

## IN THE WAITING

---

**SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021**

---

Oh, wonderful, wonderful! If you have your Bibles we're back in Matthew, Chapter 25 today. We started a bunch of weeks ago in Matthew Chapter 24 with the disciples asking Jesus a bunch of questions about the end times. And then Jesus went into some very clear, simple teaching that broke out in basically three thought processes. There's going to be some crazy signs that are going to happen, but it's just the birth pangs. Then we're going to go into a period of time that's called The Tribulation, it's going to be a tough time, there will be martyrs in that time, but it won't be the worst. And then there's going to be an Antichrist who's going to rise and bring a desolation event to the temple and claim for himself to be God there in that temple, and then we enter into this time called The Great Tribulation, it's going to be a horrific time. And at the end of that time Jesus comes back.

So Jesus says I'm going away, there's gonna be some stuff that goes down, here are the signs to see what those things are, and then I'm gonna come back but you right now, you're gonna have to wait and you're gonna have to wait, and you're gonna have to wait. But Jesus has said all along there's a reward for that and there's a reward for loving His coming, and there's a reward for looking forward to His coming. And in a series like this it's awesome because we start beginning to see those signs happening around us, we've even seen those in the weeks that we've been studying this. It becomes a little more clear, but then after waiting after a while you just go, "Uh." Ever wait for someone to show up at your house? Back before cell phones it was even crazier. You didn't know where they were, you didn't know when they were gonna come. They said they're coming around two and then they didn't show up at two, it was three and they didn't show up at three. And you wait and you wait till four and finally you just gave up. But for those first couple hours you're just waiting there eagerly for that moment, and then finally there's this moment where you just go, "I've had enough."

And by the way, this is sort of the toggle that I see. So when we talk about waiting for Jesus, when you're thinking about His return and that He's coming to take us to be with Him, four times in the Scripture we talked about last week He says He's going to come and He's going to gather us. When you think about that and you realize that could happen at any moment there's something that gets excited. He says I'm going to make everything right, I'm gonna take you to be with Me, you just go, "This is exciting," and you begin to wait. But then after a... and by the way, when you're waiting like that I just think it amps up your passion for Jesus Christ.

You begin to think about, you begin to look at His Word, you begin to study, you begin to make sure your life is right. It's like when you're waiting for that person to come to your house at 3 o'clock. You're making sure everything's clean, you're making sure that there's some hors d'oeuvres on the countertop when they come in and some water and drinks, and everything's just perfect, and the shoes are lined up. I mean, everything's dialed in, you're waiting and you're excited, and there's just, there's this anticipation, that's where we are with the return of Jesus Christ. But then you get to this place where you switch the toggle where it's like, *I'm tired of waiting, nothing's happening, I see stuff and it goes away, and we've heard this before.* And you sort of go dead and there's this mindset where it's like, *Oh, well,* and the spiritual intensity can just drop off tremendously.

So one of the things we want to talk about today is what to do while we're waiting, how do we keep that spiritual intensity high, and I've been thinking about this this week is our decision to wait and to continue waiting declares how much value we see in some specific things what we're waiting for. So if you think about it, you go to a restaurant and they say it's going to be a 10-minute wait, that's one thing, they say it's going to be a 45-minute wait, that's another thing. I mean it better be really, really, really, really good food if you're going to wait 45 minutes. If you're just stopping off alongside the road while you're traveling and they say it's a 45-minute wait you say no thanks, you don't do it because this is not

## IN THE WAITING

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021

of great value to you. But if it's your favorite restaurant and it's a special day and you've saved up for this moment, 45 minutes is nothing and you will wait for that.

I called a restaurant a couple weeks ago that someone said was the most amazing restaurant anywhere in the world, and um, I called them up and I made, I tried to make a reservation, and they told me, "Oh, yes, sorry, you have to do that like three months in advance." Now *that* is a good restaurant! I said, like, "Do you have a waiting list?" And they're like, "Oh, yeah, yeah!" You know, "Give us your phone number, someone changes, you know, we'll call you." So I was waiting all week, waiting all week, waiting all week. So finally on Saturday at 3 o'clock, because I was hoping to do something at 6 o'clock, Saturday at 3 o'clock I'm calling them up going, "Anyone cancel?" And they're like, "No." And I went [DEFLATED], "Oh." I hoped. But those things that matter a lot to you, you're like, you're willing to wait for, and it's when we give up on the waiting that things really go bad.

