Having a Full Lamp

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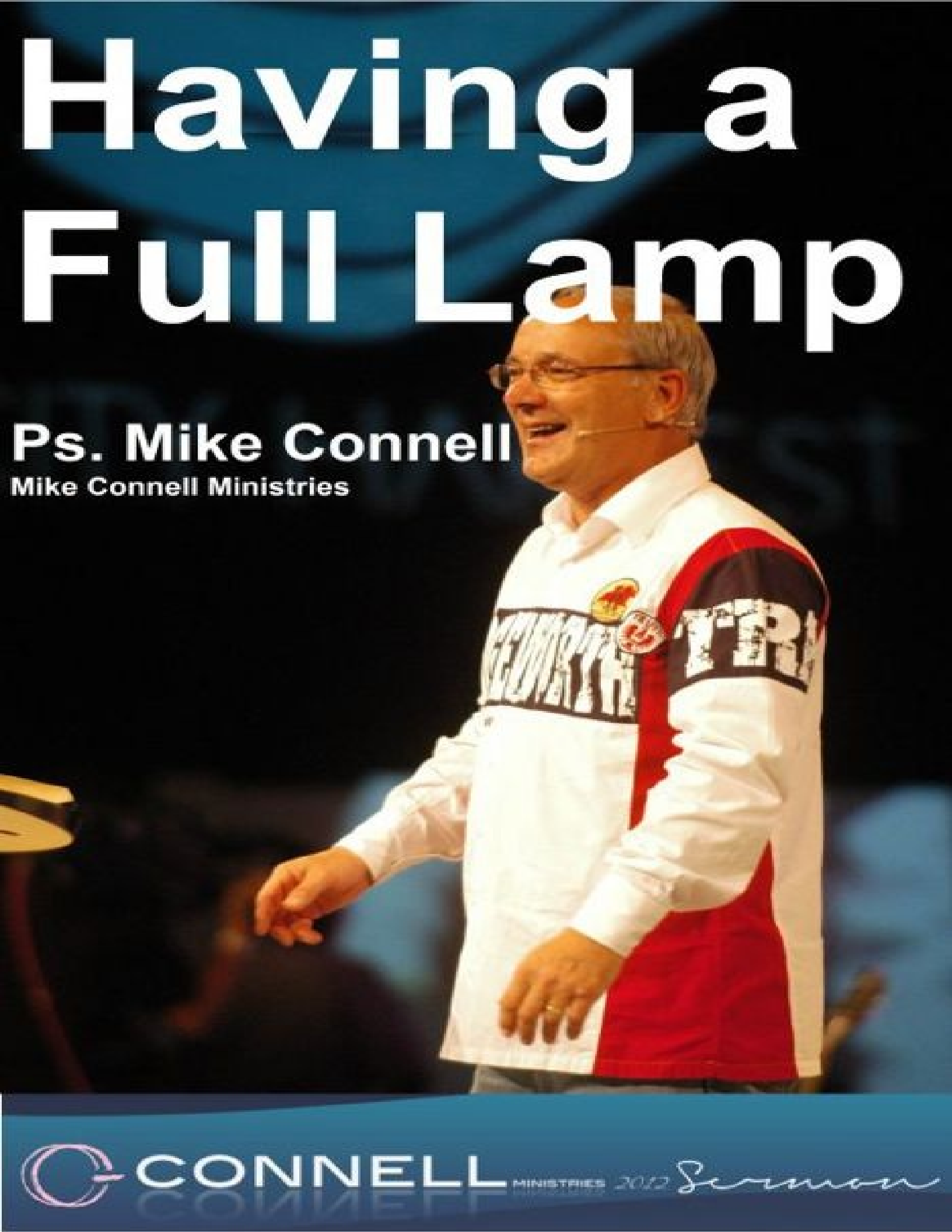

CONNELL MINISTRIES 2012 Sermon

Having a Full Lamp

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: *How will we know the end of the age? How will we know your second coming? One of the great things for us as believers is to know that not only Jesus came once, He will come again. There are massive issues related to His second coming that affect how you live your life. So Jesus spoke some parables and He had three parables and each parable brings out a different aspect of His coming.*



I want you to open up your Bible with me. I want you to look to Matthew, Chapter 25 and we've been doing a series. I want to continue the series and get you pumped up and fired up and in Matthew 25 let's read it. You know the story here, it's the Parable of the Virgins, five wise, five foolish. When you read it you automatically think I wouldn't be a foolish one. I must be a wise one and it may not be so though.

