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Bible-Printables

Spend a little time studying the picture then, if you would like to, colour it in making it as muted or vibrant as you wish.

Is God speaking to you through the words below and the picture?

## BIBLE READING: Matthew 25: 1-13

God's kingdom is like ten young virgins who took oil lamps and went out to greet the bridegroom. Five were silly and five were smart. The silly virgins took lamps, but no extra oil. The smart virgins took jars of oil to feed their lamps. The bridegroom didn't show up when they expected him, and they all fell asleep.

In the middle of the night someone yelled out, 'He's here! The bridegroom's here! Go out and greet him!'

The ten virgins got up and got their lamps ready. The silly virgins said to the smart ones, 'Our lamps are going out; lend us some of your oil.'

They answered, 'There might not be enough to go around; go buy your own.'

They did, but while they were out buying oil, the bridegroom arrived. When everyone who was there to greet him had gone into the wedding feast, the door was locked.

Much later, the other virgins, the silly ones, showed up and knocked on the door, saying, 'Master, we're here. Let us in.'

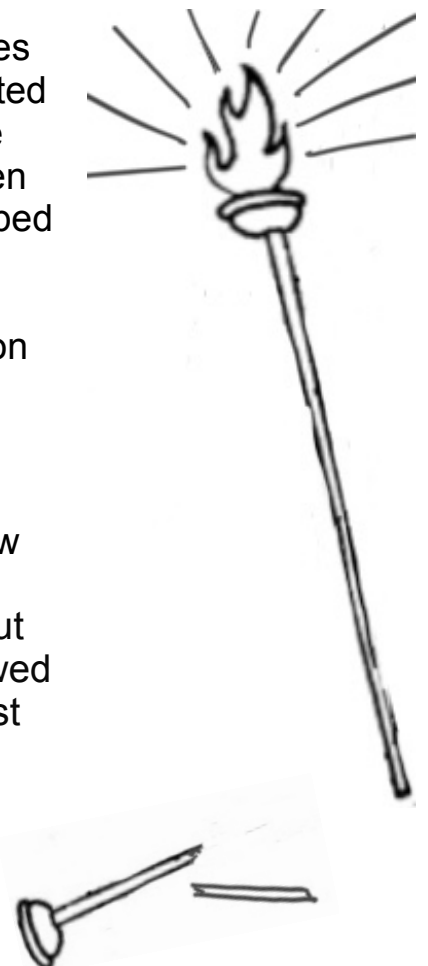
He answered, 'Do I know you? I don't think I know you.'

So stay alert. You have no idea when he might arrive.

In this story Jesus is answering his Disciples' questions of how and when the 'end of the age and his coming again' will happen. He is speaking of our need to be prepared. He uses the example of a village wedding, the virgins had been invited to the feast then would escort the bridegroom and his bride home in a torch-light ceremony. The lamps would have been oil-soaked rags on a stick that constantly needed to be dipped in the oil. The bridegroom was delayed and the girls fell asleep. One group awoke and were ready the other five floundered. Jesus contrasts careful and watchful preparation and a careless sense of security which would lead to exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus is telling us we need to be spiritually ready. The oil represents our commitment to answer his invitation to follow him - a commitment to grow closer and closer to him. Ten young women responded to the groom's invitation, but five of them didn't make themselves ready, they just showed up and expected it to be fine. Jesus tells us 'you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him' (Matthew 24:44). No one can do it for us, we must make a personal decision to follow Christ. Then our relationship with God is something that needs to be constantly worked on.

A day will come when it will be too late.



For five virgins the light shone. For five it was extinguished, the relationship with the groom was lost. Jesus referred to himself as the bridegroom (Mark 2:19), his followers, the Church, is the bride. He is also the 'light of the world',

The Bible make many references to 'light' from Genesis through to Revelations. On the first day of creation God brought light into the world and in the new earth the Lord God is the light. As his followers we are called to shine too.

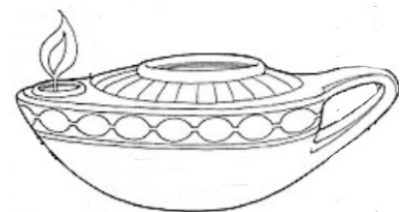
Below are six of these references. Read through them. Then try reading each one carefully, prayerfully and think about what each says or means to you. Then you might like to ask yourself: 'Does God's light shine in me? Do others see it?'

Genesis 1:3 "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light."

Psalms 138:1 "You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light."

Isaiah 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Matthew 5:16 "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."



John 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Revelation 21:23,24a "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. By its light will the nations walk..."

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father,

With you there is no darkness. But sometimes the world feels such a dark place. Bring your light and healing presence into my life and the life of all those I love and those for whom I pray. Help me always walk in your light and so become a light to the world. So that more and more people in the world can see and join together in singing those words:

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me

Amen

Bible on Pictured is produced by the Revd. Janet Parker, in the Diocese of Ely, to help by being a Ministerial Presence in challenging times.

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