So you think about a spouse, you think of someone who's waiting to have the right spouse, that perfect fit, that godly spouse, that person that will compliment you for years to come and you're waiting and waiting. There's no one, there's no one, there's no one, there's no one, and you go out with someone and that kind of stuff and then finally, finally, one of two things happens. Either that person shows up or you just go, you know, "This person's good enough. I've waited long enough. This is getting long. They'll never come." And you make a wrong decision. It wasn't worth it in your mind to wait for that right one. So we wait for the things that matter a lot for us. And the things that matter a lot, that mean a lot, that we assign high value to, we wait for. And so in thinking about Jesus, if you want to remain a passionate follower of Jesus, I would encourage you. Waiting is something that we need to learn how to do.

So here's what happens next. I told you that Jesus went through some heavy stuff and it was like this whole teaching section in Chapter 24, not hard to understand but hard to hear. It's just like, it was like one bad thing to the next bad thing and it just amps up and gets worse. And then finally it all resolves with this great, wonderful thing, Jesus comes and He gathers us to be with Him, and we look forward to that day. So He just goes through it, it all makes sense. Then it's as if He just continues the conversation. I actually should have brought a stool up here, and He's sitting there He's chatting with His disciples and He does what we would do. You know, if you have to instruct someone on something you throw out a few stories and that's what He does next, we call them parables. They're just common things in life that makes sense.

If I tell you about, you know, I stopped at Wawa yesterday to fill up the car with gas, and I use that to explain something to you, you get it. You know what Wawa is, you know what gas is, and you just know that it's me fill... and you know what, you don't assign any weird special value to Wawa. The letter "W" means this, and the "Wa" means that, and that little bird on their thing means that, you just know that I went to Wawa to get gas. The same is going to be the case when we interpret a parable. We don't make crazy stuff out of it, we just go, "What was Jesus trying to tell us?" He was just throwing a story out at us and we're responding to that story. So He goes through this teaching section, and then you remember we've started into these little stories and these analogies and these illustrations, and He's just talking straight through. It's taken us five weeks to do it. He just did it really quick and He just goes hey, there's this fig tree, when you see leaves coming on the fig tree, know that summer's near. The same way, when you see these signs that I was just talking about in that teaching section, know that my return is near.

And then He said hey, you remember the story of Noah, the whole flood, the ark, and God says the world is so wicked He's going to destroy it with a flood but He didn't want to do it without giving the

## IN THE WAITING

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021

people a chance to repent. And so He gives Noah instructions to build an ark and Noah begins to build that ark all along preaching to people, "Repent! Repent!" They look at him, think he's goofy. God gives them 120 years to repent and God's saying hey listen, there's a moment where that door is going to go shut, where this window of opportunity to trust in Me is going to be over, and then there will be judgment so jump in there now.

And Jesus goes on to tell us a story, He says there's two men working in a field, one is left behind, the other is taken. What do you think about this gathering? He says two women grinding at a mill, one is left behind, one is taken. He goes on and says, you know, it was sort of like a master of a house, if He had known there was a thief coming in the middle of the night, what would he have done? Well, he would have stayed awake. And I mean, there's nothing crazy about that except for this Jesus constant just simple message that He's trying to get through these parables – stay awake, stay awake. And then He tells a story about a master and we'll get to that story in just a moment, but let's talk about the key theme for a moment. And if you have your Bibles open, I would love for you to look at it. There's three just little phrases in Chapters 24 & 25 that I think nail the theme of all these little stories that He's just going through here—so if you're looking at your Bible, just look down at Chapter 24, verse 42. He says:

*<sup>42</sup> "Therefore, stay awake,*

— that's what we've been saying, that's what we're going to keep on saying —

*for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."*

— so since we don't know when He's coming – stay awake. If you'll look down to verse 44:

*<sup>44</sup> "Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

– MATTHEW 24:42 & 44 (ESV)

So He just said stay awake, you don't know what day. He says be ready, because you don't even know the hour that He's coming. And then in Chapter 25, verse 13, He says:

*<sup>13</sup> "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."*

– MATTHEW 25:13 (ESV)

So I see three words here that really wrap up the theme of all these stories—the fig tree, Noah, these people working in the field, working at the grain mill, and the thief coming—three themes. The first one is stay awake. Just very quickly on that, there are a lot of things in our world that cause us to sort of go to sleep. We get involved in materialistic things. We get involved in just the daily grind of life. We are messed with by the enemy who's trying to point our attention somewhere else so that we're not looking in the right places. And so that's sort of this mindset of stay awake, stay on the alert, stay on guard.

