



SERMON GROUP LINK

BRADY HERBERT | "PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS"

Harris Creek Baptist Church

July 27, 2014

LIFE GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

In preparation for group discussion, take a few minutes to read through the instructions to the right.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

SERMON TEXT:

Matthew 25:1-13

BEFORE LIFE GROUP

1. Spend time in prayer and studying the passage.
2. Listen to the sermon and take notes. Write down questions you had while listening to the sermon.
3. Read through all of the material.
4. Write down two or three ways to apply the passage to your daily life.

DURING LIFE GROUP

1. Summarize the sermon in your own words. Ask other group members to do the same.
2. Ask someone to read the text for the group.
3. Lead your group through the discussion questions, asking the ones that are relevant to your group. Supplement some of the discussion with your own thoughts and follow-up questions.
4. Share how you might be able to apply the sermon to your everyday life.
5. Close with a time of prayer, asking God to increase the depth of our relationship with Him and our obedience to what we learned.

SERMON RECAP

The parables of Jesus are stories Jesus used from everyday life to explain abstract spiritual truths and ideas. The truths Jesus proclaims in these parables are timeless truths; however, the stories are also rooted in a particular time, culture, and context. Often times, this means the reader must become a student of Jesus' culture in order to understand the timeless truths he is communicating. This is particularly the case in "The Parable of the Ten Virgins" in Matthew 25. There are even a few wedding customs Jesus casually mentions in this parable that we know very little about today. Despite the cultural gaps we may encounter in this story, the overall message is clear: what we do in this life matters eternally. In his book *In Light of Eternity*, Randy Alcorn says it this way: "This life is the headwaters out of which life in heaven flows. Eternity will hold for us what we've poured into it during our lives here. Your God-given resources of time and talents and money and possessions are the lever, positioned on the fulcrum of this life, that moves the mountains of eternity. When you see today in light of the long tomorrow, even the little choices become tremendously important." In this parable, Jesus reminds us of the importance of preparing for eternity by the way we live here and now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. No matter the culture or context, weddings contain customs and traditions that are symbolic to insiders but difficult for outsiders to understand. What are some wedding traditions in our culture could be confusing or difficult to understand?
2. The parable in Matthew 25:1-13 is a story in the setting of a Jewish wedding in the First Century. What are some customs Jesus mentions in this parable that are hard for you to understand? Why is it significant that Jesus describes the arrival of the Kingdom of God in terms of a wedding celebration? When the average person thinks of "the end of life as we know it," do you think a wedding celebration is what immediately comes to mind? Why do you think Scripture predominately describes eternity in this way?
3. "The Parable of the Ten Virgins" mainly focuses on the foolish bridesmaids who were unprepared. Why do you think Jesus chose to focus this parable on these characters rather than others? Could there be anything significant about the fact that Jesus doesn't mention the bride in this parable?
4. If the focus of this parable is on preparation for eternity, what does it look like practically to be prepared to meet Jesus face-to-face? Are there any "if only" (i.e. regrets) you would have if that time came today? Is there anything in your relationship with God or relationships with others that is still in need of reconciliation on your part?
5. Jesus concludes this parable by saying in verse 13, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." What does it mean to "keep watch"? Why does this phrase not mean to be nervous, constantly worry, and never rest? Why can someone who is prepared to meet Jesus face-to-face sleep easy like the five wise virgins in this parable?
6. If you were to "see today in light of the long tomorrow" (Alcorn) on a more regular occurrence, would you live differently? What would change about your perspective on life, and how would your conversations with others be adjusted?
7. What did you take away from this weekend's message? How do you feel led to respond?