

The Last Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 25:1-13
November 22nd, 2020
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Bridegroom Is Coming

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost, most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

According to the words of our Lord + Jesus, recorded by the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, when is the time of our Lord's return? Our Lord + Jesus comes at Midnight. Our Lord and Savior comes to take us from the vale of sorrow to Himself in Heaven in the middle of the night. What is it like at Midnight? What is it like in the middle of the night? It is dark. There is no light but from the moon and the stars. In other words, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ comes when the world is filled with darkness. The Light of the world comes to bring light and life to His people when they are surrounded by darkness. Our Lord + Jesus will come for us when our world is surrounded in darkness. He will be the Light that illumines this dark place. He will be the Light for the world.

Indeed, the time draws near. The Bridegroom soon will call us. For this world is filled with the darkness of sin and shame. We are surrounded by unbelief, heresy, and disregard for the Law and will of the Lord God. This world is very evil, and it seems to becoming more evil every day. For no one has use for the Lord God or for the Christ. The world wants to get rid of Christ and His Church. They want to silence her voice in this world. And sadly, in many places and even in many so-called Church bodies, the voice of the Church, which echoes the voice of her Bridegroom, is silenced or distorted.

But the Church, the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem adorned for her Husband like a bride, comes down from Heaven to all those who cling to her Husband, the Christ, in faith. She continues to proclaim with her voice the good things that our Lord + Jesus has done for us. He has perfectly fulfilled the Law of God which we break each and every day. He has taken upon Himself our flesh, and bore that flesh to the holy cross where He offered up His life as a ransom for our life. He gave His life into death, so that we might have life with Him eternally.

Because the Bride of the Christ, the Church, continues to call out to this world through the means of grace; because she continues to invite people to come and find shelter and comfort under her compassionate wings, those who believe on the Lord + Jesus are purified by the Word and by water and bread and wine. New Christians have faith created in them by the work of the Holy Ghost through

the means of grace. These new Christians are purified of all of their sins by their faith in the Lord + Jesus—in His works and merits. Therefore, these new Christians in their purity are rightly called “virgins.” We too, having been brought into the care of Mother Church by the waters of Holy Baptism, and continue to be fed by her through the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments are also rightly called “virgins.” For we too are pure in the Lord God’s sight having been forgiven of our sins on account of our faith in the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus. We, like all new virgins, have been brought out of the darkness of sin, into the marvelous light of our Lord + Jesus. He has illumined our souls to see that salvation is found in His works alone, and not in ours.

Therefore, our Lord + Jesus tells a parable about the Last Day regarding all of us virgins. There are ten virgins. Ten is the number of perfect completion. Nothing more can be added to the complete number ten. So, this parable is about the whole Church on Earth. All have their lamps. All slumber and sleep the sleep of death. But five are foolish and five are wise. The difference between the two is summed up in the last verse of today’s Gospel pericope. The whole point of our Lord’s parable is that we should keep watch. The Son of Man is coming. The Bridegroom is coming. Our Lord + Jesus is coming. He will come in the middle of the night, when we are least expecting it.

The five foolish virgins failed to keep watch. They did not bring oil in their flasks. In short, these represent those who are only Christians in name only. They are in the Church. They go through all the motions that other Christians go through. But according to the parable they lack something; they lack oil in their flasks. Many theories have been put forth as to what the oil represents: faith, love, good works, and the like. Whatever the oil symbolizes we do know that the foolish virgins run out of it, for they did not bring extra with them. Whatever the oil symbolizes they do not have extra of it because they failed to keep watch. They were not mindful of the Day of our Lord’s coming. They were instead consumed with the things of this life and this world.

This life and world will pass away. There will be a New Earth and a New Jerusalem. Before our Lord’s return we will all slumber and sleep the sleep of death. The things that we hold onto in this life and world will not remain. You have heard the axiom, “You cannot take it with you.” Nothing in this life will be carried into the next life. The only thing that seems to be able to be carried into the heavenly realms is the oil that was stored in the flasks of the five wise virgins. They are wise because they planned ahead. They were prepared. They had kept watch for the Day that would be coming. They had not forgotten that that day would come as a thief in the night, and so, they were always preparing and prepared for that Day.

Our Lord + Jesus also admonishes us through this parable to keep watch: to ever be mindful of the day of our death and the Last Day. Well then, how does one “keep watch?” We keep watch by continuing to live our lives as virgins—those purified by faith in the works and merits of the Christ. We keep watch by continuing steadfastly in the means of grace. We come to this holy house to receive respite from this wearying world. We come to this holy sanctuary to receive from our Lord + Jesus through the means of grace forgiveness for our sins, eternal life and salvation. When we come to meet the Bridegroom in this place, He gives us oil for our flasks. He preaches the good news into our ears that He has won salvation for us, so that no matter how much of a poor, miserable sinner we may be He has paid the penalty of that sin in His Body on the tree of the holy cross.

He even washes us clean daily when we live in our Holy Baptisms—when we through daily contrition and faith cling to the Lord’s crucifixion on our behalf; His sacrifice to atone for our sins. He washes us with His own Blood shed for us on the tree of the holy cross. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, He has enlightened our dark souls, and brought us into His eternal light by placing us under the care of His Bride, the Church.

The Church cares for us by feeding us with the Body and Blood of her Bridegroom, our Lord +

Jesus in bread and wine. In His Church—under the care of His loving Bride—we are fed and nourished until the day when He calls us from this vale of tears to Himself in Heaven. He comes to us and calls us out of the darkness to live in His glorious Light. He comes to us so that we may remain with Him for all eternity. In the darkness of our sin the voice goes out in the middle of the night that the Bridegroom is Coming. He is coming to bring us into His eternal light. He is coming to bring us into the eternal Wedding Feast. There for all eternity we will walk in daylight and there will be no light. We will awake from our sleep of death to live with Him for all eternity.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us keep watch. For that day comes as a thief in the night. We do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. Let us continue to keep watch by continuing daily in study and prayer of God's holy Word. Let us continue to keep watch by continuing to come to this holy house to receive from our Lord through the hand of His Bride, the means of our grace. Let us continue to keep watch by being prepared always for the coming of our Lord + Jesus. For in so doing we will continue to take oil with us in our flasks, and go and meet the Bridegroom with trimmed lamps and go into the eternal wedding hall of Heaven. For He promises that the virgins—those who have purified themselves by putting on the works and merits of the Christ—will be brought to Him. Where He is there will no longer be any night, but we will walk in the eternal light of Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, we beseech Thee, grant us grace that we may wait with vigilance for the advent of Thy Son, our Lord, that, when He shall arise from Thy right hand to visit the Earth in righteousness and Thy people with salvation, He may find us, not sleeping in sin, but diligent in His service and rejoicing in His praise, that so we may enter in with Him unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; through His merits, Who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!