Pentecost 24 11/8/2026
Matthew 25:1-13 27A

FIVE OF THEM WERE FOOLISH, AND FIVE WERE WISE. FOR WHEN THE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS, THEY TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM, BUT THE WISE TOOK FLASKS OF OIL WITH THEIR LAMPS.

The ten virgins take their lamps and go out to meet the bridegroom because that's what the ten virgins are supposed to do. And they wait. And wait. And…wait.

Here's how weddings worked in those days. The bride and her family and friends would get ready and gather at the bride's home. The Bridegroom and his friends would come to the bride's home to escort them back to his home, where there would be food and festivity that accompanies a wedding. When the bridegroom came, it would generally be dusk, so the light of the lamps was used to light the procession back to the groom's house for the wedding feast. That's how weddings worked.

That's what the virgins are doing in the parable -- they're waiting. They're waiting for the groom to show up. They're waiting. And waiting. And waiting. And then, they wait some more. It seems like the bridegroom has been delayed. Maybe he'll never even show up, so maybe – just maybe – their waiting is in vain.

You know what it's like because we've been waiting, too. At Jesus' ascension, two guys in white robes showed up *and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way you saw him go into heaven" (Ac 1:11).*

The parable before us this morning is pretty straightforward to understand. Jesus is the bridegroom and He's coming back to get His

bride, the Church, and take her to the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven, which has no end. So, we find ourselves waiting for the bridegroom. And waiting. And waiting. Waiting like 2,000 years now.

So let me ask you: How are you doing with all this waiting? It seems the 10 virgins in our parable have a problem with waiting. They become drowsy and fall asleep. How irresponsible of them! Jesus says that we do not know the day or hour of his return, so you have to awake, on guard. But, it's easy to become drowsy and falling asleep, isn't it?

It's hard to stay awake and watch. We're still waiting and waiting and waiting. But, we forget. All that waiting causes us to forget that we are in the world, but not of the world. We start to think that we have time to do what I want to do. After all, I love me more than Jesus, right? And it shows.

You doubt God's promise that He will never leave you nor forsake you and that He works all things together for good, so you worry and stew and fret. You do not forgive as God has forgiven you in Christ, so instead of living at peace with everyone, there is enmity and animosity. You ogle and covet that woman because she would make you much happier than the wife God has given you. You want and desire, and your neighbor has more and gets more than you have, and you are jealous and envious, and you even you use your tongue to discredit and defame your neighbor, so that you can look better.

We become drowsy and indulge the desires and lusts of your earthly flesh, accommodating yourself to the fallen world, and making yourself perfectly at home in it, and, without warning, the cry is heard, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet Him." And, the foolish had no oil in their lamps to greet the bridegroom. Take another listen to the words of Jesus,

> *"And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying "Lord, open to us' (vv. 8-11)."*

We have the comfort and certainty that Jesus is going to take you to be with Him because He opened heaven's door to you the first time that He came.

The first time Jesus came was to be your Savior, to save you from sin, death, hell, and the devil. He did it by being born of a mother, taking on human flesh, and taking all your sin and all its wages of death upon His human body and carrying them to the cross. There, He died on the cross for you and three days later, rose again for you. Them, 40 days after He rose triumphant over the grave, He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you at the table at the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven.

So it is that as they wait, the wise virgins, Jesus says, *"took flasks of oil with their lamps."* Allow me to ask you a question: What made them "wise"? The answer is the Holy Spirit, the 3rd person of the Holy Trinity. Out Little Catechism teaches us the Holy Spirit "has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith" (17). Because we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings us to Christ and make us wise – He "enlightens" us is our Small Catechism says it -- unto salvation in Him, so that we trust, rejoice, and find comfort in Jesus.

Think of it this way: God shut Noah and his family into the ark and they were safe from the flood waters. So in that same way, God the Holy

Spirit shuts us up in Christ so that safe from sin, death, and hell in the Savior.

In the parable, the lamp is the HEART. "No oil" means that your heart is not filled with oil of Jesus' love, forgiveness, life, and salvation, because you rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing you to Jesus. In other words, your heart is like a lamp: it is either filled with the love, forgiveness, life, and salvation of Jesus because the Holy Spirit brings and keeps you in Jesus, or it is not.

And if it is not filled with the oil of Jesus' love, forgiveness, life, and salvation, you will from Jesus, *"Truly, I say to you, I do not know you" (v. 11).* That's the last thing you want to hear from Jesus, and the last thing Jesus wants to say. What Jesus wants to say to you is, *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:34).*

The Parable is our lesson this morning is a call to repentance. Our Lord Christ is forcing us to ask ourselves: Have I grown tired of waiting and become drowsy in my faith? Am I staying watchful, through the work of the Holy Spirit bringing me and keeping me in Jesus so that I am ever ready to hear the cry, *"Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him"?*

Because you need oil in your lamp, the Holy Spirit brings you to Jesus so that He can give you that forgiveness, that life, that salvation that He won for you. That happens when He says, "I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." That happens when He says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." That happens when He says, "Take, eat, take drink, this is the true body and the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins."

Receive those means, hear those words, for through them, God the Holy Spirit brings you to Jesus, so that the Savior can pour the oil of forgiveness, life, and salvation into your heart, that you may ever be watchful and ready to hear of the Bridegroom’s arrival.