

The Journey to Find the King – Matthew 25

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MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 25](#) • [Psalm 68:5](#) • [Isaiah 1:17](#) • [Deuteronomy 10:18](#) • [Hebrews 3:1](#)

Shabbat shalom, everybody. It's a good presentation, fostering the family. It's been a ministry we've had running since 2018, and it's impacted many lives. And so if you can get involved, I encourage it. And that can be as little as making a phone call to encourage someone once a week, or making a meal for somebody once a week, or going above and beyond and doing more. Fact is, we need your help. And it does a lot more than you think. So thank you.

So, Lori and Catherine, they painted a picture of the children who need homes in foster care, the families that need support, and a community called To Respond. And I don't know if you guys read some of the statistics that they put in the video that they made, right? It's pretty striking just how many children find themselves in the foster care system. And what is more troubling is not simply the children in the foster care system, but the children that have remained in the foster care system. The children that have known a new house, a new family every six to eight months or less and they don't know why. It's devastating. It's devastating. There's an entire demographic of people that are unseen. And when you're exposed to the reality of what is really happening to real people right now, it's jarring. It just doesn't seem real sometimes. But people are waking up and more and more churches are getting involved and we're trying to help support a very broken system that is trying its best to help an actual need, a crisis that's going on.

And so what can we do as Christians? And what type of mindset should we have, not just with foster care, but our mission in preparing to walk out in this world and be these disciples of this king, of this rabbi, of this messiah? And so join me as we turn to Matthew chapter 25. And here we are going to take a journey to find... the king. We're not going to read all of [Matthew 25](#) because I'm merciful. Now, [Matthew 25](#), if you're familiar with the chapter, we all know that chapter probably because of the sheep and the goats parable, right? That one that we don't like

to revisit, but we will today. But there's two other parables. There's three parables in the entirety of [Matthew 25](#). And they all talk about the same thing.

Keep Your Lamp Burning

The first one is about the ten virgins, right? And the bridegroom is coming and five of the virgins are wise and five are foolish. So five take enough oil with them so that they can keep refilling their lamps even though it's going to get late because this king that is coming lost track of time, made a pit stop. He's not here. He don't know when he's coming. Whatever. We got to keep our lamps going so that we can see him and that he can see us in the night, right? And five of the women didn't bring enough oil. So when they were going out, oh wait, I'm going to run out. The king's not going to be able to see me and I'm not going to be able to find him. So they go back home or they go back to the market and they try to find some oil. And of course, by the time they get oil and they're ready to go and they've actually been doing the things that they need to prepare, they go and the king's gone and they miss their shot, right?

It's kind of like... If you're planning to go to a huge party or gala or something, whatever, nice big party with a bunch of friends, and you've been planning it. It's supposed to be a huge party, right? You're supposed to be prepared. You grab some clothes. You go out the door. You're waiting on them to text you the info to go pick up because the carpool's coming around, but your phone died because you didn't charge it. So now you can't. You're going to miss out on the entire event because you didn't have it in your mind of what was happening tonight. What's actually going to happen? Oh, we're going to a party. No, it's the big one. It's the big one that you should have rented an outfit for and been all prepared for. And yes, your phone should have been charged. But you didn't put enough forethought into it to even think I need to plug my phone in a little bit earlier in the day so I know what I'm doing has me ready. You missed out. It wasn't that you didn't prepare. It's that you weren't ready. In Greek, that word is *hetoimos*. I know that's close. David's cringing at me. It means to be ready, but it's an action word. And so here we have the king is coming, but we need oil so that we can venture out and meet him. Where? Where? It didn't say. We've got to find this king. We've got to find him. Because this is the king, right? This is the king that we're supposed to be following. This is the king that we're supposed to be discipled under in his kingdom. The ambassador is the soldiers of his king. We've got to find this king. We've got to be close to this king. That's the journey.

Running the Master's Business

You have the other parable, which is about the bags of money, right? A rich master—a king, a landowner—he leaves his servants in charge of his money while he's gone. The king is going away and he's going to come back. So he leaves them in charge of everything—his business, his money, his affairs, his reputation. And while he's gone, two of them invest the money that he gave to them. They use it. They actually did something, and he's pleased. But there was one servant, if you remember, that didn't.

And what did he do? He didn't do anything. He just buried the money somewhere. He was too intimidated by the entire scenario and too unfamiliar about how everything works and the expectations of his master that he buried the money that the master entrusted him to use. And when the master returned, the master was mad. Why was the master mad? He didn't lose the money. No, the master took all the risk and all his servants had to do were follow the instructions. Just do the thing. Do the thing. I was just scared, so I buried the money. I didn't lose any. You wicked servant? And what excuse does he give? He said he was scared, so he didn't even try.

