

## Faith That Saves Part 3

*Faith That Saves*

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I invite you to open your Bibles to Luke 14 and we're going to get there momentarily and I'm going to start in verse 25. Luke 14:25. This morning I want to speak to you about your soul and where you stand with God. That's what I want you to be thinking about is where do you stand with the Lord this morning.

One of the things that I've been thinking about as we've been doing this series "Faith That Saves" is this disciple that is mentioned over and over again in the New Testament, Judas Iscariot, Judas Iscariot, and many of you know his story. He was the only disciple that wasn't from Galilee, that's why he's called Judas Iscariot because he was from a village called Kerioth and Iscariotes in Greek, that's translated Iscariot, means that he was the man of Kerioth which was way south in Judea. All the other disciples were, you know, think up near the Sea of Galilee. He was from way down in the south and throughout the New Testament he's called the betrayer and the traitor because you remember the gospels were written years after the fact, so the disciples knew then what they didn't know earlier is that Judas would go on to betray the Lord Jesus Christ. But what's interesting about Judas in his ministry is that he's treated like the other disciples. When the other disciples are sent out on mission, Judas is sent out as well. Judas was trusted by the Lord Jesus and by the other disciples, remember he was the treasurer, he was the one carrying the moneybags wherever they went. Yet a careful study of the New Testament reveals that he never called Jesus Lord. Not once. He always referred to Jesus as Rabbi.

You see, Judas had some type of superficial faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah, in fact, over and over again his hope was that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom right then and there. That was his motive. He was always saying,

"Jesus, is now the time that you're going to set up the kingdom? Is now the time that you're going to set up your earthly reign?"

And he was also concerned about money. It's revealed later that he was basically skimming off the moneybag, and you remember when Jesus is in Jerusalem during the Passion Week, Jesus is sitting at a table and a woman comes in and starts bathing Jesus' feet with perfume with her hair, and the perfume was incredibly expensive, it would have cost essentially a normal person's year's wages to purchase this perfume. And you remember what Judas's response was? He said, "This woman shouldn't be doing this. We could have sold this perfume and given the money to the poor." And Jesus rebuked Judas and he said, "The poor you always have with you. This is the week that I am going to the cross." And basically at that rebuke when Jesus said to Judas, "I'm going to die and she's preparing me for my burial," Judas went ballistic internally because Judas says, "No, you've got to set up an earthly kingdom. How dare you say that you're going to die and that she is setting you up for a burial?" And so Judas leaves, he goes to the high priest and the Pharisees, he says, "What do you want? I'll betray him." And they said, "We'll give you 30 pieces of silver." He goes, you remember, and he joins the disciples at the Last Supper, then Jesus calls him out, Judas leaves again and then Judas brings the whole band there into the garden of Gethsemane and betrays Jesus with a kiss.

Jesus calls Judas in John 17:12 the son of destruction, the King James says son of perdition. Unlike Peter who also betrayed Jesus, Judas never repented. He had remorse at the cross, when he's sitting there at the cross he had remorse and he took that silver and he went and threw it in the temple and then he went and hung himself in a field. He had remorse but never faith and repentance.

And I bring up Judas this morning because Judas is the classic stereotype of the false disciple. You're talking about somebody that saw every single miracle, you're talking about somebody that was on that hill when Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. I mean, can you imagine sitting at Jesus' feet for the Sermon on the Mount? You're talking about who was up in the Upper Room with the Lord Jesus himself. You're talking about somebody that saw him heal all these people but yet he never believed, and that's my great fear with the broader church and specifically our church is I don't want a single one of you to think that you're in the kingdom, to think that you're one of Jesus' disciples and Jesus say to you on the last day that you were a son of perdition or a daughter of perdition. I want you to know where you stand with the Lord and there's a number of ways that we could do that, that we could approach that. We could look at how we can have a basis of assurance and those types of things, but I think the best way is to go back to the very foundation and look at faith itself. What is saving faith? What constitutes saving faith and how do you know if you have it?

Now we've look at several qualities of saving faith already in the previous two weeks. We've looked at, first, supernatural faith; second, childlike faith; third, repenting faith; fourth, surrendering faith; fifth, living faith; and this morning we're going to pick up with the sixth quality and that's self-hating faith. Self-hating faith. Jesus says that for us to enter the kingdom of heaven we must have self-hating faith. Contrast that with what the

world says to you. Our world says that your issue is that you don't love yourself enough. Jesus says that your issue is that you don't hate yourself enough.

