

ARE YOU REALLY READY FOR HIS RETURN?



On Feb. 7, the One Day Bible reading included the parable of the 10 virgins (or bridesmaids), five of whom were ready with extra lamp oil, and five of whom were not.

"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids[a] who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

"At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

"All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

"But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

"But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

"But he called[a], 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

"So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

(Matt. 25:1-13)

Are we ready for our Master's promised return? Are our lamps filled with oil, and some to spare? Or will we be caught unawares, unprepared, too busy to have readied ourselves?

A modern-day parallel of this story might be: Jesus tells His Followers (not "Christians", not "Believers"): "I'm going to come for you, and the day that I do, I'll text you on your phone just before so you can be waiting. There will be buses that come by your house to pick you up and take you to our meeting place, and it will be in a hurry, so be ready when it comes. When you receive



my message, simply text back to me the word "Yes". If you don't, we'll assume that you changed your mind and don't want to come, so the bus won't stop."

You're all excited to get this message because that means that you're in! Wow! But days, weeks, months pass. No phone call. Then all of a sudden you see a bus come by your house, but it doesn't stop for you. Why? You check your phone for text messages, but it won't turn on. What??? You fiddle with the keys but there's no response, so you try rebooting it, but it won't do that either.

Then, as a last resort, you plug it in, and it comes on with the lightning bolt symbol, telling you that the battery is dead and it has to charge before you can use it.

You missed Jesus' bus because you hadn't kept your phone charged and hadn't received or responded to your personal invitation to get on the bus.

Another parallel to the parable of the virgins and their lamp oil would be that the Lord sent us tickets for the bus He would send for us. He warns us that without those tickets we will not be allowed on the bus. We won't know when the bus is coming – we just have to be ready for it and have our tickets with us, because it could happen at any time.

The day comes when the bus arrives to pick us up. We happen to be at a doctor's appointment in Apple Valley at the time, but the bus driver knows that and comes to the doctor's office to get us. We remember with terrible dismay that we left our tickets on the counter in the kitchen! Oh, no! The bus driver tells us that he's sorry, but his instructions are that we cannot get on the bus without our tickets. Our bad habit of leaving things lying around has caught up with us in a terrible way.

This applies to our spiritual preparation, also. Did you see how Scott Adams, creator of "Dilbert" comic strip, recently died

of cancer. He waited to commit himself to God through Jesus Christ until he was on his very last few days, which is a risky thing to do. What if he had passed a few days earlier than expected?

Scott Adams' procrastination should serve as a warning to us. What if that very last day of this world arrives, and we haven't given God the go ahead to take control of our lives? There certainly is enough going on all over the world, and especially in the U.S., to make us suspect that something's up.

It's imperative that we commit to follow God in surrender of our wills and obedience to His will NOW, today, not on our deathbed. And we must realize that running to church on Sundays and even Wednesdays, wearing religion like a garment that can be removed at will, isn't sufficient. Maybe on that day when He comes for you or for us, we will be involved with our daily worldly pursuits, having left our ticket or our cell phone on the counter at home. And so we miss the message and the bus passes us by.

Let us not be like the five virgins who had no oil for their lamps and so got locked out of the wedding feast. Instead, let us get our personal houses in order and be prepared for that great day when we will be with the Lord, having filled our spiritual lamps with His Holy Spirit as we burn brightly for Him!

Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior

Fanny Crosby, 1868

1 Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
do not pass me by.

Refrain:

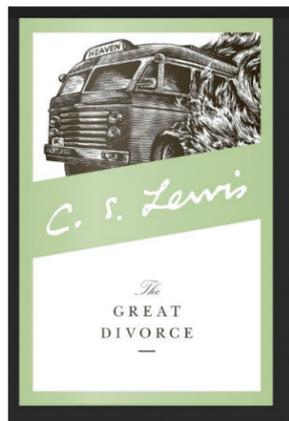
Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry;
while on others Thou art calling,
do not pass me by.

2 Let me at a throne of mercy
find a sweet relief,
kneeling there in deep contrition;
help my unbelief. [Refrain]

3 Trusting only in Thy merit,
Would I seek Thy face;
heal my wounded, broken spirit,
save me by Thy grace. [Refrain]

4 Thou, the Spring of all my comfort,
more than life to me;
Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in heav'n but Thee? [Refrain]

Linda Gammel



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LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

Monday, March 30th

5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge
on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.

LVEDA provides an important community forum recognized by County, State, and Local Representatives. Supports real economic development consistent with our rural goals. Opposes projects that harm our land-use integrity and quality of life.

**Is something bugging you?
COME TO THE NEXT MEETING
TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION!**

On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