Then the kingdom of heaven should be likened to 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five were wise and five were foolish and those who were foolish took with them their lamps but took no oil with them. That's a bit strange isn't it? And the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed they all slumbered and slept and at midnight a cry was heard; behold the bridegroom is coming. Go out and meet Him. Then all the virgins rose up, trimmed the lamps and suddenly the foolish realised their lack of oil. They said to the wise give us some of your oil, our lamps are going out and the wise said no, no, less there be not enough for us and for you. Go rather to those who sell, buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy the bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with them to the wedding and the door was shut.

And afterward the other virgins came also saying Lord, Lord, open to us and He answered and said surely I say to you I do not know you and then Jesus applies it; watch therefore you know not the day nor the hour at which the Son of Man is coming. Now it's helpful if we see the context that Jesus is speaking, context is the background, otherwise you've just got one story on its own.

The context for this is found in Matthew 24. The disciples asked this; how will we know the end of the age? How will we know your second coming? One of the great things for us as believers is to know not only Jesus came once, He will come again and there are massive issues related to His second coming that affect how you live your life. If you don't understand anything about the second coming chances are you won't

worry except just go on with your life and not understand the tremendous issues that are at stake for us.

So Jesus spoke some parables and He had three parables and each parable brings out a different aspect of His coming, so one of the parables brings out that Jesus is represented as a bridegroom and as a bridegroom - in other words the Bible uses a picture to describe what He's like and what He's like as a bridegroom, you think of people love weddings. I mean everyone loves a wedding, come to the wedding, everyone's dressed up. You see the groom standing there waiting for the bride to come down the aisle and it's an exciting event a wedding and then afterwards there's a great feast and celebration and dancing and partying. Weddings are great - but when it's talking about the bridegroom it's presenting Jesus like this, that He is passionate with desire for you! He intensely loves you and is willing to do everything He can to win your heart. He's the bridegroom.

Then it represents Him in one of the parables as a King. When Jesus is represented as a King He's represented something with great power, extraordinary supernatural power, able to transform individual lives, groups of people, families, cities and nations. And so the Bible presents that Jesus is a King, He has a kingdom and He calls us to obey. He calls us to bring our lives into alignment with Him for blessing and for destiny. Then the third way He's presented, He's presented as a judge. Now people don't like that aspect of Jesus. We just want to hear He's a bridegroom, He loves me and I love Him and I have a wonderful time.

Actually, you have to have several aspects of Jesus to get the proper picture. One of the things to see is Jesus is also a judge. As a judge He will come to remove all oppression and all injustice. He will remove everything from the earth that opposes love. Why? Because He's a passionate lover and He won't let anything stay that would hinder love. So in order to understand what Jesus is like you've got to see Him not just in one of those pictures but in all three. You've got to see Him as the bridegroom who loves us passionately, as the King who has power to change our lives and desires to rule over all the earth, as the judge who will come and address all issues of injustice and all issues of wrong.

Now if you only have a picture of Him as the bridegroom you get all sentimental; Oh, Jesus you loves me and I love you and oh, having a wonderful time and I just want more. If that is all you have you actually become weak and ineffective and we don't live out what we're called to do. We need to see Him not only as the one who loves us and enjoy that, but also to see Him as a King and He has a kingdom and there are ways of living that bring blessing and there's an order He wants to establish. We see Him as judge; we understand we need to deal with issues in our life first because God calls us to judge with Him.

Now when you start to look at that all of these aspects of Jesus are important and they turn up all through the Bible. Let me just show you a few places they turn up. Want you to have a look with me, just hold Matthew 25, we'll come back in a moment. Look into Revelation 19. Now you'll look and when you start to look at the Bible, just look for how Jesus is presented and you'll find He's presented in different places; Song of Solomon, He's the groom. The Book of Kings, He's a King. The Book of Revelation, He's the groom and He's the King and He's the judge. Now look at some of these things here, in Revelations, Chapter 19. Look at this and it says - Verse 7 - let us be glad and rejoice and give Him the glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready and to her was granted that she would be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white - so it talks about the groom and the wedding, huh? The marriage supper - Verse 10 - of the lamb has come, so there He is, the groom.

Now look at Him in Verse 11. Now I saw heaven open and behold a white horse and He that sat on him was called faithful and true and righteous, He judges and makes war. So now He's not just a bridegroom and it's about a wedding, it's about a war, a global war. Do not think there'll be peace forever. God speaks of an end time and a global war when He will come and it'll be messy. It'll be very messy. A large number of peoples will die during that season when the Lord comes again to establish His kingdom. Everything that opposes love will be confronted and dealt with.