Look at Luke 14:25. Luke says, "Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them," get this picture, Jesus is walking along and there are massive crowds, we know that at the feeding of the 5,000 that there were close to 20,000 people, so when Luke says that there's great crowds, you're thinking in the thousands. And Jesus is compelled to turn around and address these thousands of people following him and he says to them, he says, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." We need to understand what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is unmistakably clear about what saving faith is and what is required to enter the kingdom.

Notice that word "hate." He uses it here, it's a Jewish idiom. It means that you love something so much and so extravagantly that all your other loves in comparison to this are essentially hate, that your love for something is so great that your other loves are hate by comparison. And notice what Jesus puts his finger on, it's the thing that everyone loves most. Who do you love most? Mommy and daddy. Who do you love most? Husband or wife. Who do you love most? Your precious children. Jesus is saying, "Look, if you're going to enter the kingdom of God, your love for me has to be here and by comparison you have to hate even your own family members."

And if that's not drastic enough, look what he says next. He says, "yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." What people love most contrary to what our culture is telling you is themselves. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out, just log on TikTok or Instagram. People love themselves. No one needs to be taught to love themselves more. That's not our problem. Jesus says we don't need to learn self-love but self-hate and it's this self-hatred of your own life that is required to enter the kingdom of God.

How does this self-hating faith express itself? Look at verse 27, look at the next verse. Jesus says, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Jesus is saying is that what is required is complete surrender to him, that you must be willing to give your life for him. Last week we looked at Luke 9:23, this isn't some existential mythical saying that Jesus is giving. He's literally just saying, "You have to be willing to die for me." Everybody knew what a crucifixion was, Jesus is saying, "Look, if you're going to follow me, you have to be willing to die tomorrow. You have to be willing to give up your life for me right now, and you have to follow me. Your life as you know it is over. Your old life, whatever you were doing, it's coming to an end now and you have to be willing to give it to me every single day." To be willing to be crucified with Christ and to follow him even to death.

And here's what so many have failed to understand about saving faith, okay? The church at large has pedaled what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called cheap grace. Cheap grace. Now was the grace that was accomplished for us cheap or costly by the Lord Jesus Christ? Costly. Very costly. And Jesus says that to receive this grace, we don't earn it but yet there's a

cost involved for us. It's not just mental assent to the truth. That's what the church has said, the church has said, "Look, this grace is given to you if you just agree that Jesus died on the cross and rose again. Do you agree? Yes? Okay, you're in. You have the grace." That's not what Jesus ever said. Jesus never said that. It's cheap grace that preaches forgiveness without repentance. It's cheap grace that promises eternal life without holiness. It's cheap grace that says walk an aisle without taking up your cross. It's true grace that says renounce your old life. It's true grace that compels you to follow Christ. It's true grace that says take up your cross.

Jesus says that his grace is free, the only thing it will cost you is your life. Did you get that? It's free, all you have to do is let go of what's in your hand to receive it. Jesus refuses to receive the warmed up leftovers of your life, right? Isn't that what so many people think that Christianity is, is, "Oh yeah, you know, I said a prayer in Young Life, I'm good. I'm in. I have lived however I've wanted to since, haven't picked up my cross one day, haven't followed him." How is that saving faith? No, no, no, no, no. It's not faith here, it's faith here in the heart and Jesus says that the way that that faith expresses itself is by this all-encompassing love for the Lord Jesus Christ that makes everything else by comparison hate.

Look at verse 28. This is why Jesus says in verse 28, he says, "Think very carefully about whether or not you want to believe in me. Think very carefully." Don't just say, "Oh, Jesus, I'm in. I'm with you." Don't just raise your hand. Look at what Jesus says, he says, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace." What's Jesus' point? He's saying, "Count the cost. Don't just say you're in without first thinking it through. Are you willing to give everything up for me?" That's the cost. Sit down, weigh it out, count it. Don't just count yourself a disciple.

Look at the last verse, verse 33 in this section, "So therefore," this is the conclusion, "any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." Wow. This is staggering. If you're not willing to renounce all that you have, you cannot be the Lord's disciple. So let me ask you: have you considered the cost? Have you weighed it out? These are Jesus' demands. You've heard him. If you can't renounce all that you have, you're not yet in the kingdom of God.

