

For Such a Time as This A Daily Devotional Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024



From Matthew 25: *The Message*

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.

On the First Sunday of Advent in 1974, the Rev. Dr. David H.C. Read preached a great sermon on the text above to his Presbyterian congregation in NYC. As we prepare for Advent, I present to you excerpts from this wonderful sermon:

Jesus was a GREAT storyteller. That's one of the reasons why we read that 'the common people heard him gladly.' When he was talking, as he usually was, about life in the Kingdom of God, life under God's rule, what it means to reckon with God, in this world and the next, he told stories....

It is part of my job to suggest what the parable meant to writers and editors of the Gospels who were members of the first-generation Church, and if possible, to get behind that to what Jesus originally intended to convey. But no one can set limits to the power of these words to explode in the soul and challenge us to a new level of Christian obedience. ...

This is what [Jesus] came to offer everybody who would listen – a life of glorious freedom and fulfillment under God's rule, a life that has already the foretaste of the eternity where it will be fulfilled. 'I have come,' he said, 'that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' So, he invites us to enter the kingdom with the expectation that it will be at least as happy and refreshing an experience as the singing and dancing at a glorious wedding party. ...

Whatever our thoughts may be about this Second Coming of Christ, we cannot escape the fact that we all face the crisis of death, and that there are other moments of crisis in our life and the life of nations, in which we are suddenly confronted with the reality of the Kingdom of God. ...

We say that this season of Advent is a preparation for Christmas. What do we mean by that? Is it to remember that we should be buying those presents and mailing off these cards? Is it a preparation for conventional celebrations at home and in church? Advent means Coming, and the preparation above all others that is required of us is a readiness to meet the Lord as he comes to us. ...

'Don't miss it!' That's what this parable says to me. 'Don't keep putting off the question of the Kingdom until it is too late, and the door is shut.'

Prayer for the Day: (from *Fifty Prayers* by Karl Barth)

Lord God, we thank you that we are permitted to know that we do not pray to you in vain. We thank you that you have let your light rise, that it shines in the darkness, and that the darkness shall overcome it. We thank you that you are our God, and that we may be your people. Amen.

**For Such a Time as This ... will return next Monday.
Have a blessed Thanksgiving celebration!**