

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Walk As Children Of Light

This is the eleventh in a series of sermons through the book of Ephesians, and today we will be covering 5:3-14. Let us regroup ourselves and recall that the whole creation has to do with our Lord Jesus Christ: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Col. 1:16-17). Our lives are not meaningless and aimless things. We are inexorably hurtling toward a certain end that looks like this: “In the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Eph. 1:10). As part of that gathering together in one all things in Christ, God the Father has determined to set apart a people to give to His Son. They are chosen in Christ, blessed, predestinated, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, given an inheritance, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That is where we fit in the grand scheme of things. We are not chosen so we can live however we want to live. We are chosen “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” (Eph. 1:4). We are chosen so that in the fulness of time, we would be shown to be “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10). We are chosen so that “he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Tit. 2:14). Jesus didn’t just die to forgive your sins – He died to make you holy; to bring you into the presence of God! Thus, in this book of Ephesians, having laid out God’s gracious plan of saving us who were once dead in trespasses and sins, giving us life and uniting us to Christ and joining us together in one body in Christ, to the praise of His glory, Paul proceeds to show us what type of holy life we ought to therefore be living. The overarching topic has been “walk[ing] worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1), and today, we will continue with more specific examples of what that looks like, this time in the realm of sexual misconduct, covetousness and improper speech.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but

rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Ephesians 5:3-14)

The passage starts with the word “but” which adds a contrast to the previous passage, which ended like this: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” (Eph. 5:1-2). We can learn a few things from this conjunction “but.” First, Christ giving Himself for us does not give us the right to sin! Second, no matter how many ways the world wants to redefine the word “love,” fornication is not love. Third, while it is wonderful to bask in the glory of Christ’s love for us, it’s also necessary to face the reality of our lives. We are at war! Our lives are full of temptation, sin, affliction, suffering, sorrow, etc. Remember that these words were written to the church and not to the world – and that is because the church needs to hear these warnings. We’re in enemy territory and must be on guard. This passage is warning the children of God to not be involved in these sins, with the implication that saints can and do fall into these sins and need to be warned about them. The warnings themselves, in fact, are one of the ways that God sanctifies us.

Don’t Join The Children Of Disobedience

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. (Ephesians 5:3-7)

Some sins ought never to be named among the saints. That is, they ought never to be spoken of approvingly, casually, glibly, lightly. They should never be spoken of in a way that would minimize or trivialize their sinful character. There should be no hint that these sins are going on in the church. Not a whiff. Not a suspicion. Not a rumor. Not anything that would give people outside of the church a cause to blaspheme God by saying that His church tolerates these sins. The standard here is not “we really need to try to keep these things to a minimum. Maybe we can follow the 80/20 rule.” No! Not once named! How these sins are dealt with is one of the key things that separates true churches from phony churches. As a matter of policy, phony churches will either say that these things aren’t sins at all, or they treat them like suggestions that you’re free to take or leave, or they come out very strongly in word about

how sinful these things are, but then they leave it to the honor system – there's no accountability. Whatever those places claim to be, they're not churches. You should thank God for what we have in this church, and please don't despise it.

Now, let's spend a few minutes going over the sins themselves. Between fornication (Greek: *porneia*) and uncleanness, we cover the whole spectrum of sinful sexual behavior. That is, anything outside of one man, one woman, for one lifetime. Think of fornication as engaging in the act, and uncleanness as anything that could reasonably lead to the act (pornography, what you read, what you look at, immodest dress, flirtation, a wandering eye, a lustful look, suggestive speech, inordinate emotional attachment, etc.). Fornication generally comes at the end of a process of uncleanness – you don't just go out and fornicate one day.