That word "renounce, apotasso," it means "to bid farewell; to bid it goodbye; to say goodbye to something." We used to sing at A&M our fight song that says, "Farewell to Texas University, so long to the orange and the white," talking about the Texas longhorns. It's easy to farewell the Texas longhorns, right? It's easy to farewell the things that we don't like. It's hard to say farewell to yourself, to your loves, what you like. Thomas Watson was a Puritan and he said, "The man who cannot get beyond himself will

never get to heaven." That's what Jesus is saying. You have to get beyond yourself, your loves, in order to receive Christ.

And here's the thing, here's why Jesus is saying this, it's because in order to receive the gospel, it's free, Jesus died on the cross, you didn't earn it, but in order to receive it, you have to have empty hands. That's what he's saying. Clean them out so that you can receive the grace that he offers. How can you receive the grace that he offers if you're holding onto your old life? That's why he says you must have self-hating faith.

So that's sixth, self-hating faith. So we've seen supernatural faith, childlike faith, repenting faith, surrendering faith, living faith, self-hating faith, and seventh and this is the flipside, okay, treasuring faith. This is the opposite, treasuring faith. You let go of what's in your hands in order to receive the treasure. That's what Jesus says over and over again is that saving faith is a treasuring faith. It's a faith that renounces our lives in order to receive the greatest treasure that is offered in the world.

I want you to turn to the left to Matthew 6:19. This is in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, Jesus says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." That word for "treasure" is "thesauros," it's where we get our English word "thesaurus." It's literally translated into English and it means "a collection of what is supremely valuable." It's a conglomeration of things that are most valuable to you, and that's what really a thesaurus is, it's a collection, right, of valuable words. Jesus is saying, "Don't let your main treasure be something in this world. Don't let your main treasure be anything in this world. Don't let it be money. Don't let it be house. Don't let it be your fame, your popularity, your legacy. Don't let your treasure be anything here." Why? Because he says everything here is temporal and can be taken away, and he just basically uses this, you know, he describes how moths come and destroy things, you know, moths would just like today go and lay eggs in clothing and garments and then the larvae would eat the clothing. And he says where thieves break in and steal, right? Where people can come, that was a big problem in the ancient world where thieves could easily come and steal what you have. Jesus' point is no matter how secure you think your worldly possessions are, they can be taken away from you. Don't believe me, just look at the rising inflation we're seeing right now. What you thought you had six months ago is not what you have today, right? Just like that things in this world begin to be taken away and ultimately when you die, everything will be taken away from you in this world. Every single thing. That's what Paul says to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."

So Jesus says, "Look, what you want to do," verse 20, "is lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal." You want to focus on accumulating eternal treasure. Peter puts it like this in 1 Peter 1:4, he says it's "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 13:14, he says, "here we have

no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come." So here's the point: what Jesus is saying is this, is that true faith sees what is most valuable because you see the spiritual realities, right? Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, of things not seen. That's why it's called faith. If you could see it, it wouldn't be faith. Do you get that? You see with the eyes of faith the eternal kingdom and the treasure that is offered to you in the gospel even though you can't hold it, touch it. That's what a treasuring faith is. It's seeing that everything here is temporal and will fade away while the treasures that you store up in heaven are eternal and last forever. It's a faith that says what matters is not keeping up with the Joneses here but being with Jesus for eternity there. That's what it is.

What are these eternal treasures that Jesus is talking about? We could list so many that are mentioned in the New Testament but it's an eternal pardon from sin, that's Matthew 6:14. It's the love of God the Father forever given to us, John 16:27. It's eternal peace with God, John 14:27. It's an eternal home in the new heavens and the new earth, that's Revelation 21, 22; Matthew 5. It's the crown of righteousness, that's 2 Timothy 4:8. It's heavenly rewards. Each of us will be given rewards for what we've done, Matthew 5:12. But most importantly and hear me say this, most importantly the treasure is Jesus himself. Heaven would not be heaven without the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the Lord Jesus himself. Remember Jesus said, John 14:3, "Where I am there you may be also."