Notice it says He comes to judge and make war. His eyes like a flame of fire, on His head were many crowns. Look at this, Verse 14; the armies of heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him - so He's going to be doing this with His people. Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword to strike the nations and He will rule with a rod of iron and on His name - Verse 16 - on His robe is in fire name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lord. So again you see, the coming of the Lord, John saw something yet to come and He saw at the end time a wonderful wedding feast and a marriage and then he saw Jesus coming as a mighty King and he saw a great war and the earth being judged. All are aspects of Christ, not just one and when you look at Jesus ministry you find Bible starts with a wedding and Jesus ends with a wedding. Book of Revelation; have a look at Jesus' ministry it begins at a wedding feast, it ends with a marriage supper. It's just over and over and over in the Bible.

Now let's have a look and go into Matthew 25. Now in order to understand Matthew 25 you do need to understand a little bit about what this would have meant to those who heard it. Now for us, we look at it's a strange story; lamps and oil and shout of a bridegroom coming and people going out in the middle of the night and doors shut and all that kind of thing. It means very little to any of us because we have a different concept of a wedding. We think here it is and you come to the church and here it is, the groom's here and the bride comes down. There's music and we all go to the party afterwards. We think that - but the Jewish wedding was completely different.

What would happen is the son would - either his father would arrange the marriage for him or they would send a servant to arrange a marriage for him, so they had arranged marriages in the Bible. They worked quite well apparently - or the son himself would go and he would seek out a bride that he would marry, so the son would come and when he came he would carry with him an immense amount of money which was the dowry. He had a purchase price. The second thing he would carry with him was the wedding contract and the third thing he'd have with him was wine and what he would do is he would go and he would meet with the bride and with her family and he would make the proposal and present out the proposal of a wedding.

And there was a price to pay and then the bride, then they would sit down and they would have a meal together and the cup of wine would be passed around and if the bride accepted the cup of wine and drank the cup of wine, then that means she was accepting engagement. She was now considered from a Jewish point of view she is now married to him, even though the wedding's not consummated, the marriage is not consummated, she is now legally married to this man - and yet the wedding doesn't take place fully until a season later.

So at that point they're betrothed. Mary was betrothed to Joseph. That's how it happened. So a woman who was betrothed had to remain faithful in the period of time of preparation, so the man would then go back to his father's house and he would go back to his father's house and prepare the bridal chamber and that may take a while; prepare a dwelling place. Now that you begin to understand what Jesus meant when He said I go to my Father's house to prepare a place for you, this is all wedding language. They understood what that meant.

When Jesus said I've longed to drink this cup with you and they drank the cup at communion, now you understand what He was talking about. He was proposing in marriage. He was setting forth a new covenant. This is what He said; this is the new covenant. He's talking about marriage and what He's saying is I've come and I'm presenting a new covenant. Drink this with me and this will bind together God and man in a marriage covenant. Then He says now I'll be leaving. I'll be going to my Father and I'll be preparing a place for you and then I will come again.

Then what would happen was the bride had no idea when the groom would come. The groom came when the father said it was time to come and he would determine whether everything was ready. Then he'd say it's time to come and the groom and his friends would come and they would come at night and they would come with lamps burning and then the shout, the bridegrooms best man would shout the bridegroom is coming! Now the bride had to be awake so she'd have a lamp and she needed to have oil in the lamp to keep the lamp alight. She would wake and when she heard - because you never know what night he's coming - you can

imagine the anticipation and then suddenly the shout goes up and quickly she'd rise up and she's been spending her time preparing how to be a great wife, how to be a great mother. She's all ready and she goes out to meet - and there it is. It's a wonderful thing. There it is - there's lights and torches, the groom, his friends, his party is with him. The bride comes out. She has her lamp and then she goes with the groom and they go back to the father's house where there's a wedding chamber and they go in and the door is shut and no one can go in there.

And then there's a tremendous feast and celebration. Now that is what the Jews understood. Now when you read this and see what Jesus did you get a much better idea. So let's have a look. He says then, then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Then is referring to at the end of the age it's talking about the coming of the kingdom. There is a time yet to happen when this will take place and this is what will happen. He said then the virgins, he said there were 10 virgins he said so the kingdom, the day when the kingdom comes in full manifestation of power and the earth will be like this. It'll be like 10 virgins. Now the word virgin refers to someone who's kept themself pure. In 2 Corinthians Paul writes and he says I have espoused you to Christ as a virgin. What he's saying is when you receive Jesus Christ your sins were washed away. You were made clean. You now spiritually become a virgin, a person undefiled and you have entered into a marriage covenant with Jesus Christ. You've entered into a relationship with Christ, we are called to be faithful to Him. We are called to keep our lives pure for Him. We are called to be His bride, to represent Him in the earth and to prepare ourselves for this coming day.

And it says - notice this - 10 virgins, the number 10 speaks of the full number of whatever's in view, so it's speaking not of unsaved and saved. It's speaking of believers. Let me ask you this; are you wise or are you foolish? And the only way you know you're wise or foolish is if you see what's at stake here and see what they did. So you notice that all of the virgins had a lamp. The lamp was a small container with a wick and it gave out oil. It used up oil, gave out light - so the lamp, now the lamp speaks of having capacity to shine light somewhere. Every believer has a lamp. Your lamp is your life and John 5, Jesus said of John the Baptist,

he is a bright shining lamp. In other words you are a bright shining lamp. Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 5, He said let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works. So what does it mean to have your light shining? It means you are doing something that is constructive, advances the kingdom of God, acts of kindness. You are doing something, not just in a prayer room but you are actually doing something that causes people to know you are the real deal. You have got something in your life that I want. You carry the life of God. So let your light so shine that men may see what you do, your good works and glorify your Father who's in heaven.

In other words he's saying the church must become a light to the community in every aspect, so every one of the virgins had a lamp. The difference was between those who had oil and those who had no oil or didn't have an adequate supply. Let's just follow the story through and see how that works out for us, so the oil or no oil. So notice the first one is the five virgins or the wise virgins that had oil. Oil always in the Bible is a picture for us of the Holy Spirit. It's a picture, you know, we're anointed with oil so they put oil on and the Holy Spirit would come on people so the five wise had oil. What does it mean that they had oil?

It means they had taken time to build intimacy with the Holy Spirit. They'd taken time in prayer and the word of God to come to know Him, to hear His voice, to yield to his leadership and direction in their lives, just as Esther yielded to Hagar and Hagar prepared her, we are called to let the Holy Spirit prepare our lives. Listen - you cannot run your life just with a Bible. You need the Holy Spirit, the fire of God, the oil of His presence alive in great quantities in your life.

A little while ago we were talking about praying in tongues, energising your spirit man and letting God fill you with life, fill you with vibrancy. So this having oil has to do with our spirit life. It has to do with the kind of life you're living with God where no one sees. It's the kind of life - what kind of prayer life you have, what kind of time in the word of God. Are you letting God's word change your life? Are you letting God's word shift your mind? That's how you become filled. The word of God is power to change us and fill us afresh with the Holy Spirit, so the wise virgins had

oil and the oil of the Holy - the Holy Spirit touches your heart. He softens our heart. He shows us where we've gone wrong. He helps us to repent. He gives us grace to stay on course. He brings things and reveals things to us. We need the Holy Ghost in our life. That's why - church without the Holy Ghost, what is it? It's dead. Something is missing in there.

You and I need that light with the Holy Ghost and listen, listen, you come into Bay City. It is a Holy Ghost church. There's a great dimension here but you've got to make sure you've got the oil yourself. You've got to get the oil yourself, so we're teaching some of our leaders here how to become conscious of God, conscious of the Holy Spirit, so they learn how to yield and flow and work with the Holy Spirit. We all need to be able to do that. All of us can do that. It's why I've got a seminar on activating the gifts, but it's more than activating the gifts. It's getting oil inside you so you're full of the life of God, so what about the five foolish virgins?

The five foolish virgins took no oil. They had no oil. In other words - get this, I want you to see what this means; it means they were so busy with life doing things they failed to build an adequate personal devotional life, just like Mary and Martha. Mary was commended for placing priority on relationship over works. It's not either/or. Works, what we do needs to come out of what we are in His presence and the only way you can do that is if you build a prayer life, build a life in the word of God. Build one - you say well I can't do it, I'm not good at it. Everyone can! Everyone can and if you don't know what to do put your hand up and ask. Don't say in that day I'm sorry, I didn't have enough. Notice there was no room for the virgins to give an explanation why they had no oil. There were just consequences for no oil and so in this last day before the coming of the Lord there'll be increasing emphasis on a number of things; one, there'll be increasing emphasis on the marriage relationship with Jesus, that He loves us, that He desires us, on intimacy with Him. There's going to be an increasing emphasis on that.