Now, when we reread it, we see a detail here that's interesting. We see the man who had been given one bag of gold—very minimal compared to the rest. So here it is. Look, it belongs to you. It has your name on it. It has the packaging. It's good. His master replied, this is verse 26, if you're following along, you wicked and lazy servant. So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. You knew this about me. You know my business. You know how I work. Well, then you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, and at least I would have earned some 2%, 3%, 1%. I would have earned a quarter, something. But you didn't even do that. Why didn't he do that? Well, he said it was because he was scared. But the master asks him, you couldn't have taken a single trip to the drive-thru at Shalom Fargo and drop it in the account. You couldn't have even done that one thing. So which was it? Was the servant scared or was he just pretending to be scared to justify his apathy? He found an excuse. I don't know, master. I didn't want to upset you. So I chose to do nothing the entire time you were gone and have nothing to show for it. Nothing. I was just scared.

If you were scared, you would have taken it to the bank still. You were effortless. The king is going away but left his servants loyal to him in charge of all of his estate, all of his business, and all of his finances. And while he's gone, he expects his servants to continue running everything as if he's still there doing business. And when he returns, he finds one did not keep the estate going. He did not. He did not represent his master to the world and did not show any growth or even minimal effort that was required. That's why he was cast into outer darkness in the next verse, where there's gnashing of teeth, because he showed that he didn't want to align himself

with the goals of the master. And when the master returns, he's going to ask how everything that he left is doing. All these servants apparently had instructions. I mean, most of them knew exactly what to do. There's no excuses. Where is this king? Where do we find him? Where do we take the journey to find this king that we follow?

The Least of These

Finally, the third parable in [Matthew 25](#) is the sheep and the goats. You know this one. It's the same thing. Am I there now? Yeah, verse 31. We'll go ahead and read this parable. It's a longer one. You guys ready? Words of the Master. The king will reply... Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least, in the Greek, that word least, it's like the least of the least of the least of the least, like the least. The one you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. The least would be about your status. It's the least of these; it's about status. You ever notice that when you lose status, you kind of drop a couple points in the social status? Status is gained through wealth. It's gained through fear. It's gained through love. It's gained through respect. It's gained through a lot of places. But there's a lot of people who'd never have a chance to have status, and they're caught in this liminal place of being unseen. And Yeshua says, if you find any of them, and you do anything like that to any of them, you did it to me.

The Judgment of the Goats

Then those on the left, the goats. Those on the left, he will say to them, depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger. You didn't invite me in. I was sick. You didn't look after me.

They also will answer, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or needing clothes? Or when did you go to prison? When did we not help you? Because if we saw you, we would have done it—that's the gist here.

He will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous will have eternal life. Yeshua seems to get a bit more serious with this one. It's not quite as nuanced and fluffy. This parable is addressing the exact same thing as the other two though. It's about two different kinds of people. Those who claim to be aligned with the objective and goals of Yeshua, and those who

want to do just enough to convince themselves that they are. So much so that they're shocked when they're told they're not.

Three Parables, One Message

These three parables show what the Christian ideal looks like. We are to be ready, actively, like the virgins who charge their phones, right? Not just prepared and ready to go, but active in doing it. We are to be responsible and faithful, like the servants that actually did something while their master was away.

And then we have the third parable, which is where we're called to be radically compassionate as the hands and feet of Yeshua. And notice the language there—inheritance. The kingdom prepared for you. It's that word again. The kingdom I made ready for you will be an inheritance, prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

What is so frustrating about [Matthew 25](#) is that we are called to emulate Yeshua in our faith. I know you say that, but we're actually called to do it. We're called to do it in a very real way, in a way that looks radical, in a way that may even seem uncomfortable or scary. But that's no excuse.

The Divine Paradox

It's a paradox in [Matthew 25](#). It's as if service to the vulnerable is the same as service to Yeshua. Divine mathematical paradox: service to the vulnerable equals service to Christ in [Matthew 25](#).

In first century Judea, these six acts of mercy that Yeshua speaks about, defining the goats and the sheep, they weren't extraordinary. They were basic hospitality. There was nothing extraordinary about them. What made them revolutionary is they were extended to the unseen in society. The invisible ones, the ones with no status. The ones that you just don't want to be around. The nobodies.

Feeding the hungry. Giving drink. Welcoming strangers. Clothing the naked. Caring for the sick. Visiting prisoners. Notice that Yeshua doesn't list building synagogues, offering sacrifices, or memorizing Torah verses. The kingdom criteria of Yeshua are so radically practical that we often wonder why we need to be reminded of them.