And then He says be ready. We aren't ready to be gathered up if we don't have a relationship with Jesus. He came to give His life so that we could be forgiven. That was that whole Noah illustration, like, He says repent of your sins and believe God. We get a choice: Do we repent? Do we believe God or not? That's the being ready where we say, "No, I want to believe God. I want to trust Jesus. I want to believe that what He did there on that cross forgives me of my sins." So stay awake, be ready.

And then the third one was watch and that says last or next to the last verse in the Bible where it's just saying even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. There's this there's this alertness, there's this watching, there's this thinking, there's this looking at the signs, there's this keeping this in front of us all the time. It's as if Jesus is saying to all of us and sort of saying, "Time out! Time out!" This is Jesus talking: Here's what

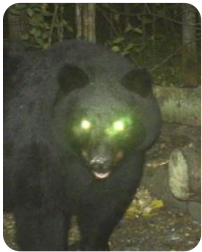
## IN THE WAITING

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021

I want for you—stay awake, be ready, and watch. Stay awake because if you had known, verse 43 says, you would have stayed awake. If you had known, you would not have fallen asleep.

I remember when I was a very young pastor, I was a youth pastor, we took a junior high camp up into the mountains; it was a nice little camp, had cabins that we all stayed in. And one of the kids said, "I was up last night and I looked outside the cabin and I saw the eyes of bears around our cabin." We all laughed at this kid and made fun of him and said that didn't happen. Bears will never come in here. And everyone's like, "Let's stay up tonight and see if we can see the bears." Well, we agreed to that and since I was staying in the cabin with the boys, we all took our sleeping bags and we all went out on the porch. And I was sure bears wouldn't come up if we were all on the porch. And it gets cold at night there in these high elevations, and we've got the sleeping bags and we're sitting there and they're telling jokes to each other and telling stories, and before too long I did what I do so easily [SNAPS HIS FINGERS], I was out cold sound asleep.

And what happened next I wasn't aware of. I guess the boys are sitting there and all of a sudden they claim they looked up and there were eyes all around. They just look like they're glowing, bare eyes all the way around the porch. They freak and they run into the cabin and shut the door [LAUGHTER], and youth pastor slept through it all on the front porch. Woke up in the morning and they're like, "You were in danger." I'm like, "Why didn't you wake me up?" They were like, "You should have stayed awake."



Jesus knew that waiting would be hard. Most of us don't like to wait, and most of us there's a given point where we give up. And they tell us it's 45 minutes at the restaurant and we're sitting at about 57, we're walking out. Many of us take the little buzzer only to take it back and hand it back to them going, "It's too long. I don't feel like waiting any longer."

Last week Jesus told a story<sup>1</sup> about a master of a household who gave an assignment to the people in the household. And he just said, you know, he told them all you need to do is feed the household, that's your only assignment, just feed the whole household. I'm going away, I'm going to be gone for a very, very, very long time. Jesus goes hey, there was one guy, he followed those instructions, and Jesus referred to him as a wise slave. He referred to him as a faithful slave.

The other guy, he didn't feed his people. This guy was, well, he decided to get drunk, he decided to just live the way he wanted to; he just didn't think it really mattered. It said he actually abused the people under his care by the way he treated them. It's as if by disobeying his life just spiraled down and just went the wrong way. And Jesus referred to this guy as unwise, unfaithful and foolish. And here's what he said, "My master is delayed, I can do whatever I want, he's gone. Whatever." The master said it, I'll do what I want to do, life's easier that way, and everything cycled down. And Jesus called him unwise and foolish.