Covetousness is a greedy, avaricious pursuit after something; a sinful lusting after something that is outside of God's design. The immediate context is to chase after some sinful sexual thing. In fact, this is the root of uncleanness and fornication – you want something and then you start taking steps to get it. But it goes beyond that, and would include any covetousness (money, prestige, power). Covetousness will always be found holding hands with entitlement and discontentment. And it will absolutely destroy you – it will eat you from the inside out. If you're always agitated to change something, never content, always leaving Christ to try to find satisfaction somewhere else, always throwing a pity party for yourself because of your terrible lot in life, etc., you are neck deep in this sin. And the passage identifies covetousness as idolatry. Why? Because it's the thing that consumes your mind; it's the thing that you live for; it's the thing that you dream about; it's the thing that defines you. If the "it" is anything other than God, it's an idol. You might be inclined to downplay the sin of covetousness but equating it with idolatry ought to show you how terrible it is. The prohibition of idolatry is absolutely central in the Bible – it is the thing that arouses God's jealousy. Now let me be clear – it's not necessarily a sin to want something. If you are unmarried and you want to be married, it's not a sin. If you want to find a better job, it's not a sin. Those desires are normal and common. But it becomes a sin when you become angry and discontent with your current lot, turn the thing that you want into your personal idol, lose faith in God, and start trying to force things to happen. Like you commit fornication because you want to force a marriage or have a baby. Or you sabotage your job so you'll get fired so you can get a new job. Do you remember Abraham and Hagar? We are still facing the fallout from that. The proper thing to do is submit to God's will in the matter, including His timeline. And if you struggle with that concept, please talk to someone in the church about it, as we all have experience with it.

Filthiness, foolish talking (Greek: *moros*) and jesting all seem to be talking about speech, and this is the only place in scripture where these sins are addressed. This may shed some light on what it means for the previous sins to not once be named – that is, don't name them in this

way. Filthiness is any obscenity, and may go beyond speech to include non-verbal gestures and things like that. Foolish talking is the type of talk you'd expect to hear out of a drunk or a moron. Jestings is coarse or ribald joking, like dirty jokes or double-entendres – “fools make a mock at sin.” (Pro. 14:9). These are all general definitions, but here's a good rule – if the Lord Jesus Christ was standing in front of you, would you be ashamed to say it? Are you saying something that He'd say? Remember, this is all in the context of following (i.e., imitating) God. Now, historically, we haven't done a good job in treating these sins with the gravity that they deserve. We've tended to dismiss people who call us out as being self-righteous, having a form of godliness, being a Goody Two-Shoes, etc. Maybe they are those things, maybe they aren't, but that's not the real reason you're dismissing them – you're dismissing them because you've run up against a standard of holiness that you don't want to submit to. But speech is very important. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Mt. 12:37). This type of speech can cause incalculable damage – you tell some obscene joke, for example, and it lives in the hearts of the people who hear it for decades. It spreads like a disease. It only took you a few seconds to say, but it will likely even outlive you.

So, this group of sins is a small list, but it covers a very broad swath of behavior. Everything from speech to thought to action. In fact, if you go in reverse order, first you talk about it, then you covet it, then you pursue uncleanness, and then you fornicate. By the time you get to the end of the list, everyone is convicted. But why these sins? Just like ancient Ephesus, these sins are prevalent in society. We're immersed in it. We're bombarded with it. We start to become numb to it. And it seeps into the church. Perhaps you've been chasing some of these things because you think they will fill some void in your life that you've convinced yourself that you have. You've been listening to the world's wisdom. Let me warn you to stop that – you will never be satisfied outside of Christ. Any other path is perilous and deadly. Or perhaps you are looking at this list with despair, thinking that you are lost and without hope. I have good news for you from Christ: “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Mt. 9:12-13). You are just the kind of person Jesus came to save. Or perhaps you're looking at these sins and breathing a sigh of relief because you don't think you've ever committed any of these sins. You think you're safe. That is a dangerous place to be. Remember what happened to David with Bathsheba. (I'm not only talking to the young people. David's sin with Bathsheba was when he was 50ish. Abraham's sin with Hagar happened in his mid-80s). Robert Murray M'Cheyne: *“I am tempted to think that there are some sins for which I have no natural taste, such as strong drink, profane language, etc., so that I need not fear temptation to such sins. This is a lie - a proud, presumptuous lie. The seeds of all sins are in my heart, and perhaps all the more dangerously that I do not see them.”* Or perhaps you've excused yourself, because you're a special case. We are all expert at finding sin in others while rationalizing it in ourselves – if it's me, there's

always a good excuse or explanation. It's an outrage to go preach repentance to the world, for example, and then go home and engage in all manner of uncleanness, day after day, year after year. Or worse, to be noisily incensed and indignant at someone else in the church, while you're doing the same thing in the dark. What hypocrisy!