Faith is the realization that nothing else matters compared to knowing Christ and being with Christ, that Christ is himself an immeasurable, inexhaustible, unfathomable, inestimable, limitless, boundless treasure. Paul said, Philippians 3:8, he says, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish," as refuse, as waste, compared to knowing Christ, "that I may gain Christ." Paul doesn't count all things as rubbish because they're so bad but because Christ is so grand. Do you see that? It's that Christ is this immeasurable treasure and that's what it means to enter the kingdom of God. It's not just, "Okay, I see that you died for my sins, Jesus. I see that you rose again. I hear your promise that all who believe in you will be saved." But it's coming face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ and realizing that nothing else on this planet compares to him. That's why there's a line of demarcation here because if all you have is just the mental facts of the gospel but you don't see the treasure, that faith will never last. You will wither away. You'll fall away. You'll be like these even pastors that are in the ministry for 15-20 years and then leave the faith. What happened? They never got to the point where they saw the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God as an inestimable treasure, an immeasurable treasure. And Jesus says that true faith is coming to that realization. That's what true faith is, it's seeing the kingdom for what it is and knowing what the kingdom is about, seeing Christ for who he is.

Jesus illustrates this, just turn to the right to Matthew 13. Jesus begins telling these parables and Jesus explains what the kingdom is like. Look at verse 44 of Matthew 13. He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Let me give you the quick interpretation of the parable. In the ancient world you didn't have banks, you didn't have cryptocurrency. All the money was traded in actual metal coins.

So whatever you had, you had to find someplace to hide it, you had to find someplace to keep it, and robbers were always coming and looking to try and steal people's money, trying to steal your coin. And so people would most often bury their wealth. In this parable, obviously the person who buried the wealth forgot about it and we don't know who this person is that is in this field, perhaps he's a hired hand or maybe he's renting the property, or maybe he was just walking through the field, but somehow he comes across a treasure in the field. So the field doesn't belong to him. Now what does he do? Notice what he does. In his joy, Jesus says, he goes and sells everything that he has and buys the field so he can get the treasure.

Now was it a hard thing for him to sell and offload everything he has? No, it was an easy thing. In his joy he does it. Why does he do it in joy? Because he sees the treasure that's in the field. That's what Jesus says the kingdom of God is like, is that you see the treasure. If you didn't get that, he explains it again, look at verse 45 and 46, the parable with the same meaning. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it." The only difference with this parable is that the pearl merchant is searching for this treasure. The man in the field wasn't searching for the treasure, this pearl merchant is searching for pearls of great value. In the ancient world, most of the pearls were brought out of the Persian Gulf and so to get those pearls you would have pearl merchants who were sitting there on the beach and you would have pearl divers bringing the pearls to the pearl merchants and selling them, and then the pearl merchants would travel throughout the world on the Roman roads selling the pearls wherever they could sell them. Now this pearl merchant is searching for great pearls, fine pearls, and it says, verse 46, he finds one pearl of great value and what does he do? He goes and he sells all that he had and bought it. Again, what does the pearl represent? The pearl represents Christ and the kingdom. The pearl represents Christ and the kingdom, and that Christ and the kingdom must be loved above everything else in our lives, that everything else must be surrendered in order to gain Christ. Notice that there is no hesitancy again on the part of the pearl merchant to sell everything that he has to possess this great pearl, and so it is with treasuring faith. So it is with treasuring faith is that it's nothing for you to renounce everything that you have to possess Christ.

Quick question: if you come to the point in your life of seeing Christ as your greatest treasure, do you see Christ and his kingdom as your greatest treasure above everything else? Jesus says everything else is but a drop in the bucket that you might gain him. We used to sing a song growing up in youth group, it went like this, it went, "All I once held dear and built my life upon, all this world reveres and wars to own, all I once thought gain I have counted loss, spent and worthless now compared to this. Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing. You're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness and I love you, Lord." Nothing compares to knowing Christ.

One more quick quote, this is from Tozer, he says, "The man who has God for his treasure has all things in one. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness, or if he must see them go one after one, he will scarcely feel a

sense of loss, for having the source of all things he has in one all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing for he now has it all in one and he has it purely, legitimately, and forever." That's treasuring faith.

So first was supernatural faith; second, childlike faith; third, repenting faith; fourth, surrendering faith; fifth, living faith; sixth, self-hating faith; seventh, treasuring faith; and now eight, urgent faith. How did I lose count there? That's the Texas A&M part.

