

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 8

The Ten Virgins

Objects to have:

Chalkboard or posterboard and chalk or marking pen

An old-fashioned lamp or a lamp representing those of Bible days

Ten connected paper dolls that have skirts—having happy faces drawn on one side of all ten dolls, and on the other side five happy faces side-by-side and five sad faces side-by-side

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

The great Storyteller was at it again—telling stories, that is. The greatest Storyteller was Jesus. Jesus, however, did not tell stories simply to entertain; Jesus told stories to teach people what they needed to know.

Sometimes on a hillside, sometimes from a boat in the Sea of Galilee, sometimes in a house, Jesus talked and people gathered around Him to hear what He had to say. Jesus talked to them many times by telling parables. You know what a parable is: a story that teaches a lesson.

Some of the people believed Jesus, and they trusted Him as their Saviour. Some of the people did not believe Jesus and did not trust Him. Those people who trusted Jesus understood the lessons that He was teaching, because He explained them to them. Those who did not trust Jesus did not want to bother to ask Him to explain what He meant.

We have been hearing seven of the parables that Jesus told. Let's see if we can remember some of them and the lessons that those stories taught. (As your time permits, review them: THE GOOD SAMARITAN, THE PRODIGAL SON, THE RICH FOOL, THE GREAT SUPPER, THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN, THE SOWER, THE TARES.)

Telling the story:

(Hold your Bible, opened at Matthew chapter 25, and say the following:) They climbed a hill together. It was a rather high hill. In some places the hill went straight up; so, in those places, they had to zigzag back and forth in order to climb. In some places the hill was very stony and bare. In other places the hill was flatter and was grassy, and there were trees growing on it. In the Bible, in the book of Matthew, I read that it was Jesus and His closest friends, the disciples, who were climbing the hill together.

They got to the top of the hill, and there on the top were many trees. The trees were not tall, but even though they were short, they provided shade from the hot sunshine. Besides leaves on the trees, there was fruit growing. Oh, maybe we would not call it fruit—it was olives. The hill that Jesus and His disciples climbed was called the Mount of Olives. They all got comfortable there on top of that hill—Jesus and His disciples. How the disciples loved to listen to Jesus! Once again they were settling down, with their eyes on Jesus and with their ears open to hear what He had to tell them. (Put down your Bible.)

Our story is about some old-fashioned lamps. (Pick up your lamp.) It is also about some ladies. (Hold out the paper dolls so that they can see that there are ten of them and so that the happy faces are turned toward the children. Count the paper dolls together.)

It was a very exciting time for these ladies. Jesus said that five of the ladies were ready, and five of them had not gotten completely ready. Jesus called the ones who were ready wise and the ones who were not ready He called foolish.

Each lady had a lamp. In the days when Jesus was on earth, the people could not plug the cord into a socket in the wall and turn on the lamp and have light. No man knew yet how to make electricity work for the people. Their lamps had to be lit with fire, and at nighttime it was the flame from a lamp that helped them to see where they were going and helped them to read and helped them to do anything they had to do around the house. In the lamps was a liquid that was called oil. Also in the lamps were flat, very coarse pieces of fabric. Those coarse, flat pieces of fabric were called wicks. The wicks were soaked in the oil so that when the wicks were lit, they would keep burning. There would always be a flame as long as there was oil in the lamp. A person could blow out the flame, but when he wanted to have light again, then he would light the wick with fire from a little torch or from a stove, etc.

The ten young ladies were gathered in a house. One of the young ladies was going to be married. The young ladies with her were friends and helpers. They were excitedly waiting for someone to come. They were waiting for the bridegroom to come to the house of the young lady who was going to marry him, and he would take her away to his house. The friends of the bride would go with her to see the wedding and have fun at the wedding reception. But, they did not know the time when the bridegroom would come. It was daytime when they started to wait for him. They knew that he could come either in the daytime or he could come at night. These young ladies, called virgins, each had a lamp with her. Five of the lamps had oil in them, and five of the lamps did not. The five virgins who had oil in their lamps were called wise; the five who did not were called foolish. The foolish young ladies weren't ready in case the bridegroom were to come at night.