The solution to all this, and the place where you will find safety, is here: "but rather giving of thanks." To be thankful may seem to be a strange contrast to this list of sins, but thanksgiving will keep you from them. Be thankful, from the heart, that you have been given new life and you have an inheritance. Be thankful for your lot that God has wisely ordained. Can you imagine a man who is thankful in his marriage committing adultery? Can you imagine a person who has thanksgiving on their lips speaking filthiness?

In this section, he gives a couple reasons for why we ought not to engage in these sins:

1. It is not becoming for saints. Verse 3 says that fornication, uncleanness and covetousness should not once be named among us "as **becometh** saints" and verse 4 says that filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting "are not **convenient**." They are different words, but they are very similar in meaning – it means it's not fit or appropriate for saints to engage in these sins. It is because of who we are that it is unbecoming. God has set us apart to be holy, so it is unbecoming to live unholy lives. He didn't say "don't fornicate because you might end up with an unexpected baby, or you might get a disease, or you might make your mom cry, or you might get caught and exposed and it would be really embarrassing for you." He said, "don't do it because you're saints!"
2. People who live that way go to hell, and don't let anyone tell you differently! People who persist in these sins don't go to heaven. Period. This does not mean that a person who has ever engaged in these sins or has fought against these sins is permanently barred from heaven. A saved person cannot lose his salvation, but a person who persists in, enjoys, and pursues these sins demonstrates that he was never saved in the first place. This is a terrifying warning! He starts it off by saying "for this ye know," meaning that this is self-evident. It's beyond dispute. It's universally known. But he's going to tell you anyway. (Note: Don't be the kind of person who gets angry when someone tells you something you already know. This is God's way of sanctification – constant reminder). People who impenitently live this way do not have an inheritance in the kingdom now, and they never will have an inheritance. The wrath of God is revealed against them now in so many ways (earth judgments, emotional and mental turmoil, broken bodies), and it will come on them in all its fury later (Rom. 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10). So, don't listen to the vain talkers in the world who tell you "love is love" or "it's very natural to do this kind of thing" or "it's ok if you're consenting adults" or "as long as you're happy, that's all that matters." Don't listen to the vain talkers in the churches who tell you "Jesus already paid for all your sins – you don't have to obey" or

“God is far too loving and merciful to punish you. He’s so full of grace...these sins aren’t that big of a deal.” Don’t be deceived. If you weren’t liable to be deceived, Paul wouldn’t be warning you here to not be deceived.

Verse 7 is the conclusion of this section and is really the hinge of today’s whole passage: “be ye not therefore partakers with them.” Be careful who you keep company with. To partake brings a reproach on Christ, destroys lives, destroys testimonies, destroys reputations, destroys credibility, destroys integrity, destroys churches. We can still live among them, work with them, go to school with them, etc., but don’t partake with these children of disobedience in their sins. Even just a little bit: “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.” (Ecc. 10:1). What we ought to be partaking in is the promise of God in Christ (Eph. 3:6); not in the sins of the children of disobedience. If you make that fateful choice to be a partaker with them in their sins, you will also be a partaker in their punishment.

Light vs. Darkness

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Ephesians 5:8-14)

Here we are afforded another reason why we ought to not be partakers with the children of disobedience in their sins – it is because we have been changed from darkness to light, so we should live that way! “For ye were sometimes darkness.” Not just a few shady areas here and there. But darkness itself. Utter darkness, gross darkness, within and without. Not a ray of light. You didn’t just live in darkness – you WERE darkness. You didn’t just stray off the path a little bit – your fundamental, core nature was darkness. By all appearances, you were a person going to hell. If you look back on yourself and see anything other than the blackest darkness, you have a very skewed vision of yourself. Don’t be arrogant – remember your former nature! Certain types of people spend a lot of time with contemptuous thoughts and speech about how evil everyone else is, so don’t forget that “ye were sometimes darkness.”

