

Holy Week Reflections - Wednesday

Wednesday was a quieter day than the previous days. The excitement and jubilation of **Sunday** when the city turned out and people sang praises.

Monday was unexpected as Jesus drove out money changes from the temple.

Tuesday just added fuel to the hatred of those who wanted to kill Jesus.

Today is Wednesday, the calm before the storm! Jesus yesterday was confronted by enemies from the outside, but now there is an enemy from inside, one of his own circle of friends. The conspirators have agreed the price of 30 pieces of silver and now wait patiently for the right moment when they can get rid of Jesus for good.

Do they not realise in their conspiracy to murder Jesus, they are about to play a part in the worst crime humanity has ever committed, the murder of the Son of God?

This day the disciples were mulling over Jesus words while on the Mt of Olives. We today are thankful as it provides us with much hope today when we see much chaos in the world and know Jesus has already told us these things must happen before his return.

The teachings I want to draw our attention to today is the signs of end times and the parable of the 10 virgins.

Matthew 24 and 25 - A reminder of the teachings Jesus spoke of to his disciples which were for them and for us today. When the disciples asked Jesus about the signs of the kingdom, Jesus told them Four great signs for which they are to look for.....

1. **In the world** there will be greater turmoil, unease and terror as wars and rumours of wars increase along with famines, pestilence, diseases and earthquakes - but see to it that you are not alarmed for these things must happen.....
2. **In the church** - Then he tells the disciples that there will be signs within the church, we will be hated by all nations and many will turn from the faith. As the persecution and pressure increases, so there will be a great falling away from truth into apostasy and error.
3. **In the Middle East** - when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation then those in Judea are to flee quickly, not even returning to his home to collect a coat of bag!
4. **In the Skies** - The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky.....

Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. Jesus reinforces the teaching with a set of parables, each with a particular focus....

The Parables

1. Need for watchfulness and heart religion (Virgins)
2. Diligence and faithfulness (Talents)
3. Great Day of judgement

The wise and foolish virgins

In this parable we see at the Second Coming of Christ, the church will be a mixed body, containing falsehood and truth, good and bad, true worshippers and deceivers and these are summed up as wheat and tares, sheep and goats, wise and foolish.

The parable about the wise and foolish virgins is contrasted with the church. Ten Virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. But only 5 had oil in their vessels to feed the flame.

All may have been baptised. All may be regular attendance at services. All may even claim to be Christians and followers of Jesus. But not all were ready to meet the bridegroom when he came. The shock from the parable is how quickly events moved once the call of the Bridegroom was heard. And just how many people were caught out and unprepared, no oil!

Jesus said it will be just as in the days of Noah when he returns. In an hour when no one is expecting, the Lord shall return and it's the foolish who are unprepared. The striking point of this parable is the foolish missed the wedding and find themselves shut out of the great feast.

As Jesus parable of the wise and foolish virgins so we need to be diligent in our faith, so we are prepared and our Lord finds us ready when he returns. We have been given many gifts and promises to help us be ready.

Think of some of the promises that relate to the life of godliness and holiness

1. Freedom from sin's dominion (Rom 6:14)
2. Grace that is sufficient (2 Cor 12:9)
3. Power to obey his commands (Phil 4:13)
4. Victory over the devil (Jam 4:7)
5. Escape when tempted (1 Cor 10:13)
6. Forgiveness when we confess our sins ((1 John 1:9)
7. Response when we call (Ps 50:15)

God has given us everything necessary for the divine life. God does not make us holy without our involvement, we must have the desire and be determined to see it through.

Author Tom Olson (of Unlocking the bible), remembers his father used to say to his sons...

Add to your faith the virtue of courage of David

And to the courage of David the knowledge of Solomon

And to the knowledge of Solomon, the patience of Job

And to the patience of Job, the goodness of Daniel

And to the goodness of Daniel, the brotherly kindness of Jonathan

And to the brotherly kindness of Jonathan, the love of John

May we be found ready, with our lamps lit. Lord give me oil in my lamp to keep me burning bright for you. There was evening and morning the fourth day. To discover the evens of Thursday we shall see tomorrow.

God bless. Rev. Ken