



Week 9

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

The Parable of the Ten Maidens



Read Matthew 25:1-13

This is the ninth and penultimate study in the series on The Kingdom of God. Time and time again Jesus told parables revealing something of what the Kingdom of God is like. And we need to know as much as we can about God's Kingdom because that is our home, it is where we belong, where our citizenship lies. And we need to know how to live as Kingdom people in a world with very different values and emphases. Each parable gives us another piece of the jigsaw and week by week the picture is building. This week we have one of the Crisis Parables, so called because it deals with the second coming of Christ.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. Take some time to think about the different pictures and multi-faceted symbolism that we have looked at from Jesus' parables that begin with the phrase, 'The Kingdom of God is like.' They are like different pieces of a jigsaw that make up a picture. We do not have all the pieces but we can see enough. What difference has this study made to you and how you view the Kingdom of God?
2. This parable is known as one of the Crisis Parables. The other Crisis Parables are the parables of the Thief in the Night (Matthew 24:42-44), the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (Matthew 24:42-51) and the Waiting Servant (Luke 12:35-48). Have a look at each one (including the Ten Maidens) and look for the similarity of message. What is the main emphasis in each of these parables? What do they teach us about what the Kingdom of God is like?
3. Read Matthew 24:1-35. What is your interpretation of the signs of the times? About his Second Coming, Jesus said, '*No-one knows that day or hour*' (Matthew 24:36). We do not know the day or the hour (verse 13). What we are told is that it will be '*when we do not expect him*' (Matthew 24:44). John Wesley was asked that if he knew the Lord was returning today what would he do differently. He replied, 'I would carry on just the same'. How would you feel if he returned tonight? Are you ready to meet him? What would you need to do or to change in your life or would you carry on just the same because you are living fully for him?
4. The Christians of Thessalonika thought the Second Coming of Jesus and the end of the age was going to happen straight away so they just sat around doing nothing waiting for his imminent return. On one hand Paul wanted to praise their faith (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10) and on the other, to admonish them for their idleness (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13). How can we live a life pleasing to God (see 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Hebrews 11:6; Colossians 1:10-12; 1 John 3:21-24).
5. The silly girls in the story were not ready when the bridegroom came and were shut out of the party. How can we get ready for the Lord's return? How can we prepare for it when we do not know when it will be? See 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7, 5:1-11; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 7:29-35.

'Jesus says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.'

(Revelation 22:20)