But God is very gracious to us. You were darkness “...but now are ye light in the Lord.” These metaphors of darkness and light appear all throughout the scripture. Darkness (death, evil, sin, ignorance, secrecy, inability, lies, blindness) vs. light (life, salvation, knowledge, clarity,

understanding, purity, manifestation, happiness, truth, goodness, righteousness). There was a time when you heard Jesus talking to you: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12). You have gone from being darkness to being light – there’s a sharp line of demarcation between the two. You don’t just reflect light; you ARE light. But it is light “in the Lord.” We are back to the doctrine of union with Christ. He is the light of the world, so you are the light of the world. By virtue of being in the Lord, you share in His light. You don’t have any light on your own. The light is part of you and in you because Christ lives in you. It’s all by being joined to Christ. This is your new nature. And it’s there not because you “allowed” it to happen, but because “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6).

A core thing to understand about the nature of God is that God is light (1 Jn. 1:5), and now you are children of light. Because you are children of light, you should be walking as children of light. But what does that mean? The first thing is that the fruit of the Spirit is associated with it. The indwelling Spirit produces fruit – it is the result of your new nature as children of light. The image is of a fruit tree, and a fruit tree’s whole business in life is to produce fruit. The fruit will all be of the same type, but there will be many different sizes and other variations, and there will be different levels of maturity because fruit does not ripen overnight but instead grows slowly and steadily. And you can’t force the fruit – it must grow organically and naturally. Paul gives us a list over in Galatians 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” If you don’t find those things in your life, that’s a problem; you’re not walking as a child of light. The fruit is described as having all the shades and nuances of the following three characteristics. 1. **Goodness** – benevolent, unselfish, interested in the good of others, not malicious. 2. **Righteousness** – in accordance with God’s plumbline, obedience to God’s law, integrity in dealing with men. 3. **Truth** – openness, no hint of deceit or hypocrisy.

Walking as children of light also involves “proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” To “prove” means that you test, try, evaluate, discern, scrutinize. Your interest is in measuring everything you do against the standards of God. “What does God think about this? What does God say about this? Is this pleasing to God?” We’re not interested in fruit for the sake of fruit – we’re interested in fruit because this is what is acceptable in God’s eyes. How do we know what is acceptable to God? Read the Bible! Look at the Lord Jesus Christ! Any heathen can live an outwardly commendable life – we know lots of them and might describe them as relatively good and decent people. We work with them. We go to school with them. We end up in social situations with them. We like them. But they’re going straight to hell when they die, so long as they continue to not be concerned about proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. They might be doing all the right things, but for all the wrong reasons.

What else is involved in walking as children of light? We must “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” The works of darkness (i.e., the works of the children of disobedience) are unfruitful – they are worthless to body and soul. They are barren. They do absolutely nothing of benefit, and on the contrary, will only cause harm. We are to have no fellowship with them. In your lives, you’ll have to face them on a regular basis as you go out into the world, but make it very clear that you’re going to have nothing to do with them, these unfruitful works of darkness. Don’t assist, commend, advise, joke about, schmooze, minimize, or in any way make people think that you support them in their sins. On the contrary, it’s a shame to even speak of what they do in secret, so we’re required to reprove them. I believe his argument is that if it’s shameful to speak of these sins, how much more shameful is it to actually engage in these sins? These are things that must be reproved. This word “shame” is from the same root word as “filthiness” back in verse 4. You have to say something about these sins in order to reprove them, but that doesn’t mean you have to get down into the filthy details of what is done in secret. In fact, these sins ought not to even be spoken of outside of the context of reproof, and certainly never in an approving, light, or joking way.

