

Matthew 25:1-13

Engaged to Christ (An Introduction)

1. The human marriage relationship is a model of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32)
 - a. This refers to the Church collectively
 - b. Jesus is not the husband of every believer but of the Church as a whole
2. The Church is in the Betrothal period
 - a. Jesus has returned 'to his Father's house' to prepare our new home (John 14:2)
 - b. During this time, we are in a covenant relationship with Jesus
3. What this means for us collectively as the Church
 - a. We are still living in our birth home - we are still 'in the body' (Romans 8:23) and live where our old father – the devil (John 8:44) has dominion
 - b. But we can now call God 'Abba' (Father – Romans 8:15-16)
 - c. The covenant protects us from any mistreatment from our birth household (John 10:28-29, 17:12-13, Ephesians 6:10-20)
 - d. Because of our betrothal, our old 'family' will hate us more than they already hated us and each other, but our new Father will protect us (John 17:14-15)
 - e. We need not be anxious, because the covenant is our protection (John 14:1, Philippians 4:4-7)
 - f. Our covenant seals us to our new husband, who gives us a new identity in him (2 Corinth. 5:17, Galatians 6:15)
 - g. We do not fully know what life in our new home will be like, but we look forward to it, trusting in our husband to prepare a home that will satisfy (Hebrews 2:8-9, 1 John 3:1-3)
 - h. We honor Jesus when we live according to the Truth, but we bring shame to him when we sin (Proverbs 12:4) and even force him to sin with us (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)
 - i. Our new husband cares about our worldly needs (1 Corinthians 7:33)
 - j. We no longer consider our old home as 'home' but look forward to our new home, and ready to go at a moment's notice (Genesis 24:54-59)
 - k. We wait for our betrothed to come take us home (John 14:18, 27)
 - l. We want to be ready to go when he comes for us (Luke 21:34-36)
 - m. In the meantime, we commit ourselves to being faithful to our new husband and refuse the advances of other men (that is, we reject false gospels, counterfeit Christs, and gods who are not God) (Ephesians 5:25-27)
 - n. Nothing keeps Jesus from fulfilling his pledge to receive us (Romans 8:38-39, 1 John 1:9)
4. What this means for us as individual believers
 - a. We are to be ready for his return at any time
 - b. To be "in Christ" is to be a part of the Church
 - c. The Church is a necessary part of growing in Christ (Hebrews 10:23-25)
 - d. Our growth (or lack of growth) is the Church's growth (or lack thereof) (1 Peter 2:5)
 - e. Today's lesson reminds us to stay focused on Christ our Savior and eagerly wait (Philip 3:20)