

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, November 12th, 2023, Pentecost XXIV
Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Psalm 78:1-7 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Matthew 25:1-13

The parable of the ten bridesmaids. We tend to think of this as a parable from the past, the time of Jesus, and not today, and that weddings would now start close to the time they were set for.

Two stories for when I was in Montreal. A wedding of a couple from the church to take place at another church. They lived on the south shore and would have to come across a bridge to get to the church and that can involve considerable delays. So, I suggested to the couple that we had a little time to play with but to make sure to get across the bridge at a reasonable time and not wait too long, as there was another event and group coming to use that church, and if we were too late the wedding would have to be delayed. The response was, it is our wedding, and we can be late if we want to. It was the groom who made the comment.

At a wedding anniversary celebration, and not a wedding, it was to take place at 5pm and I was asked to say an opening prayer. I was there a little before 5 and the couple showed up just after 6:30. The reason being, they wanted to make sure they were the last to arrive to make a grand entrance.

Which group of the bridesmaids do you identify with? Are you someone who always prepares and plans ahead, or are you prone to procrastination?
I can identify with both sides.

Also, there is a danger of not planning which can be a concern for other people. Imagine two of the bridesmaids discussing going to get oil before they go to the wedding banquet to wait for the groom. For some reason they have to go together. And they discuss when they are going to go. They one says, we could go before we pick up the dresses, or after, and before we get our hair done, or we will have time later because the groom will be late.

The second one then can be frustrated waiting for the first one to decide and be ready to get the oil. And may even decide to do something else instead of waiting.

So, it may not be just not being ready when God comes but affecting others as well. That being said, the theme of the return of the Lord is from the time of Jesus and a little later, but we don't think of this today, so it is not a worry for us today. But we don't know the day and time of our death.

Reginald Bibby, a Sociologist, has said that it is only after the age of 50 that people begin to look seriously at the issue of our own mortality. This may be one of the reasons why there are so few younger people in our churches.

But then the question comes to mind, are we just here to secure our place in heaven or is there something else going on which is why we are here?

The kingdom of God is not just about the then, the future beyond our life here on earth, but for the here and now.

With God's help, finding meaning in our lives. It is not easy, because the demands of life are so great that it is not easy to find time for ourselves to rest and reflect on life. Can church and spirituality be a place to stop and reflect and contemplate the meaning of our lives where we can feel a true connection to God and those around us?

Amen

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk with you on the road.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your hearts to love.

May you see the face of Christ in ev'ryone you meet,
And may ev'ryone you meet see the face of Christ in you. Amen.