And Jesus wants to alert us to the fact that it is very easy to get the instructions from the master to wait, to be ready, to watch, and then just go, "Uh, he hasn't come. I'm out." So what do we do while we're waiting? Be ready. Watch. One more story this week, this was fresh for us, found in Matthew Chapter 25, verses 1 through 12. I want to read it to you because the Word of God is more powerful than my storytelling ability; Jesus telling the story is way more powerful than mine. Let me read it to you, Chapter 25 of Matthew, verses 1-12:

<sup>1</sup> See Matthew 24:45-51 and Luke 12:35-48

## IN THE WAITING

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021

*<sup>1</sup> "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> As the bridegroom was delayed,*

— here we are again, waiting —

*they all became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is 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 wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' <sup>12</sup> But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup> Watch therefore,*

— and here's Jesus just giving the wrap-up, this is what Jesus wanted you to hear, this is the message, this is not complicated, there's no hidden meanings in this. Watch therefore:

*for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

– MATTHEW 25:1-13 (ESV)

The only thing that we struggle a little bit with this story is this whole bride and bridegroom coming and lamps and wicks and oil and loud cries and all that kind of stuff, it's not how we do weddings. So it's a little bit complicated to us in that way. First Century person hearing this, oh, they get it, it's how they do weddings. It made sense to them. So let me just give you a really quick once over on the wedding.

The bridegroom would arrange a marriage and would work with the parents of the bride, pay a bride price, sign a contract, and then at that point there would be a betrothal. During that moment they'd be officially married but they wouldn't live together, they wouldn't have relations together, and he would leave, the bridegroom would leave, and he would go and he'd prepare a place for the bride. Oftentimes he'd be gone for up to or more than a year, he'd go to his, normally his father's house, and build onto that house. Meanwhile, the bride back home is getting ready, learning to be a part of the family and learning how to do everything it's going to do. She has her bridesmaids all picked out, we're gonna in this passage here of them as ten virgins, and they're all excited and giddy and they're all prepared so that when the groom comes back and he shouts out, "Hey, here I am! We're gonna get married now," they begin to move towards a banquet facility and they have this big party that lasts about a week. They've got to be ready for that moment.

Now what Jesus is saying here is He is the bridegroom and He is coming back, and when He comes back we don't know when that's going to be but we've got to be ready. He's going to come back with a shout and He's going to call us to Himself and if we're not ready we will be boxed out of that banquet, that reward that He has. So He tells the story, He says it's sort of like you guys getting married. Dude goes away and begins to build the house, the girls are waiting for him to come back, she's picked her bridesmaids, they start hearing reports back. Hey, he's got the roof on... he's putting in the kitchen... we heard he was down there buying the microwave... he's got the microwave now. Word comes, you know what, he's starting to do the landscaping, it's getting close, it's getting close, be ready, be ready.

**Be ready. Watch. Wait.**



## IN THE WAITING

---

**SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021**

---

Then he got some harebrained idea how cool it'd be to have a koi pond, so he builds a koi pond and he's delayed again and it takes a little bit longer than everyone expected. And then of all things, finally he's ready, and he comes and he shows up at – the text says at some unbelievable hour, he shows up at midnight. Who does that? But you gotta be ready! And so he takes the bride and they start heading through the town to head to the banqueting place where they're going to have the banquet and their feast and their seven days together, and there's 10 virgins, 10 bridesmaids, and they start calling them in to come into the banquet place but it's in the middle of the night.

Five of the bridesmaids, they were ready for this, they had their oil, they lit their lamps, everything was good. Five of them didn't have enough oil, they weren't prepared, and as a result they're looking at the bridesmaids with the oil going, "Can you give me some?" And they're like, "We can't give you any. We have enough to light our lamps." And the text says they immediately go into the wedding, and the other five go out to the dealers to try to buy oil but it's too late, they're not getting into the wedding.

Jesus is comparing this to our being ready. That we have this opportunity to be ready for when Jesus comes to gather us, it's the thing that we've been talking about for the last few weeks, but it's very easy for us to not be in that place already. What I thought was fascinating about these ten virgins, He says five of them wise, five of them are foolish, they all look the same, they're all dressed the same, they're all invited to the banquet. They've all said yes, they're all waiting, they're all in the right place, they're waiting for the same groom, and they all fall asleep. By the way, that that could sound like a bad thing but what do you do while you're waiting? You do what you normally do. You don't go up on a roof and go, "He's coming, let's all quit our jobs." No, they go through life as normal, and so they go to bed like as normal but when you're doing what you normally do you always stay prepared. And Jesus is trying to push that out there.