It got later and later. It was lunchtime, and then lunchtime passed. It was early afternoon, and then it was late afternoon.

In the house where the groom lived, a lot was going on. Many people were hurrying around getting everything ready for the bride. Tables were all set for dinner. Food was being cooked in the kitchen. The house had been cleaned and scrubbed for days, getting ready for the big, exciting wedding that was to take place. Finally, somebody called out, "Everything is all ready. Groom, you may go to the house of the bride and get her and her friends."

The groom smiled—what a big smile! How handsome and happy he looked. He was dressed in a new suit and new shoes; he had just had a haircut, and he was all ready. He said to his friends who were going to be in the wedding party with him, "Come on, friends. Go with me to get my bride."

There were some men who had some horns that they could blow to make good music; some other men had some drums that they could play. They got in line and went out of the house. They began to play some very happy music on their horns and their drums. Following them was the bridegroom and walking along with him were his friends. They knew the way to the bride's house, and that was where they were going. Someone was carrying torches of fire so that they could see where they were going.

Someone close to the bride's house heard the music and saw the flaming torches and went running to the house of the bride. "The bridegroom is coming! The bridegroom is coming!"

The young ladies heard the call. One of them said, "Oh, it is midnight. We need to light our lamps so that we can see to go out of the house to meet the bridegroom and those who are with him." Someone got a little torch of fire and started to light the lamps. The five wise virgins quickly lit their lamps. The five foolish virgins cried out, "Oh, we do not have oil in our lamps. Our lamps will not light. Please give us some of your oil."

The five wise virgins said, "We have enough oil in our lamps, but not enough to share. If we shared, then none of us would have enough oil to last until we get to the house of the groom."

"Where should we go to get some oil?" asked the five foolish virgins.

“Go to the person who sells oil, and buy some,” said the wise virgins as they walked out of the house to meet the bridegroom and those who were with him. These five wise virgins met him and walked with him and the others back to his house. They went into the house, and the door was shut behind them. Only those who were in the house were to enjoy the wedding and the party that was being held for the couple who were getting married. The five foolish virgins bought their oil, and came to the house and found the door shut and locked. “Let us in! Let us in!” called out the foolish virgins.

“We cannot let you in now. The door is shut. No one else can come in anymore.” (Turn the paper dolls so that the sad faces on five of the ladies can be seen by the children.) How sad! They were going to miss the good times.

When Jesus was telling this story (put down the dolls and pick up your chalk or marking pen), His friends on the Mount of Olives (draw a hill) were listening to His every word. He was saying to them, “The kingdom of Heaven is like these ten virgins—five of them ready and watching for the bridegroom to come, and five of them not ready. Someday the Son of man is going to come again, and when He comes, He wants those who trust Him to meet Him.”

Jesus is going to come again someday. We do not know when He will come. I am so glad that I am saved—that I asked Jesus to be my Saviour. I will be ready when He comes! I know that when the trumpet will be blown by an angel, I will rise from this earth and meet Jesus. I will meet Him in the cloud, and so will everybody else who has trusted Him as their Saviour. It's just like having oil in the lamp—it's being ready for whenever He comes. Some people have said no; they will not ask Jesus to be their Saviour. They are just like the five foolish virgins who did not have oil in their lamps for whenever the groom came to meet the bride. All the people who have said no to Jesus will not get to be with Him when He comes again from Heaven, and they will have no second chance. They can't decide then to be saved—it will be too late. It will be just like the door has been shut and locked, and they cannot get in. They will never have a chance to go to Heaven; they will have to suffer themselves for their sins.

Oh, how much Jesus loves us all! He loves us so much that He let Himself be punished for our sins. But, if we will not trust Him, then our sins are not covered by His blood—they are not washed away—and God cannot let sin be in Heaven. Let's all be ready when Jesus comes again. If you have not asked Him to be your Saviour, please do that today. We do not know when He is going to come.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Matthew 25:13—“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”