Second, there'll be an increasing emphasis on the kingdom advancing through the earth and thirdly, there'll be an increasing emphasis on social justice and Christians need to be full of the Holy Ghost. So they didn't,

now look what happened; there came a cry at midnight. Midnight's the darkest hour - so they all slept and slumbered because He delayed and there's a tendency when the Lord's not come and we don't know that He's coming and we think it's a long way off or it's not going to happen soon - we tend to just sleep and slumber and not really notice what's going on. Finally there is a cry comes and there is definitely going to be a prophetic voice. It's already started speaking to the church; Jesus is the lover of your soul! Jesus is a coming bridegroom. Notice what the voice was - behold, He comes. Go out and meet Him. So three things; number one, Jesus is coming! He is coming! He will return! Two, He will return as a bridegroom, passionately in love with you. Three, go out and meet Him. Rise up and begin to engage personally in your personal life with God. Engage personally in intimacy with Him. Don't neglect that side of your life and think oh, somehow it all works out. It doesn't. It doesn't. There's just consequences and choices - and so let's have a look and it says - notice here that the five foolish virgins, they rose up and they said oh, give us some oil. Our lamp is going out. So what they're saying simply is this; we are not having impact with our life anymore. Our lamp is going out. One of the biggest concerns I have in my personal life is my lamp never go out. When your lamp is going out it means there's an absence of Holy Spirit presence around your life and activities. When the lamp is going there's a lack of fresh revelation from heaven, there's a lack of hearing the voice of God. When your lamp goes out you're having little or no effect in the community.

It is a great concern in my life that my light burn bright. It is a great concern to Jesus that His church, each one and corporately shine brightly, that there's passion, fire, life, a reality of something with God that overflows and we want to do things that represent Him and advance His kingdom - and so the five foolish virgins came to realise - and notice this - they were busy and they were doing lots of things, but they didn't realise until the cry came, He's coming, we're out of oil. I think it's very easy. Now just think about this; how many of you remember when once you were passionately on fire for Jesus? And now the fire is really dim. You've run out of oil. We need to do something about that. We need to re-engage in our life with Him and our love with Him. We need to see what's

coming in and repent and do the first works again, begin to be back excited.

I felt the Holy Ghost just so challenge me. I want you to be back, so excited about the things you first were excited about, stirring me to coming alive into a new dimension again. So they said we want to have what you have. Here's the thing that they said; no, you can't have it. Seems very selfish doesn't it, but here's what the deal is. You cannot transfer the intimacy and preparation of the heart one person has to another. I can share my light with you. I can light up your life. I can release anointing to you, but the one thing I cannot do is substitute or give to you what only you can do in your time with God. No one can do it for you, no one.

It's not a matter of how gifted you are. It's not a matter of what talents, education you have. It's not even a matter of how much money you have, it's not about whether you're a minister, everything - every believer is called to shine. Every believer is given the Holy Spirit. It's our decision what we do in building intimacy with Him. What a challenge.

They said no, you have to go and buy for yourself! You have to pay the personal price! Young people, it's great to come to a camp - let me tell it and put it real simple; you came into someone else's oil in life. Make it your own. Be determined. I want what I saw on those leaders. I want that fire of God! I want that life of the Holy Ghost! I want to burn passionately and make my life count for something! I want what they have - and you can't just get it from them, but you can learn from people how to build your devotional life. You can learn how to pray. You can learn how to pray, read the word of God, how to meditate in the word of God, how to gain insight to heaven from what God's word says. Everyone can do it! Even if you can't read - Janice, two hours a day in the night she will play an audio CD and the word comes into her because her reading's not so good, but that's not stopping her get the word of God. I understand she's already gone through the Bible a whole number of times, which would be more than many others. No education, very little reading skill and yet passion for God. That counts. It really counts.

So go and buy it for yourself - so guess what happens in it? So then finally it says while they went to buy it the bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with them to the wedding and then the door was shut and so you see, the bridegroom came. Those that were ready - there is a time coming Jesus will come. It's absolutely certain. Who knows when - but those who are ready, those who were prepared immediately arose and were able to enter in. What did they enter into? They entered into intimacy. They entered into an experience with God. They entered into the third heaven. They entered into a new realm with God. They entered into a totally different dimension that you have to qualify yourself for by intimacy with the Holy Ghost.