And they're all jolted awake by the same voice. Some of your translations will say a cry, some will even say a trumpet,<sup>2</sup> and when that cry and when that trumpet comes there is a response. And what happens next is the thing that will be life changing for all of us. It says when that cry came, meaning the bridegroom was there, five of them who were prepared immediately went into the banquet and the other five did not. And in fact, in verse 12 it says, He says when they knock on the door, the other five the foolish ones that weren't prepared, "I never knew you" – very specifically meaning we've never had a relationship. All dressed up, same people, same place, showing up at the same place, doing all the right things, one group was prepared and the other was not. Some going through the motions, some who are legitimately ready.

Here's my question: What made some wise and some foolish? Here's the answer: Five were ready, five thought they were. Five were ready, five thought they were. Probably the scariest words in the Bible are right found in this little story. Jesus says the five that thought they were, they knock on the door and Jesus says, because in this text the bridegroom is Jesus, Jesus says I never knew you, we didn't have a relationship. Yes, you dressed up. Yes, you said yes. Yes, you responded to the invitation. Yes, you had lamps, you looked like you were the part. He says I never knew you.

Those words haunt me. It caused me to go, "Where am I at my heart?" You can look up here at me right now and you don't know that. You don't know what's truly going on in my heart. I look out at you, I don't know truly what's going on in your heart. We all look like we want to be here. I can't see those you in your living room right now, my guess is you're kicking back and comfy [GESTURES THUMBS UP], that's cool. I can't see what's in your heart. I don't know what you've done with Jesus. It's the weight

---

<sup>2</sup> Transcriber edit/correction: Keyword [search](#) for "trumpet" in Matthew 25:6 reflects none of the versions on Biblegateway.com state "trumpet" – they all state "cry" or "cried", "shout" or "shouted", or "yelled."

## IN THE WAITING

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 7 | 5.23.2021

I've always felt with my kids, like, I can't transfer my faith to them. My faith doesn't have children. It doesn't have grandchildren. It's not automatically conveyed. There was a moment with both of my children had to make a decision for themselves and even at that, that decision would only be played out over time to see if it was actually real and legit. I mean, I've heard people say things and, you know, you've heard people say things, they don't mean it, people say things all the time, sounded good but they had no intention of following through. It wasn't what their heart said.

I believe that Jesus' words on the page here are prepare now so you are ready then. I believe He's saying be ready at all times so you're ready at that time. And His comments about being ready were simple—stay awake, be ready, watch. And I really am hoping that we don't take this as something like, "Oh, there's probably some more things I need to do here and I gotta get onto my checklist of "church things" that I've got to do. He's wanting a heart for Him. He's wanting a relationship with Him. And only you know as you talk to Him, if you have that, don't let our performance world, our religious world try to condemn you on that, the enemy try to condemn you on that. That's not what it's about. We're all sinners, there's – we all have moments of sinning and frailty and... but we know if we have a relationship with Jesus because we go back to Him.

And the last thing we want to do is go to that door and knock and hear, "I never knew you." The last thing we want is when all of a sudden that cry, that call, that trumpet comes and we're not ready. It'll be too late at that point. That's what this story that Jesus is telling says. I shared with you last week there's four passages and this is one of them that talks about the gathering up of the saints to be with Jesus. All except for the 2nd Thessalonians passage, all of them talks about a cry or a shout or a voice. So may I end with these words: There's coming a shout, there's coming a voice, there's coming a trumpet call, will you be ready? Are you ready right now because I believe the way Jesus tells the story, He's trying to let you know that can come at any time. Are you ready?

Lord God,

I want to just stop right now for a moment and, um, I ask You to let your Holy Spirit speak to each one of our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Search us, speak to us right now, would your Spirit confirm in our hearts that we are your children, and if we don't feel that confirmation today, I pray that we'd feel the conviction to say, "I want to have a relationship with You, Jesus." And that You would come into our lives and that that would become a daily relationship. We say here together today even so come quickly, Lord Jesus, oh, that we pray. Amen.



**Scripture quotations marked (ESV)** were taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Accessed on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)

**Graphics/Image Credits:** Pg 1–Wawa (wawa.com); Pg 4–Bear glowing eyes (outdoorhub.com); Pg 7–praying hands (pixabay.com); CF logo in the footer (sermon video screenshot); "Watch or Listen" buttons, CF Calvary (sermon video screenshot); YouTube (youtube.com).

**Keywords:** ready, watch, awake, coming, wait

**COPYRIGHT © 2021 – LEE WIGGINS – ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**