Both groups of people are surprised by the judgment of this king. It suggests bewilderment. Neither sheep nor the goats recognize that their actions were ever a service to Christ. And it looks like seeing those who are invisible, being present with them, and if need be, finding

yourself among them in the status of the invisible—which is bound to happen when you start following the footsteps of Yeshua.

Becoming Invisible

Anyone ever start their faith walk with Yeshua and all of a sudden it seemed like the world kind of retracted back a little bit? Like maybe not even in a good way. Maybe you got lonely all of a sudden. You don't mix very well anymore because of the way that you think. And I'd say that's a good sign.

The world can't attach itself to you, so it just retracts back. Remember that Greek word? Hetoimaseia. It appears in the parable of the sheep and the goats as well as the ten virgins. And of course in the sheep and the goats it's verse 34. It's this word prepared. I love it. It shows up in both of them.

The Beauty of Theological Tradition

So this is the part where I want to talk about some nerdy stuff because I find such beauty in Christianity. I really do. I find the beauty in the traditions that we hold close to us, in the way we honor God. But I also find a lot of beauty in other traditions and other denominations and Christian history and the way that Christians over the past 2,000 years have attempted to emulate Christ and find ways to relay the message and the theology of the love of Christ in their generation.

And this was done for a very long time through artwork. And in Greek Orthodox paintings and iconography, let's see here, we have a common thing. And there's actually a name for it. It's the throne of Jesus. It's a hetoimaseia—what is prepared, or the prepared throne, as it's called in Greek Orthodox theology.

And the thing about this one is it just looks like a throne, but there's something about it. What's interesting about this throne, if it's the throne of Jesus? Who's on it? It's the thing in the middle. Here's another one. The prepared place, the prepared throne. It doesn't make sense.

The Empty Throne

And you see this especially in scenes like The Last Judgment. And at first glance, it just looks like an empty throne, right? No big deal. Ornate, royal, vacant though.

Sometimes you'll see a gospel book sitting on it in the painting or a cross or a folded piece of cloth.

Now, again, I come from a Protestant background, so my trigger instantly is, why isn't Jesus on the throne? He's supposed to be on the throne. It's kind of like when you go to a Catholic church. Why is he still on the cross? He's not on the cross anymore. Why do you still have him on the cross, right? And the reason why, if you notice, Catholic masses and Greek Orthodox masses, they're both kind of Orthodox, but they have two different types of Jesuses on the crosses.

In Catholic churches, you'll see a Jesus that is suffering for your sins and mankind. He has a very distraught look on his face. In the Greek Orthodox, you'll see Jesus suffering on the cross with a face of contentment. And I love that. They both put Jesus on the cross for the same reason, because they see the cross as his throne. That's where the power reigns out from.

So it's theology, ideas, discussions. It's imagery to convey the power message of who Jesus is to the world.

The Prepared Throne

Greek Orthodox theology presents an empty throne, right? But there's a profound theology behind this that I love because it's not an empty throne. It's a prepared throne. It's the same Greek word that we talked about earlier. Preparedness for action, not passively waiting, like I'm prepared and now I'm going to wait for the end of the world to come. No.

You see, in Orthodox theology, there's a beautiful understanding behind this. It's the same thing we believe. We believe Christ is reigning right now. Christ has power right now. He's never stopped sitting on the throne. But how is he ruling? Through us. That's why the Spirit was given to you, by the way. Through us. That's how he's ruling. Through his body, the church. Through every act of mercy, every moment we care for the least of these, every time we leave God's fingerprints on the world, that's how Christ is reigning and ruling actively through us.

The throne here in the images is prepared because Christ's reign is both already and not yet. He's ruling now through ordinary people doing extraordinary acts of love, just like you. And the throne awaits the final moment when his kingdom will be fully revealed. When every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Participating in His Reign

And so when we see images of the prepared throne, it's not there to say, oh look, we're waiting on Jesus to start reigning. No. It's to remind us that we're participating in his reign right now. Right now. Right now. It is actively at work, actively in reign. And one day he will sit on the throne and it will be in its completion. But until that day comes, it is now. It is fully here and not yet. I find that so beautiful in that tradition.

The thing I found even more beautiful is the facial expressions. When this guy figures out that Jesus is not on the throne—look, they all come up to the throne and he's like, guys, he's not, what do I do? Do I have another one? Yeah, here's another one. It's beautiful again. So you have the angels going around, but look, the angels are even upset about this. Where is he? But that's the reminder.

The reminder is that you, as an ambassador, as a carrier of the Holy Spirit, as a disciple of Yeshua, as a follower of Christ, you have a responsibility to be the vessel that he's reigning through right now because the throne is prepared. He's reigning now, and one day he's going to sit down. It's just a beautiful reminder. I love that.

The throne is prepared, therefore we are too, just like the virgins. It's our opportunity and our calling to make today's opportunities reveal the invisible king's love.

The Character of God

With that, we know the character of God. We have lots of Bible verses. We have [Psalms 68:5](#). He's the father to the fatherless. He sets the lonely in families.

Can you take us back to the title slide? You have [Isaiah 117](#), defend the fatherless, defend the cause with acts of justice and righteousness. [Deuteronomy 10](#), how God loves the sojourner that comes in, loves to give him food and clothing.

Heaven Touches Earth

It's the character of God. And the incarnation, which is God becoming human form through Yeshua, revealed something the world had never seen. Because it wasn't just about something Yeshua did. It's the very pattern of how God works and has always worked in the world. Heaven touches earth through embodied love. That's the message. God becomes flesh in Yeshua, [Hebrews 3](#) and 1. Yeshua serves the least of these throughout his entire ministry, showing forth what the eschatological jubilee in the kingdom of God looks like when it actually impacts people. We are called to receive his spirit to enable us to be his ambassadors, as Paul says. So

ambassador is speaking on behalf of. That's an ambassador. So if a king sent an ambassador to go deliver a message, it was as if the king is walking in. That's how the ambassador is treated. That's the authority the ambassador carries. He's speaking on behalf of the king.

That's why we were given the Holy Spirit. We have some business to attend to while the king is away. And the Spirit works through us to continue showing the world what Christ looks like and what his kingdom looks like.

The Prepared Throne

Now we're not trying to incarnate Christ by any means, but we're trying to emulate his work and participate in his kingdom. It's what we call being a follower of Jesus. We follow the example that Jesus set forth during his ministry. And we do that every day, and we do that to everyone.

And when Christian families choose to welcome vulnerable children, something profound happens. The invisible becomes visible. Those who are forgotten are remembered. And right there, in a moment that no one else would ever give any amount of weight to, heaven touches earth in a very small human being because you made a decision to show kindness.

We could go into all of the adoption language that Paul uses in Ephesians or how Jesus, too, was like a vulnerable child and pushed out of his own country. We could go on about how God is the father of the fatherless and acts of justice and righteousness for the widows, the orphans, and the sojourners. It's who God is.

We could go into how abortion was seen as something that was really distasteful and not okay in the pagan Roman Empire. Did not like abortion. You can't kill a child. It was totally okay, though, to take the child to the trash heap. Leave them there because then you're not killing. You just leave the child out to die.

We could talk about how the Christians were the ones that went to the trash heaps every day in Ephesus to see if there was any life there so they could pick it up and carry it home and raise a child of their own. That's our heritage as Christians. That's who we are. That's who our king is.

Where Is the King?

We could go on and on about the examples in the Bible and history, but you get it. You know it. We claim to be seeking the face of our king. Where can we find the king that we're trying to be so close to and be a part of and to look like? How do we get to know this king? Where is he?

And [Matthew 25](#) answers that question. And it tells you where to go if you want to eat and drink with him. The king is hungry. The king is thirsty. The king's in jail. The king is sick. The king is lonely. So let's go. Let's go. This is why we are here.

Many Forms of Kingdom Work

And maybe that doesn't look like getting involved with foster care or adoption or on a care community team. Maybe it looks like something different, something you have more access to. Or maybe it's something that you're reminded of later this week as you walk down the street and you see someone that you know you're supposed to engage in as God has called you to have this divine appointment with. Maybe you'll be reminded of it then.

But we need to be prepared in an active sense. And preparedness means ready to go, ready to fight, ready right now. Not, I got a basement full of food for the end of the world. That's not actively prepared. That's not a prepared throne. That's a bunch of food that's going to expire. Let's do this and let's do it together.

Closing

So please stand as we conclude services. And if you'd like to get more information about the ministry here, the Fostering Adoption Ministry at Founder in Truth Fellowship, please join them in the classroom after services to learn a little bit more on how you can help. And again, we can do this and we can show people the King.

Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King Father, we thank you for the opportunity to come together and be reminded of the serious tone of the expectations of King Yeshua. Father, we know why we're here and we know what we're called to do. And I ask, I ask with the power of Yeshua that the Holy Spirit within each and every one of us would enable us to do it. That we would be able to walk. That we would be able to tend to the business of our Father. Be the ambassadors to the world and meet the King. We thank you, Father. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

The Shema

Sing the Shema. Shema. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you peace. Shabbat Shalom.

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