Joy Lutheran Church



5-Day Devotional: Ready? Ready.

Living by the Promise | Matthew 25:1–13

This devotional follows the progression of Sunday's message: living in the meantime, trusting Christ when we're weary, recognizing the gift of faith, receiving God's gifts, and waiting with hope.

Day 1 – Living in the Meantime

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:5

"The groom was late in coming, so they all became drowsy and went to sleep."

Waiting is hard. We wait for appointments, answers, opportunities, and important events. Sometimes the waiting is exciting. Other times it is frustrating, exhausting, and filled with uncertainty.

Jesus tells a story about ten bridesmaids waiting for a bridegroom. The bridegroom is delayed, and all ten eventually fall asleep. Their experience sounds a lot like our own. We live in the meantime—the time between Jesus' first coming and his promised return.

It's easy to wonder whether anything is ever going to change. We look at the world around us and wonder when Jesus will return and make all things new. We can become comfortable with life as it is and lose sight of the promise that Jesus is coming again.

But the delay doesn't mean the promise has failed. Jesus has not forgotten us. We live in the meantime, trusting that he will do exactly what he has promised.

Quote from the Message

"We live in this meantime. The time when the bridesmaids fell asleep. We live in the meantime waiting to realize the fulfillment of what Jesus brings."

Reflection Question

Where are you experiencing a season of waiting right now? How does Jesus' promise to return give you hope as you wait?

Day 2 – Faith When We're Tired

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:6–7

"At midnight there was a cry: 'Look! The groom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps."

One of the interesting details in Jesus' parable is that all ten bridesmaids fall asleep. The wise ones get tired, too. Their readiness wasn't measured by their ability to stay awake all night.

We sometimes assume that strong faith means always feeling close to God, always being enthusiastic about worship, or never experiencing doubt. When those feelings disappear, we may wonder whether something is wrong with us.

But faith isn't measured by the intensity of our emotions. There are times when we feel spiritually strong and times when we feel spiritually tired. There are seasons when God's presence seems obvious and seasons when he seems distant.

Being ready doesn't mean never getting tired. It means continuing to lean on the promises God gives us in Christ. Our confidence rests not in how strongly we feel but in the faithfulness of the One who made the promise.

Quote from the Message

"Being ready does not mean not being tired. Being ready, as Jesus talks about it in this parable, is leaning into and leaning on the promises that God gives us in Christ."

Reflection Question

Have you ever confused feeling close to God with having strong faith? What promises of Christ can you lean on when your feelings are uncertain?

Day 3 – Faith Isn't Something We Can Borrow

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:8–9

"The foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps have gone out.' But the wise ones replied, 'No, there won't be enough for us and you. You should go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'"

When the bridegroom finally arrives, the foolish bridesmaids discover that they don't have what they need. They turn to the wise bridesmaids and ask them to share their oil. But the wise bridesmaids cannot give away what is needed for their own lamps.

Jesus' parable reminds us that faith cannot be borrowed, outsourced, or manufactured at the last moment. We may have parents, grandparents, spouses, or friends whose faith means a great deal to us. We may belong to a congregation, know the Bible, and participate in the life of the church. Those things can be wonderful gifts, but they cannot take the place of trusting Christ ourselves.

This can be difficult to hear, especially when we worry about the faith of someone we love. We cannot believe for another person. But we can pray for them, love them, encourage them, and point them toward Jesus.

Ultimately, faith is God's gift. The Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel and brings us to trust in Christ.

Quote from the Message

"The reality is that faith is something that can't be borrowed. It can't be manufactured. It can't be outsourced."

Reflection Question

Are there things you sometimes rely on as substitutes for trusting Christ? Who in your life needs your prayers, encouragement, and the hope of the Gospel?

Day 4 – God Gives Us What We Need

Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:8–9

"He will also strengthen you until the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful! You were called by him into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

If faith cannot be borrowed or manufactured, how are we supposed to remain faithful while we wait for Jesus to return?

The good news is that God doesn't leave us to figure it out on our own. The Holy Spirit is at work in us, calling us through the Gospel, bringing us to faith, and keeping us in that faith.

God gives us his Word. He reminds us of his promises in Baptism. He meets us at the Lord's Table, giving us the life-giving, sin-forgiving body and blood of Christ. He gathers us into a community of believers who walk alongside us through life's celebrations and struggles.

These aren't accomplishments we offer to God to prove how ready we are. They are gifts God gives to us because we need his grace.

When we are weak, God remains faithful. When we are uncertain, his promises remain true. When the journey becomes difficult, he continues to sustain us.

Quote from the Message

"Being ready is being sustained by the gifts that God gives us through the Holy Spirit."

Reflection Question

Which of God's gifts—his Word, Baptism, Communion, or Christian community—has been especially meaningful to you during a difficult season? How might you receive and appreciate that gift more intentionally this week?

Day 5 – Waiting with Joyful Expectation

Bible Verse: Matthew 25:13

"Therefore, keep alert, because you don't know the day or the hour."

Jesus ends the parable with a reminder to keep alert because no one knows the day or the hour of his return.

That can sound intimidating if we think readiness means constantly worrying about whether we have done enough. But the heart of this message is not fear. It is hope.

Jesus is coming again. The One who gave his life for us, who rose from the dead, and who promises forgiveness and eternal life will return to fulfill everything he has promised.

We don't know how long the journey will take. We will experience unexpected delays, difficult seasons, and moments when we grow weary. But we don't travel alone. The Holy Spirit continues to sustain us through God's gifts.

Our hope isn't in our ability to make ourselves worthy of Jesus' return. Our hope is in Jesus himself. Because he is faithful, we can wait with joy and eager expectation.

And as we wait, we have the opportunity to encourage others, share the promises of Christ, and live out our faith in the places God has put us.

Quote from the Message

"Being ready is waiting anxiously with joyful expectation for that time when Jesus comes back again."

Reflection Question

If you truly believed that Jesus could return at any time, would anything about the way you live this week change? Who could you encourage with the hope of his promise?

Closing Thought for the Week

We don't wait for Jesus by trying to make ourselves worthy of his coming. We wait as people who have received his grace, are sustained by his gifts, and look forward to the fulfillment of his promise. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.