

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Matthew 25:1-13**  
**Lesson #34**  
**Prepared to Wait**  
**05/17/2020**

## What is on our soul's "Bucket List"?

*Psalm 37:4*

"Delight yourself  
in the LORD;  
And He will give  
you the desires  
of your heart."

Levels of human hope

**Core  
longings**



**Critical  
longings**



**Casual  
longings**



1

**Unmet longings are at the core  
of life's suffering.**

*Habakkuk 1:2*

**"How long, O Lord,** will I call for  
help, and You will not hear? I cry  
out to You, "Violence!" yet You do  
not save."

**Preparing to wait is a vital part  
of managing our longings.**

2

## "Signs of the End Times" (Matthew 24-25)

"The beginning of  
birth pangs"

**24:4-14**

- ✓ False Christs will come
- ✓ Wars & rumors of wars
- ✓ Famine & earthquakes
- ✓ Believers hated by all
- ✓ Conflict within the ch.
- ✓ False prophets
- ✓ Many are mislead
- ✓ Increased lawlessness
- ✓ Love will grow cold
- ✓ World evangelism

"The great  
Tribulation"

**24:15-28**

**Intensified**

- ✓ Disrespect
- ✓ Disturbances
- ✓ Deception

Second  
Coming of  
Christ

**24:29-31**

We are called not  
only to read the  
signs of the times  
but also be a sign  
in & for our times.

**24:32-25:30**

**5 Parables**

- ✓ **Fig Tree**
- ✓ **Thief**
- ✓ **Servants**
- ✓ **Virgins**
- ✓ **Talents**

3

## How are we to prepare for waiting?

**Last  
Week**

**External Trials:** Fig Tree

**#1 Don't be surprised by tribulations.**

**Internal Temptations:** Thief, Servants

**#2 Don't be slack while unsupervised.**

**Resource Management:**  
Virgins, Talents  
**#3 Don't be standing by  
without preparing.**

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## The Context

Dangers of **missing** signs of the advent.

**Fig Tree**

**#1 Don't be surprised  
by tribulations.**

Dangers of **misunderstanding** the signs of the advent.

Dangers of assuming  
the advent is **delayed**.

**Thief, Servants**

**#2 Don't be slack  
while unsupervised.**

Dangers of assuming  
the advent is **immediate**.

**Virgins, Talents**

**#3 Don't be standing  
by without preparing.**

**Dangers of  
a "quick fix"**

5

### Matthew 25

“<sup>1</sup> Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. <sup>3</sup> For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, “Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps.

<sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the prudent, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” <sup>9</sup> But the prudent answered, saying, “No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” <sup>10</sup> And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> And later the other virgins also came, saying, “Lord, lord, open up for us.” <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, “Truly I say to you, I do not know you.” <sup>13</sup> **Be on the alert then**, for you do not know the day nor the hour.” **6**

### What is the point of this parable?

- We do not have to reconstruct the **marriage customs of the day** to get it.
- We do not have to see **symbolic significance in every detail** to get it.

“**Be on the alert** then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

- **Don't be caught unprepared to wait.**



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### Are we vulnerable to the spirit of the foolish virgins?

- **Surprised by waiting** - economically, physically, and socially in this life.
- **Expecting a “fixer” who will bail us out of trouble** - in this broken world.
- **Disappointment with God** - for not failing to respond to OUR faith, prayer, and heart.
- **Anger and anxiety** - in the face of broken dreams and fading hopes.

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### Testimonials

- Peter's religious zeal would be crushed by his false expectations leading to his denial of Christ.
- In the parable of the seeds - some fell among thorns and sprouted but did not endure over time.
- The prodigal son's older brother's entitlement based on “good behavior” excluded him from the feast.
- Martin Luther was reluctant to translate the Bible because he felt the Lord would come in the 16th cent.
- “88 Reasons the Rapture COULD be in 1988” led many churches to expect it and make poor decisions.
- We have a sign (first fruits) of the Kingdom but may be tempted to try to bring it in before Christ returns.

