

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

## **Parable of the Talents and Stewardship: The 10 Virgins**

Matthew 25:1-13

Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

### **SERMON SYNOPSIS**

- The parable of the 10 Virgins draws from the biblical tradition of contrasting the wise and the foolish (for example, Proverbs 9:1, 13-14). In this parable, what made five of the virgins wise is that they were prepared for the bridegroom's coming.
- The bridegroom in the parable refers to Jesus, who will return to our world as promised many times in the Bible (Matthew 9:15, 22:2-3, 24:30, John 14:3, 1 Peter 5:4). When this happens, Jesus and His Bride – that is, all of us who have been cleansed and clothed in righteousness, the Church – we will finally be with our Lord & King for all eternity. (Revelation 19:6-9).
- Despite the certainty of Jesus second and final coming, some people choose to live life as they please, especially when He seems to be taking a long time to return (2 Peter 3:3-4). However, the reason Jesus seems to be taking a long time is not that He is slow to keep His promise. Rather, our Lord is patient and is giving time for all people to repent and believe in Him (2 Peter 3:8-9).
- The foolish virgins represent those in church who go through the motions of Christian living without having a real faith in Jesus, just like the virgins trimming their lamps though they did not have enough oil as they took no care of what was inside as their lamps were empty. Some try to find faith at the very last moment. However, none of these things will work as faith cannot be borrowed and it is impossible to have instant end-time obedience and end-time instant faith. And to these people, Jesus says, "I do not know you." (Matthew 25:6-13).
- To be prepared for Jesus' final return, we need to build our faith in God right now. This means deepening our discipleship through regular prayer and Bible study, small groups, serving in ministry, and so on *to know* Him, *love* Him and *trust* Him, and *to be filled* with the oil of faith and joy and hope. We need to constantly ask ourselves, "How well do I know Jesus?" and "Does Jesus know me?"

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **RELATE**

1. If Jesus came back today, what would that mean for you? What would it mean for your friends and family members?

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**REFLECT**

2. What are some specific ways we can be watchful and ready for Jesus' return?

[Verses to help us go deeper: Mark 13:33-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15]

**RESPOND**

3. Think about one or two things you could do to grow more in your faith *to know* Jesus, *love* Him and *trust* Him. In the next week, set aside time on at least two days to do those things. At the next meeting, share with the group what difference it has made to your loving, trusting and knowing Jesus before this.

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Praise God for His faithfulness to His promise to return, and His patience with those who do not believe in Him yet.
- Ask God to convict each one in TPMC to seek to live each day ready for Jesus' return and to give us patience, perseverance and alertness to do so.
- Thank God for giving us everything to live a godly life and sustaining all of us His children – in TPMC & the global Church of Jesus Christ – so that we will be prepared for Jesus' final coming (2 Peter 1:3-4).

**SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON**

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." [Matthew 25:13]

**UPCOMING COURSES & EVENTS**

Refer to TPMC's website or Sunday Bulletin for the details regarding:

- Donation to Project Tribute
- S.H.A.P.E. Course
- Step Up Course
- Step Up Retreat