

“And The Door Was Shut ...”

Matthew 25:1-13

Context

- ◊ In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus teaches that:
 - ◊ He will come again at a time when “*no one knows*” (verse 36) and that,
 - ◊ We are therefore exhorted to “*be on the alert*” (verse 42) and “*be ready*” (verse 44) since,
 - ◊ “*The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect*” (verse 44; ESV).

Context

- ◊ Matthew chapter 25 begins with a parable to further address the need for readiness and preparedness for the Lord's coming.
- ◊ Verse 1 begins with the words, “*Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ...*”
- ◊ The word “*then*” should be noted for setting the context for the parable when the Lord comes again.

- ◊ In this parable (verses 1-13), Jesus compares five foolish virgins and five wise or prudent virgins who awaited the arrival of the bridegroom at a wedding feast.
- ◊ The word for “*foolish*” is from the Greek word *moros* meaning “dull and sluggish” (Vine).
- ◊ The word for “*prudent*” implies a cautious (careful) character (Strong) who is “mindful of one's interests” (Thayer) and is “practically wise” (Vine).

- ◊ Jesus noted the delay of the bridegroom and how all ten of the virgins “*became drowsy and slept*” (verse 5).
- ◊ Only the five prudent virgins brought along extra flasks of oil to accommodate any delays.
- ◊ “**It is not enough to have burnt, but to be burning when the Lord comes.**” It's not a matter of whether I have served the Lord in the past, but whether I'm faithfully serving the Lord when He comes again.

We are told that readiness is not defined solely by past actions but what we are presently doing, as we read in Matthew 24:45-46 (ESV) that the “*faithful and wise servant ... is that servant whom his master will find **so doing** when he comes.*”

- ◊ In the parable, the cry went forth (verse 6), *"Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."*
- ◊ Unprepared for the delay, the five who were foolish went to buy the additional oil they needed.
- ◊ While they were away, *"the bridegroom came"* (verse 10) and then we read those haunting words *"and the door was shut."*

The use of the term "**door(s)**" in the scriptures often has a symbolic meaning representing opportunities and the reference to closed or shut doors symbolizing closed or missed opportunities.

These opportunities can either be good or bad. For example, in Genesis 4:7 God said to Cain after he became angry when God rejected his offering, *"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

- ◊ Satan presents opportunities to us as well and we must be prepared to overcome the doors he presents to us.
- ◊ I find it interesting when thinking about Cain, that in John 18:16-17, we read that after the arrest of Jesus, *"Peter was standing at the door"* when he was questioned whether he was *"also one of this man's disciples."*
- ◊ Though the word *"door"* in this context is referring to a literal door, it could be said that sin was also crouching at the door of opportunity for Peter, who three times failed to *"master it."*

Doors also represent positive opportunities to do good and accomplish things in the Lord's service.

- ◊ Acts 14:27, *"God ... had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles."*
- ◊ I Corinthians 16:8-9, *"But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me ..."*
- ◊ Colossians 4:2-4, *"praying ... that God may open up to us a door for the word ..."*
- ◊ Revelation 3:7-8, *"Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut."*

- ◊ We can and ought to pray for three things:
 1. That God would open doors for us to serve Him and let our light shine (Matthew 5:14-16) in a dark and sin-filled world,
 2. That we will be selfless enough to recognize the open doors, and
 3. That we would have the courage and conviction to make the most of them.

We need to make the most of the open doors we are given to make our lives right with the Lord.

To the church in Laodicea, Jesus exhorted them to repent and in Revelation 3:20 He said, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”*

As long as we have the breath of life in us, Jesus stands knocking at the door offering us the opportunity to repent and submit to Him in obedience.

But the fact of the matter is, as taught in this parable in Matthew chapter 25, the door of opportunity to make ourselves ready is a door that will one day close – when we are not expecting it to.

Jesus again said in that parable (verse 10) that *“the door was shut.”* The unprepared in verse 11 responded by saying, *“Lord, Lord, open up to us”* to which Jesus responded, *“truly I say to you, I do not know you.”*

In responding to the disciples’ question as to whether few would be saved (Luke 13:23), Jesus answered that yes, many would not be saved due to the fact that they did not respond to the open doors presented to them (Luke 13:25-26).

◆ Jeremiah the prophet spoke of a time when the door of opportunity would be shut when he wrote in Jeremiah 8:18-20, *“My sorrow is beyond healing, my heart is faint within me! Behold, listen! The cry of the daughter of my people from a distant land: ‘Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not within her? Why have they provoked Me with their graven images, with foreign idols? Harvest past, summer is ended, and we are not saved.’”*

◆ Jesus, in John 4:35, exhorted his disciples to be aware of the open doors when He said, *“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.”*

◆ Jesus likewise, in John 9:4, reminds us that our doors of opportunity are not eternally kept open, *“We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.”*

◆ What will the Lord find once the door of opportunity is shut?

Luke 18:8, *“However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”*

◆ The good news is: right now, the door remains open to obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to repent of our sins.