

RIVERSIDE ANGLICAN CHURCHES
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

Matthew 25:1-13 – Ready or not

1. What are the things in life that distract us from Jesus? What are the things that can replace him as our hope?
2. **Read Matthew 25:1-13.** What strikes you about this parable? What seems clear and what doesn't quite make sense?

In order to understand this parable, we are going to have to look at a few other places in the Bible.

3. **Read Matthew 9:14-15.** Who in our parable (Matt. 25:1-13) might the bridegroom be? In light of Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 54:4-5, Isaiah 62:5, Jeremiah 2:2 and Hosea 1-3, why is this a startling claim?
4. **Read Daniel 12:1-3.** What is it that the Jews were hoping for God to do? Who in our parable might the wise be? Who might the foolish be?
5. **Read Matthew 23:37-39.** These verses summarize what chapters 24-25 are all about. What then in our parable might the oil represent? (hint: many think it is good works but this seems unlikely)

One of the traps modern readers fall into is thinking that the Bible directly concerns ourselves. However, the Gospels aren't written so much to Christians after the cross but to Jews and Gentiles before the cross. And so, it is common for us not to realize that the coming of the kingdom of heaven in our parable concerns Jesus' death and resurrection as the defining act that created the church.

6. Re-read the parable in light of our understanding of its characters and symbols. What do you think this parable is about? What does it call Israel to do?
7. Given that this parable does not directly address us, what do you suppose we can learn from it? What great event are we awaiting?
8. Previously we discussed what were the things that cause us not fall asleep and not be alert. What disciplines of the Christian life can help us not fall asleep? What might it look like to remain alert?
9. At the end of his parable, the kingdom of heaven is depicted as a marriage celebration, a scene of great joy. Do we feel like the church is like a marriage celebration? Would you describe our community as one of great joy?
10. If you were to meet a Christian who said they felt joyless, how might he or she learn to delight in what Jesus has done?