

# The Parables of the Olivet Discourse

Life BPC

Adults Sunday School

27 July 2025

# Recap: Prelude to the Olivet Discourse

- The opposition of the Jewish religious leaders → leading to ...
- The parables of the 2 sons; the wicked husbandmen; the wedding feast ...
- Which teach: **God desires Repentance, Obedience, Faith, Loyalty;** but the religion of man teaches self-righteousness; leading to a certain judgment – “woe”
- Man-centred religion is characterized by hypocrisy, legalism, outward piety without inner repentance, preventing others from coming to Christ, exploitation of the poor and needy, turning others from the Gospel, dishonest oaths, majoring in the minors, Rejection of God’s message (and His messengers)

# Recap: Prophecy of the Olivet Discourse

- Christ is certainly coming
- His coming will be unmistakable
- There will be tribulation – but it will be shortened for the elect's sake
- There will be persecution of believers
- There will be false Christs and false prophets
- The gospel will be preached
- Only the Father knows the exact timing of this
- Our duty is to watch (be vigilant)



# Aim

What are the parables?

What are the themes of the these parables?

How do they apply to us?

---

## Key words

“The kingdom of heaven is like ...”

“Watch”

“When the Son of man shall come”

# Concluding statement of the prophetic segment of the Olivet discourse:

- <sup>36</sup> But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Matthew 24:36
- <sup>42</sup> Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. <sup>44</sup> Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:42-44
- <sup>33</sup> Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. <sup>34</sup> For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. <sup>35</sup> Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: <sup>36</sup> Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mark 13:33-37
- <sup>36</sup> Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Luke 21:36

# The situation for believers:

- <sup>9</sup> Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because iniquity (lawlessness) shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. <sup>13</sup> **But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** Matthew 24:9-13
- <sup>9</sup> But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. <sup>10</sup> And the gospel must first be published among all nations. <sup>11</sup> But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. <sup>12</sup> Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. <sup>13</sup> And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: **but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** Mark 13:9-13
- <sup>12</sup> But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. <sup>13</sup> And it shall turn to you for a testimony. <sup>14</sup> Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: <sup>15</sup> For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. <sup>16</sup> And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. <sup>17</sup> And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup> **But there shall not an hair of your head perish.** <sup>19</sup> In your patience possess ye your souls. Luke 21:12-19

# Persecution for believers a repeated message ... BUT ...

- <sup>33</sup> These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Jn 16:33
- <sup>12</sup> Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2Ti 3:12
- <sup>10</sup> And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. 1Th 1:10

# The Parables of the Olivet Discourse

# Parable 1: Faithful vs evil servants

- <sup>45</sup> Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?  
<sup>46</sup> Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> But and if that **evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;** <sup>49</sup> And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; <sup>50</sup> The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> And shall **cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites:** there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 24:45-51

# Parable 2: The wise and foolish virgins

<sup>1</sup> Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> And five of them were **wise**, and five were **foolish**. <sup>3</sup> They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: <sup>4</sup> But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. <sup>6</sup> And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. <sup>9</sup> But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, **Lord, open to us**. <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, **I know you not**. <sup>13</sup> **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.** Matthew 25:1-13

# Parable 3: The Talents

<sup>14</sup> For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. <sup>15</sup> And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. <sup>16</sup> Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. <sup>17</sup> And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. <sup>18</sup> But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. <sup>20</sup> And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. <sup>21</sup> -- His lord said unto him, **Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.** <sup>22</sup> -- He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. <sup>23</sup> His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

# Parable 3: The Talents

<sup>24</sup> Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. <sup>26</sup> -- His lord answered and said unto him, **Thou wicked and slothful servant**, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: <sup>27</sup> Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. <sup>28</sup> Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. <sup>30</sup> And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 25:14-30

# Parable 4: The sheep and goats

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup> And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup> And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Matthew 25:31-33

# Parable 4: The sheep and goats

- <sup>34</sup> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:** <sup>35</sup> For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: <sup>36</sup> Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. <sup>37</sup> Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? <sup>38</sup> -- When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? <sup>39</sup> -- Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? <sup>40</sup> And the King shall answer and say unto them, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.** Matthew 25:34-40

# Parable 4: The sheep and goats

<sup>41</sup> Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

<sup>42</sup> For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. <sup>44</sup>

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? <sup>45</sup> Then shall he answer them, saying,

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. <sup>46</sup> And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Matthew 25:41-46

# What are the parables teaching?

	<b>Virgins</b>	<b>Talents</b>	<b>Shepherd</b>
<b>Judgment is certain</b>	<b>Arrival of bridegroom</b>	<b>Reckoning of service</b>	<b>Separation of sheep from goats</b>
<p><sup>11</sup> ...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11</p> <p><sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: Hebrews 9:27</p>			
<b>The verdict is certain</b>	<b>Entry vs exclusion from the wedding</b>	<b>“Well done” vs “outer darkness”</b>	<b>Life eternal vs everlasting fire</b>
<b>All aware of requirement and consequences</b>	<b>No lamp, no entry</b>	<b>Servants must serve /obey</b>	-
<p><sup>20</sup> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: <sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:20-21</p>			

# What are the parables teaching?

	<b>Virgins</b>	<b>Talents</b>	<b>Shepherd</b>
<b>Appearances are deceptive</b>	<b>What is inside matters (oil = Spirit, saving grace)</b>	<b>What matters is obedience from the heart</b>	<b>What matters is love for others</b>
<b>Grace</b>	<b>... is not transferrable</b>	<b>... cannot be taken for granted</b>	<b>There is no second chance after death</b>
<b>Absence of saving grace → false assurance</b>	<b>Taking for granted the need for oil</b>	<b>Attributing unrighteousness to the Master</b>	<b>Assuming that works save</b>
<b>Evidences of saving grace</b>	<b>Relationship to self (inward repentance vs outward respectability)</b>	<b>Relationship to God (self vs God)</b>	<b>Relationship to fellow man (self vs others)</b>

# Do these parables teach a “works-based” salvation?

Similar challenge arises when reading the gospels e.g. Matt 5

# Can anyone consistently do the “right thing” without (true) salvation

- <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26
- <sup>44</sup> **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.** John 6:44
- <sup>4</sup> **But God, who is rich in mercy,** for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (**by grace ye are saved;**) <sup>6</sup> And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: <sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> **Not of works,** lest any man should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:4-10
- <sup>3</sup> Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Corinthians 12:3
- <sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:9

# “Sign of” vs “requirement for”

- The kingdom is an inheritance ...
- <sup>34</sup> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:  
Matthew 25:34
  - <sup>3</sup> Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3

So what is it to “watch”

# So what does it mean to “watch” (be vigilant)?

- Evil servant
  - Be serious about Christ’s return
  - Continue to do our Master’s bidding and not our own pleasure – for judgment will come
- The foolish virgins
  - Professing is not the same as possessing (Christians vs false believers)
  - Be filled with the Spirit – be REAL about your salvation
  - Salvation cannot be shared – so share the Gospel fervently
- The Talents
  - Have the right attitude towards God
  - To love /know /fear Him = being faithful in using what God has given you
- The Shepherd, sheep and goats
  - Loving and serving others (2<sup>nd</sup> greatest commandment) is a major sign of having received the grace of God

# What's the purpose of “watching” if salvation is certain?

- <sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:1-2
- <sup>7</sup> Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7
- <sup>12</sup> Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>13</sup> For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

Watching assures us that we are  
in Christ.