gift of being a **disciple**; the gift of **caring for others**; the gift of **being able to ponder**; the gift of **offering prayer**; the gift of **bearing a mighty testimony**; and the gift of **receiving the Holy Ghost**" (Conference Report, Oct. 1987)

Howard W. Hunter: "The Lord **expects us to use our talents in his service**. Those who use their talents find they will grow. **One who exercises his strength finds it will increase.** If we sow a seed, it will grow; if we fail to plant, it will be lost... **Talents are not given to us to be put on display or to be hidden away, but to be used.** The Master expects us to make use of them. He expects us to venture forth and increase what we have been given according to our capacities and abilities. To fail to do so means to lose them. **If we do not increase, we decrease.** Our quest is to seek out the talents the Lord has given us and to develop and multiply them, whether they be five, two, or one. **We need not attempt to imitate the talents given to other persons**" (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 70).

Orson F. Whitney: "This, brothers, sisters, and friends, is the whole history of the world in a nutshell. This is what you and I are doing day by day--either adding unto and upon that talent which God has given us, be it small or great, or we are neglecting it. **No one can say truthfully at the judgment seat of God, "Father, you gave me nothing; I have nothing to render up." All men have received something from the Great Creator.** All men have received a measure of light and intelligence, and it is not for an individual or any set of individuals to sit in judgment upon the dispensations of the Almighty and say, "You have given me something so small that it was unworthy of improvement, and I have added nothing to it." (Collected Discourses, Vol.1, Orson F. Whitney, June 24, 1888).

Howard W. Hunter: "Now we come to the one-talent servant. We are saddened and disappointed in this part of the drama because first there was an **excuse**, then a display of the **fear** that caused him to hide the talent. He had been **afraid to assume the responsibility**. His attitude was one of resentment and faultfinding, saying he found the master to be a hard man, even harvesting where he had not sown. There are many in the world like this servant, **idle and unwilling to work for their master—interested only in themselves**. There are those who become so involved in the things of the world and their own selfish interests that **they will not make the attempt** or put forth the effort to **magnify one little talent entrusted to them by the Lord**" (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 262).

Spencer W. Kimball: "Likewise the Church member who has the attitude of **leaving it to others** will have much to answer for. There are many who say: 'My wife does the Church work!' Others say: 'I'm just not the religious kind,' as though it does not take effort for most people to serve and do their duty. **But God has endowed us with talents and time, with latent abilities and with opportunities to use and develop them in his service.** He therefore expects much of us, his privileged children. The parable of the talents is a brilliant summary of the many scriptural passages outlining promises for the diligent and penalties for the slothful. From this we see that those who refuse to use their talents in God's cause can expect their potential to be removed and given to someone more worthy. Like the unproductive fig tree their barren lives will be cursed" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 100).

Bruce R. McConkie: "There is an eternal principle that states: **Service is essential to salvation.** In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus dramatized the truth that to gain salvation men must keep the commandments and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus, Obedience is essential to salvation. By now giving the parable of the talents, he completes the picture. Not only must mortals keep the commandments to gain an inheritance in the Father's kingdom, but **they must also get outside themselves in service to their fellowmen.** It is one thing to be virtuous and pay tithing; it is another to persuade others to walk in paths of purity and to **make their means available for the building up of the Lord's earthly kingdom.** The Lord will not be satisfied with the salvation of Moses alone; he expects that great lawgiver to guide all Israel to the summit of Sinai. **Both obedience and service are essential to salvation**" (*Mortal Messiah*, 3:468-469).

APPLICATION: How do we fail to develop our talents? How can we overcome obstacles to developing our gifts?

3. Jesus presents the parable of the sheep and the goats. (Teaches us we must serve our fellow men.)

Homer Ellsworth: "Nearly all flocks in the Middle East have sheep and goats, as was the case in Jesus' time. Both are used—the hair of the goats is useful for many practical purposes, and cheese and yogurt are made from the milk. **But sheep and goats are very different and do not graze very well together.** Shepherds usually prefer the sheep, since **goats get into all sorts of trouble.** They climb steep, hazardous slopes and often browse while standing on tree branches. Sheep are gentle, walk slowly, and usually obey. This is not so with wandering goats" (Homer Ellsworth, "Thoughts on the Good Shepherd," *Ensign*, Dec. 1985).