What about the five who were foolish? The five who were foolish went away. By the time they'd done what they needed to do to prepare and came back, He said the door is shut. That means that opportunity has ceased. Now I can't even begin to imagine what that must mean but for 2000 years there's been a door of opportunity open for people. I would hate to come and find the door shut because at the coming of the Lord I was not passionate, zealous and on fire for Him! Of all the things that would grieve and break my heart it would be that. I could suffer the loss of everything, but not that. That is your destiny. See, we talk about destiny and people think of it in terms of well I'll do a business or I'll do this or I'll do that. Listen, our destiny is far bigger than that. You are called to an eternal destiny of which your time on this earth is just your preparation and apprenticeship, see? The only reason people don't prepare is they don't know what's at stake. I urge you to read and find out what's at stake.
Can you imagine, since they came and they knocked and He said I didn't know you - now notice this; it doesn't say they weren't Christians. It doesn't say they were evil. It doesn't say they were bad people. It just said I don't know you, or in other words I have no intimacy with you. You're a Sunday Christian.

I have no intimacy with you. Day by day there's no connection and fellowship and sharing your heart and your pain and your struggles in your life. There's no opening your life to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, when I speak you don't hear. You actually just run your life just like

everyone else in the world, but with this thing that somehow you'll go to heaven. He said actually I don't really know that. That's not what I came to do. I came to talk about a coming kingdom and your part in it. I came to offer you a kingdom and a place in it, but you took it so lightly.
I'll share with you another parable shortly and you'll see all three aspects in the one parable of Jesus being the groom, the King and the judge and you'll see what is required for us.

So one thing that's required in this parable here, Jesus applies it very simply; He says watch. Watch - and watching's always connected with prayer - watching has to do with staying spiritually vibrant and alive and connected with what the Holy Spirit is saying. Watch and pray. How do I watch and pray? I've got to build a devotional life and be connected, not just with the Holy Spirit, with His body and with His people and let the life of God grow in me.

Prayer, meditating in the word, praying the word of God, repenting when little things come up, keeping a clear conscience before the Lord - it's not rocket science. It's what's called basics, keeping your relationship alive.

I'll just finish with this. Can you imagine - many of you have seen this. You've seen a wedding take place and you've been in here and seen the couple come up and oh, the beauty of it all and the emotion of it all. The intentions are all so good and how tragic some years later when you see that they're totally separated and living apart. Everyone in our heart knows this is not right and there are lots of reasons and all the kinds of things that come up, but in your heart you know love was meant to be forever. This is the same with our relationship with God. Our love is meant to be forever, to stay passionately in love with Him. What has got in the way? What is causing your light to flicker? What is draining out the oil of the Holy Spirit? What sorts of things?

You know the Bible tells us don't grieve the Holy Spirit and let your light begin to flicker. If you're angry with people and bitter with people, hold anger, unresolved issues in your heart, don't do that. Why? It'll stop the flow of oil, the flow of the Holy Spirit! Be passionate for the flow of the Holy Spirit in your life and do whatever you need to ensure it's there.

Let's just close our eyes. Father, we thank you for great promises of a great day. Oh, what a great day when our groom, when Jesus Christ Himself comes, when He gathers us up and takes us into a new dimension of intimacy and then influence, power and authority to change this world. What an immense privilege we have. Lord, today I pray that every one of us would become fired in the Holy Ghost, to have a fresh love for the spirit of God, a fresh yieldedness to the Holy Ghost, fresh devotional life and to carry with our life a bright and shining light that flows from inside.

Just while our eyes are closed, has God spoken to you today? How is your relationship with the Holy Ghost? How is your prayer life? Are you praying? Is there passion? Are you in the word and reading and God's speaking new things to you or are you living out of yesterday's experience? Are you receiving fresh insight from God because you stay hungry to learn? You see I realised it's not what's external that counts. It's am I still hungry in my pursuit for Jesus? Am I hungry in my pursuit for the Holy Spirit? Am I doing the things in my life to position myself for Him to flow through me and in me and my light shine brightly?

Has God spoken to you today about your devotional life, about attitudes of heart that are quenching your life? Would you raise your hand, so God's speaking to me today? I need to make some change - God bless, God bless, God bless, God bless - many hands going up. Father, we thank you. Father, I pray for great grace to come upon each person that responded to you today to change and to build a great and powerful life with you, that overflows with light into our community and everyone says ... Amen!

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