The 24th Sunday after Pentecost
"The Midnight Scramble"
Matthew 25:6-10
November 8, 2026
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 24th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 25:6-10.

"6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut."

So far our text:

A "midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"

And then what ensued was a scramble. The job of these young maidens of the bridal party was simply to meet the bridegroom with lit lamps and escort him into the wedding feast. As often happens in weddings, there are delays one has to be ready for the unexpected.

I've heard of a wedding that took place on South Padre Island that was delayed for quite long time while members of the wedding party were stuck in traffic crossing the bridge. In this parable that Jesus tells, the reason for the delay isn't given. What is the main focus is that the bridegroom has arrived and it's time to go out to meet him.

Jesus tells this parable to His wedding party, the church, the visible church that is of its professing members. Jesus is talking to us this morning for He is the Bridegroom and the wedding party is the church who await His second and final coming.

What's absolutely certain is there will come a day when the Bridegroom arrives. The day of judgement is coming. The end of the world is coming. Jesus will appear. As we heard in our epistle reading from 1 Thessalonians 4:
"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God."

What is not known to anyone in the world is when this day will be. Oh, there have been many who have tried to predict the end of the world and, of course, failed. 2 Peter 3, which will be our epistle in the 2nd Sunday of Advent, reminds us:
"8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

As we come to the end of the church year these last three Sundays, this message of the final coming of Jesus is the main focus. It should be a day of much joy and gladness for all. Why? Peter tells us. Jesus' coming will fulfill His promise:
"a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Righteousness, not evil…just like it was before the fall of Adam and Eve…the Garden of Eden 2.0. There will be no more sadness, no more suffering, no more hunger, sin, darkness, or the devil, and no more death. Wow! That is a day worth looking forward to!

And God, who is loving and merciful wants all people to enjoy the heavenly eternal feast with Him. And so, He is longsuffering, giving all people the opportunity to repent from their sins, believe in Jesus, the Bridegroom, the Savior of the world and be ready with the lit lamps of faith when He arrives!

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And the Word of God tells us that Jesus did come already come to our world, to give His righteousness to the world by His death on the cross…Christ Crucified! That is the message of the Bible! God came in the flesh, a true man and offered Himself on the cross for the sins of all people. By His death, He established His new Kingdom of righteousness for all people.

His first coming accomplished what all the world, including you and me needed…forgiveness of our sins by the perfect Lamb of God, the Bridegroom who loved us so much that He willingly died for us.

Yes, this is the message which God proclaims through in those stores where the oil of faith is found. As Isaiah 55 tells us:

**“Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live;”**

God offers the Bread of Life, His Son Jesus, freely and without cost. That is what the store owners are selling…the proclaimers of Jesus Word, God’s servants who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus death and resurrection. This is what satisfies the soul!

Who are those who sell this oil for free? Pastors, Sunday School teachers, Christian parents, all who are baptized believers in Jesus, who have been taught the way of righteousness, are called to confess this faith to others while there still is time!
For when the Bridegroom arrives, it will be too late to get oil if you don’t have any. There will be no one selling oil anymore.

Whenever you watch sports like college football, professional football, or hockey, there is always a mad scramble at the end for the team that is behind. With two minutes left in the game, all stops are pulled. This is four down territory. You have to get a score, recover an onside kick and then try a “hail Mary” pass to the endzone. In hockey, the goalie is pulled in an effort to get an extra skater to score a goal.

The chances are slim that this strategy ever works. Why did the team lollygag throughout the game until the last minute? Why do people not take their soul’s eternal destination seriously?

In life, people plan for the unexpected, right? A generator is needed if the power goes out…extra batteries for flashlights…a candle and lighter in the car in the winter time if you’re in an area where you might get stranded in the snow, right? Just to keep you warm until help arrives. Here at the church we check the batteries in our exit signs every year and replace them if they’re working. The AED defibrillator battery is kept up to date, hopefully not ever needing to use it. That’s earthly wisdom.

People prepare for the unexpected contingencies of life, but how about keeping the soul ready and prepared? Spiritual wisdom…being wise by being ready for the Bridegroom. That's what today's parable is all about… a firm reminder to make the soul's readiness your #1 priority. For after the wedding door is shut, those who don't have the oil of faith, and were not ready to meet the Bridgroom, Jesus, have no recourse. There are no second chances, do overs, or negotiating for the unrepentant.

"11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

Yesterday, in the Veterans Day parade, as we went down Texas St. on the school float, we heard a man singing out, "your left, your right, your left right left." And one of the veterans on the float told me a story that was brought to his mind. He said his drill sergeant told the soldiers, if you're not marching with me, you're out of step. It doesn't matter if you think your step is right on beat. My step is the only one that matters!

In a spiritual sense, Jesus step is the only one that matters. If you're not marching with Him, if you're not following Him into the wedding feast, you're out of step. For those who were out of step with the sergeant, push ups were in order. For those who are out of step with the Bridegroom and don't meet Him and follow Him into heaven, it is much, much worse…an eternity of unspeakable suffering and torment in hell.

Is that not enough to cause a person to take one's soul's destiny seriously? Is that not enough to come to the place where the Gospel is sold for free, God's house here and receive His Word of salvation often, reading God's Word daily? Is this not the #1 priority? Receive the righteousness that God freely gives to you in your baptism, and in the very body and blood of Jesus in the sacrament of the altar? Oh yes, we all need to stay ready. Always!

Isaiah 55 continues:
"Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.
7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

That's the good news for all sinners! Abundant pardon in Jesus. And the Holy Spirit fills your lamp with the oil of faith as we heard last week in the beatitudes in Matthew 5.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven… Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."

Filled with Christ's righteousness. That makes you ready for the His coming. His final coming.

"we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

That is wisdom for your soul. Salvation for you soul. Strong salvation in Jesus for it is God's salvation for you and that makes you ready. Come Lord Jesus! Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)