9

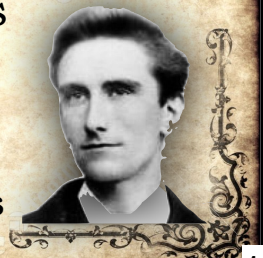
### Predicted dates of Christ's return and the END

70	1533 (Oct.19)	1763 (Feb.28)	1880	1954 (Dec.21)	1995
247	1534 (April 5)	1780 (May 19)	1881	1957 (Apr.23)	1996 (Dec.13)
365	1544	1789	1890	1958	1997 *8
380	1555	1790	1891	1959 (Apr.22)	1998 *15
500	1556 (July 22)	1792	1895	1960	1999 *36
793 (April 6)	1583 (April 28)	1794	1896	1962 (Feb.4)	2000 *59
800	1584	1795 (Nov.19)	1899	1966	2001 *17
806	1588	1801	1900	1967 (Aug.20)	2002 *6
848	1600	1805	1901	1969 (Aug.9)1972	2003 *6
870 (March 25)	1603	1814 (Dec.25)	1908 (April 23)	1973	2004
992	1623 1624	1820 (Oct.14)	1910 (May 18)	1974	2005 *3
995	(Feb.1)	1832	1911	1975	2006 (Feb.12)
1000	1648 1654	1836	1914 (Oct.1)	1976	2007 *4
1033	1656	1843 (April 28)	1915	1977	2008 (Mar. 21)
1184	1657	1844 (Mar.21)	1918	1978	2009
1186 (Sept.23)	1658	1845	1919 (Dec.17)	1980 (April.1)	2010
1260	1660	1846	1925 (Feb.13)	1981 (June 28)	2011 (Dec.31)
1284	1666 1673	1847 (April 7)	1928	1982 (Mar.10)	2012 (Dec.21)
1290	1688	1849	1934	1983	2017
1306	1689	1851	1935	1984 (Oct.2)	2020
1335	1694	1856	1936	1985 (Mar.25)	2022
1367	1697	1862	1938	1986	2023
1370	1700	1863	1941	1987 (Apr.29)	2025
1420 (Feb.14)	1708	1867	1943	1988 (Sep.15)	2026
1496	1716	1868	1945 (Sept.21)	1989 (Sept.30)	2033
1504	1719 (April5)	1869	1947	1990 (April 31)	2035
1524 (Feb.20)	1734	1870 (June 28)	1950	1991 (Mar.31)	2037
1525	1736 (Oct.13)	1872	1952	1992 (April 26)	2040
1528 (May 27)	1757	1874	1953 (Jan.9)	1993 (Nov.14)	
1532	1761 (April 5)	1878	1953	1994 (Sept.29)	

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“Faith without common sense is fanaticism; common sense without faith is rationalism.”

Oswald Chambers



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## How are we to prepare for waiting?

### 1. “Stay Cool” Waiting is to be expected.

Waiting should not interrupt our peace.

*Romans 8*

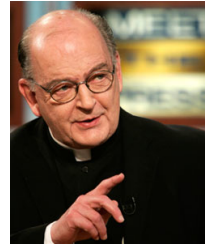
“23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.** 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”

- When we were baptized into Christ, we had to adjust to a change in - **life agenda, hopes, and expectations.**
- A failure to make this adjustment may results in - **stress, disillusionment, anxiety, and anger.**

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## Hebrews 10

“23 Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, . . . 24 and let us consider how to **stimulate** one another to love and good deeds, 25 . . . **encouraging** one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”



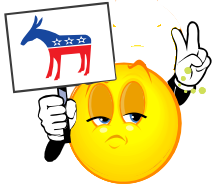
Richard John Neuhaus

“Idolatry is trying to bring in God’s Kingdom before its time and without its King.”

It is popular with both the political right and left.

13

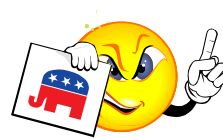
## The secular religious left is tempted to:



- Give the state a Messianic role in the life of people. “**The state functions as savior.**”
- Define the human dilemma in material terms. “**Save bodies not souls.**”
- Promote community apart from the Spirit of Christ. “**Ethics is an economic & individual rights issue.**”
- See the poor as (primarily) victims of the greedy rich and a capitalistic system that takes unfair advantage of them. “**The poor need a hand and a handout.**”
- Look down their nose at the political right. “**Conservatives are selfish, materialistic, intolerant, and evil.**”

14

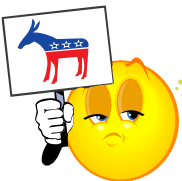
## The conservative religious right is tempted to:



- Make uncritical nationalism a sacred calling. “**Our country is the hope for the world.**”
- Define God’s blessing in terms of the American dream. **Kingdom values get confused with personal material blessing.**
- Confront select personal moral sins only. “**God will bless us if we repent of abortion, sexual immorality, & socialism.**”
- See the poor as (primarily) lazy and irresponsible who could change their state if they would only work harder, and smarter. “**The poor only need opportunity.**”
- Demonize the left. “**Political liberals are always naive and usually (always) power hungry, wrong, and probably not really Christians.**”

15

## Both sides share some things in common:



- They are preoccupied with the temporal / material. “**It’s about this life and NOW.**”
- They are convinced that the solutions are political. “**It’s about social systems.**”
- They associate their politics with their theology. “**God is on OUR side.**”
- They are more committed to being “understood by” rather than “understanding” each other. “**We don’t need or care to hear about your ideas.**”
- They question the motives of those on the other side. “**We are the only ones addressing the real issues with the right motives, and realistic solutions.**”
- They both **rewrite history to support their narrative.**

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## Distinctives of Biblical Social Reform

- Systemic change, economic justice, social reconciliation and peace are Kingdom values **but they are limited in this world and best addressed from a perspective that includes the spiritual dimension.**
- If reform is to be authentic (not superficial) it must **start from the inside** and work out as it looks up.
- Social reform in this present world is **a sign not a solution.**
- Love for God is expressed in **love for all who bear God’s image.**
- The greatest gift that we have to give the world is **WELL PLACED faith, hope, and love.**
- We bear witness to that faith, hope, and love in the way **we use our material wealth, time, and words.**



17



- **Peter heals a Lame Beggar.**

*Acts 3:6*

“<sup>6</sup> But Peter said, “**I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you:** In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk!”

- **And then preaches repentance from sin and turning to Jesus “until the period of restoration of all things”.**

“<sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive **until the period of restoration of all things** about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”

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## How are we to prepare for waiting?

### 2. **“Light up”** Waiting comes with responsibilities. Bearing God’s image = BEING a sign to the world.

*Matthew 5*

“<sup>13</sup> You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. <sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**”

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## How are we to prepare for waiting?

### 2. **“Light up”** Waiting comes with responsibilities. Bearing God’s image = BEING a sign to the world.

- **Are we more interested in reading the signs than bearing a sign?** We are called to show and tell not be the second coming of Messiah.
- **How do we understand our calling?**  
Are we to reform the world politically and economically or bear witness to a different hope?  
Are we to point to a future hope or a temporal fix?
- **Are we prepared to bear a cross now on our way to the Lord’s banquet later?**  
In this life and world we are called to self sacrifice in showing compassion as a sign of God’s love

(NEXT WEEK - the parable of the Talents).

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## How are we to prepare for waiting?

### 3. **“Look ahead”** Waiting precedes the blessing. We bear a cross to a banquet.

*Romans 8:18*

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are **not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**”

*2 Corinthians 4*

“<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> **while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**”

21

## How are we to prepare for waiting?

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- **Where do we expect to find our dreams fulfilled?**  
IN this life or BEYOND this life.
- **What do we expect of broken people in a broken world and of the church as salt and light in it?**  
This world is the closest thing to hell that Christians will experience and it is the closest thing to heaven that those outside Christ will experience.
- **What concerns us most.**  
Political (social / economic) policy or the opportunity for the church to be a sign of enlightened faith, hope, and love.

22

At the heart of our worship is a constant reminder that this world is not our home

**and our hope is not yet realized.**



*1 Corinthians 11:26*

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death **until He comes.**”

23

## How are we to prepare for waiting?

1. **"Stay Cool"** Waiting is to be expected.  
Waiting should not interrupt our peace.
2. **"Light up"** Waiting comes with responsibilities.  
Bearing God's image = BEING a sign to the world.
3. **"Look ahead"** Waiting precedes blessing.  
We bear a cross to a banquet.

*Next week*

Matthew 25:14-30 The parable of the Talents

4. **"Look ahead"** Waiting is a time for investing.  
To whom much is given, much is expected.

24

## "Behold the Bridegroom Cometh"

A wedding is before us  
The Bridegroom tarries late  
The masses are invited  
But all are forced to wait.

All expect to enter  
But some are not prepared  
While those who are much wiser  
Will enter unimpaired.

We, like the wise are waiting  
Well prepped to long endure  
Kingdom signs we're spreading  
Of future blessings they assure.

*Jim Abrahamson*



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