So, let’s spend a few minutes talking about reproof. The word means “to convict, refute, confute.” In the context, it’s talking about shining a light and revealing the true nature of something. It is to convict a person that these “unfruitful works of darkness...which are done of them in secret” (where they think God doesn’t see them) are deadly sins – sins that leave them with no inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ and subject them to the awful wrath of God that comes upon the children of disobedience. Now, this does not give you the right to peacock onto the scene and say, “I’m here to show you losers what good looks like.” It does not give you the right to vent your spleen about how disgusted you are. That’s easy to do. What’s hard to do is to look past your contempt and realize you’re talking to a person with an eternal soul who is not right with God, and that is the thing that needs to be fixed. That’s one of the reasons he started this whole section with “ye were sometimes darkness.” Don’t forget what you were! You have to be in the right frame of mind to reprove someone properly – humility, a deep sense that you’ve been forgiven, being intimately acquainted with the mercy and grace of God. If this isn’t your frame of mind, you just need to sit down and be quiet. When David sinned, here’s what he said: “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” (Psalm 51:12-13). Does that describe your heart? The goal of reproof is not to expose sin just for the sake of exposing sin, but this is the goal: “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” If all you do is expose sin, you’re like the doctor who gives the diagnosis but doesn’t tell how to treat the disease. The ones being reproved will either remain darkness because they love darkness, or they will arise and become light in the Lord, and that by the sovereign decree of God.

Now, reproof can take many forms. All you have to do is look at the Lord Jesus Christ to see that (remember the context of this part of Ephesians includes following, or imitating, God). It could be a severe rebuke. It could be a warning. It could be gentle reasoning. But it doesn't even need to be a direct verbal reproof. The way you live your life is a reproof. In fact, that is the primary focus of this passage. Don't underestimate how powerful your behavior is as you interact with people outside of the church. People know who you are. They know what you profess to believe. They see how you live, and that in itself shines a bright light. When your life is put up against the life of someone living in darkness, it can be very convicting. This is why it is so damaging when you are not living consistently with how a child of light ought to be living. You can't claim to be a child of light if you're not shining light. Light shines. Light exposes. Light makes manifest. Light reveals truth. Light has a purifying, illuminating effect on everything around it. Light produces fruit. Light stands in stark contrast to darkness. Your life must be consistent with what you say you believe – a person can say all the right things, but you know you're dealing with a false prophet when their life doesn't match up.

I'd like to conclude with just a few words about the last verse: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (v. 14). Nobody really knows what Paul is referring to when he says, "wherefore he saith." There is no passage in the Old Testament that says this. Some people think he pulled this from an early hymn that was used during baptisms. Maybe. The most plausible explanation to me is that he's conglomerating multiple Old Testament passages and giving a general sense. For example:

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined... Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead... Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out... Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
(Isaiah 9:2, 26:19, 51:17, 60:1-3)

This verse can apply to people who are in the church. Sometimes people backslide. They stray off the path into the dark. They partake in these deeds for a season. They grow slothful and lackadaisical in their service to God. Wake up! Arise! You're supposed to be living as a child of light, and Christ promises that He will give you light. But while you remain in that backslidden state, don't expect Christ to shine on you. More broadly in the church, I think

there is also a forward-looking aspect –an allusion to the final resurrection. It is meant as an encouragement for us. The light of Christ will come to full radiance when we obtain our new bodies. We have it now in some measure to guide and sustain us, but will have it in full measure then. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18).

The verse can also apply to people outside of the church. And this is where we can run into a little bit of trouble if we start getting too smart for our breeches. Someone may say, “Well, you can’t say that to people. It’ll make them think they have free will. That’s the kind of stuff that phony Christians say.” If you’ve reached a point where you’re afraid to say something that the Holy Ghost has said in the way that the Holy Ghost has said it, you’re in a pretty bad place. Your way is not better than His way. There is no more “free will” involved here than when Jesus commanded the dead man Lazarus to “come forth!” Don’t you understand that it’s the preaching itself that has the power to raise the dead, if it comes in the power of the Holy Ghost? “The gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Rom. 1:16). “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” (1 Thess. 1:5). “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:18,21). This verse isn’t just a command where God tells people what their duty is – it’s the very means by which God calls a dead person to live. Wake up! Arise from the dead! And Christ will give you light. Each person in the church can testify that at some time, Christ called you from the dead, you arose, and now you enjoy and live in His light. So, don’t partake in those unfruitful works of darkness along with the children of disobedience. Instead, walk as children of light. Lord willing, next time I’d like to cover verses 15-21.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:1-13)