In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the Lord has condemned indifference in even more dramatic terms. **We must care for the lonely and the lost and the hungry and the stranger and the incarcerated and the naked. The clearest evidence of our discipleship is the response we have to those who are in misery.** The Lord has talked about this many times in the scriptures. Consider the following:

- Thou shalt **open thine hand wide** unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deut. 15:11)
- He that hath two coats, let him **impart to him** that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. (Luke 3:11)
- **Lend**, hoping for nothing again. (Luke 6:35)
- **Give alms** of such things as ye have. . . (Luke 11:41)
- But when thou makes a **feast**, call the **poor**, the **maimed**, the **lame**, the **blind**. (Luke 14:13)
- **Do good, be rich in good works**, ready to **distribute**, willing to **communicate**. (1 Tim 6:18)
- Be familiar with all and **free with your substance** . . . (Jacob 2:17)
- **Succor those that stand in need** of your succor . . . **administer of your substance** unto him that standeth in need. (Mosiah 4:16)
- Why do ye . . . **suffer the hungry**, and the **needy**, and the **naked**, and the **sick** and the **afflicted to pass by you**, and **notice them not?** (Mormon 8:39)
- Therefore, if any man shall **take of the abundance** which I have made, and **impart not his portion** . . . unto the **poor** and the **needy**, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, **being in torment**. (D&C 104:18)

Elder Marion D. Hanks: "Jesus taught his followers the parable of the sheep and the goats, representing the judgment to come, in which he clearly identified those who will inherit 'life eternal' and those who will 'go away into everlasting punishment'. The key difference was **that those who should inherit the kingdom with him had developed the habit of helping**, had experienced the joy of giving and the satisfaction of serving. They had responded to the needs of the hungry, thirsty, homeless, the naked, the sick, and those in prison.... Nothing would seem more clear than the high premium the Savior put upon selfless service to others as an indispensable element of Christian conduct and of salvation. **Helping, giving, sacrificing are, or should be, as natural as growing and breathing**" (Ensign, May 1992, 9).

Chieko Okazaki: "It is our joy and our glory, that we can serve Christ by serving the least among us. 'The least of these' are all around us... **Not one of us, myself included, is so overcome with problems that we cannot be a nonjudgmental listener, a helpful friend, a loving sister to someone who is also in need, a defender when someone is gossiped about, an includer when someone is marginalized.**" (*Disciples*, 210.)

Ed J. Pinegar: ""Every act we perform on this earth is a reflection of our love, or the lack of love, for our Savior Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. When we love the Lord, we will keep the commandments; alternately, if we love Satan more than God, we will become carnal, sensual, and devilish. **Thus are the sheep separated from the goats**" (*Teachings and Commentaries on the New Testament*, 240).

Thomas S. Monson: "Old Bob came into our lives in an interesting way. He was a widower in his eighties when the house in which he was living was to be demolished. I heard him tell my grandfather his plight as the three of us sat on the old front porch swing. With a plaintive voice, he said to grandfather, "Mr. Condie, I don't know what to do. I have no family. I have no place to go. I have no money." I wondered how grandfather would answer. Slowly grandfather reached into his pocket and took from it that old leather purse from which, in response to my hounding, he had produced many a penny or nickel for a special treat. This time he removed a key and handed it to Old Bob. Tenderly he said, "**Bob, here is the key to that house I own next door. Take it. Move in your things. Stay as long as you like. There will be no rent to pay and nobody will ever put you out again**" (General Conference 1981, 66).

Elie Weisel: "If there is one word that describes all the woes and threats that exist today, it's indifference. You see a tragedy on television for three minutes and then comes something else and something else. **Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference.** The opposite of beauty is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference" (One hundred and fourteenth Summer Commencement exercises at Brigham Young University, August 17, 1989).

Brigham Young: "You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be preparing for celestial glory, while the meanest menial under your charge or control is in want of the smallest thing which God has given you power to supply. (From a proclamation declaring January 1, 1852 a "Day of Praise and Thanksgiving," *Ensign*, November 1971, .40,41).

Marion D. Hanks: "Jesus taught his followers the parable of the sheep and the goats, representing the judgment to come, in which he clearly identified those who will inherit 'life eternal' and those who will 'go away into everlasting punishment' (Matthew 25:46). **The key difference was that those who should inherit the kingdom with him had developed the habit of helping, had experienced the joy of giving and the satisfaction of serving.** They had responded to the needs of the hungry, thirsty, homeless, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. ... "Nothing would seem more clear than the high premium the Savior put upon selfless service to others as an indispensable element of Christian conduct and of salvation. **Helping, giving, and sacrificing are, or should be, as natural as growing and breathing**" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 9).

D&C 29:9-11: For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and **all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up**, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth; For the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass; **For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand.**

APPLICATION: To become more aware of others' needs and become more diligent in serving others.