Okay, urgent faith. There is a sense where the gospels and Jesus himself describes faith as an urgent matter, that faith, true faith has an urgency to it, and you see this time and time and time and time again in the gospels. Remember Jesus one time was in a building and people started digging up the roof to lower a guy into the room, a paralytic to be healed? Do you remember one time Jesus was walking and a woman pushes through the crowd just to touch his garment? There was an urgency about so many when it came to the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus even on the way to the cross when he's walking through Jericho, there were two blind men on the side of the road and one was named Bartimaeus and he kept crying out, "Son of David, have mercy on me! Son of David!" He saw that this was his chance with Jesus. There was an urgency about their faith and true faith when you look at it in the gospels always has this component to it. It sees Christ as a treasure and also sees the consequences of not coming to Christ in faith, and it understands that faith is not something to be put off, postponed, or neglected.

I want to show you this, turn to the right again to Luke 16, one verse, Luke 16:16. This is an often overlooked verse but when you understand its meaning, it's very important for understanding saving faith. Luke 16:16. Jesus begins by explaining how redemptive history has worked. He says, "The Law and the Prophets were until John," so which John is he talking about? He's talking about John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the last Old Testament prophet. He's saying the law came first, then the prophets, and that prophetic period went until John the Baptist but now we are in the period of the kingdom of God. Now the kingdom of God is here because the King is here, right? He says, "since then," since John, "the good news of the kingdom of God is preached," it's heralded, it's proclaimed. "I am here. The kingdom is here. Now the good news of the kingdom is preached," and notice this last clause in verse 16, "and everyone forces his way into it." Everyone forces his way into it. If you're going to enter the kingdom of God, you have to force your way into it.

The word Jesus uses is *biazo* and he uses it in a way which describes the normative regular activity of entering the kingdom. That's what he's saying. He's saying if you're going to enter the kingdom of God, the way, the normal way, the regular way that you enter the kingdom is by forcefully entering it. It's an urgent faith. The way that John Wycliffe translated this is he says, "It's making violence into it." Tyndale said, "It's striving to enter it." It's this reality of forcefully pressing your way into the kingdom, that you can't wait another moment to gain what Christ is offering to you, that you can't put it off, that you see its value and you see the consequences of foregoing this kingdom and you forcefully press your way into the kingdom.



I want to illustrate this and then we'll be done. I want you to again turn to Matthew 25. Turn to the left to Matthew 25. This is in the final week of Jesus' ministry. He's explaining his Second Coming and he tells this famous parable of the 10 virgins, and what Jesus is emphasizing in this parable is the need for readiness, the need to, the urgent need to get right with God and to be ready for his return. The 10 virgins and I'll explain to you how these Jewish weddings worked, but the 10 virgins don't represent the world. They represent the church, okay? They represent the people that are invited to the wedding.

Now look what Jesus says in verse 1. He says, "the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom." Most Jewish weddings took place at night, in the evening time, and generally speaking how it would work is the groomsmen and the bridegroom would meet at the groom's house and the bride and her bridesmaids, these are the virgins, the virgins are the bridesmaids, would be at the bride's house. And normally the wedding would either be at the bride's house or the future home of the bride and groom, but what Jesus is saying is that these bridesmaids, these virgins, take their lamps and they're there waiting for the bridegroom and the groomsmen to come for the wedding. Now these lamps would be basically a long pole and then you would have the lamp on top of the pole with basically a flask for oil, and then you would light it and then what the bridesmaids would do is when they heard that the groom was coming, is they would go out, out from the house to meet the groom and then walk back with him to the wedding. So they would go out with their lights and then walk back and accompany the groom back into the wedding ceremony.

So what Jesus says, though, is that there were 10 bridesmaids, there were 10 virgins and he says, "Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them," so they didn't prepare, they weren't ready, they knew what was going on, they came to the wedding, they intellectually understood the circumstances involved but they weren't ready. That's what Jesus is saying. So he's saying they're foolish, they took no oil with them, verse 4, "but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps." They're ready. "As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept." We don't know why the bridegroom was delayed, those details aren't mentioned by our Lord and the next verse it says, they came at midnight so that they fell asleep, you know, and I don't think there's anything that we need to read into that, that there was, you know, some people said, "Oh, the church has been sleeping and then Christ came back." You know, I think this is just they all fell asleep because it was late.

Verse 6, "But at midnight there was a cry," we don't know who makes this cry, if it's part of the bridegroom's party or if it's somebody in the house sees the bridegroom coming. We don't know who says this but someone cries out, "'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps." In other words, they all light the wick, they all light the lamp, everybody lights the lamp, but the problem is if you don't have oil to feed it, it's not going to stay lit. It's going to burn out, right? It'll be lit for a moment but then it's going to start flickering and go out.

So what happens? