

The bridegroom comes

Reverend Rob Lamerton
6 November 2005, Pentecost 25

- Joshua 24: 1-3, 14-25
- Psalm 78: 1-7
- 1Thessalonians 4: 9-18
- Matthew 25: 1-13

[This was a great sermon! especially after the twilight fair! but as you can see, it was preached without many notes. And there was no note taker.]

Rob started his sermon with this story that was in William Barclay's commentary on Matthew's gospel. (p251)

The story of how they missed it all is perfectly true to life. Dr. J. Alexander Findlay tells of what he himself saw in Palestine. "When we were approaching the gates of a Galilaean town," he writes, "I caught sight of ten maidens gaily clad and playing some kind of musical instrument, as they danced along the road in front of our car; when I asked what they were doing, the dragoman told me that they were going to keep the bride company till her bridegroom arrived. I asked him if there was any chance of seeing the wedding, but he shook his head, saying in effect: 'It might be tonight, or tomorrow night, or in a fortnight's time; nobody ever knows for certain.' Then he went on to explain that one of the great things to do, if you could, at a middle-class wedding in Palestine, was to catch the bridal party napping. So the bridegroom comes unexpectedly, and sometimes in the middle of the night; it is true that he is required by public opinion to send a man along the street to shout: 'Behold! the bridegroom is coming!' but that may happen at any time; so the bridal party have to be ready to go out into the street at any time to meet him, whenever he chooses to come... Other important points are that no one is allowed on the streets after dark without a lighted lamp, and also that, when the bridegroom has once arrived, and the door has been shut, late-comers to the ceremony are not admitted." There the whole drama of Jesus' parable is re-enacted in the twentieth century. Here is no synthetic story, but a slice of life from village life in Palestine.

Matthew's gospel; last section of teaching: Ch 23 & 24; 3-28

Did Jesus really speak in such vitriolic terms of the Jewish teachers OR was the language from Matthew about 40 years later when relations Jewish/Christian were more strained and divided?

Pharisees—mostly good men? generalize "The Nazis" a few years ago, "The Iraqis"

In the gospel 24:37

Noah and the rest

Two men and two women

faithful servant and wicked servant

Distinction flavours the rest of Jesus' teaching(?)

the bridesmaids

the servants

Sheep and goats

refer also 7:13 to 27; especially wise and foolish 7: 24;

Then “tote” refer to the last judgement

kingdom not like the bridesmaids

but like the situation: **ready OR NOT ready**

Those who had **OIL** or not.

oil is symbolic of repentance!

another level of meaning

First reading is about choice:

choice 1: Do we attend?

Gospel is about being prepared or not

choice 2: Will we be properly ready?

some other points

1. certain things cannot be got at the last minute: exams? knowledge?

2. certain things which cannot be borrowed: relationship with God?

some things must be our own to give.

last minute preparation

if not prepared there is little point in attending the exam...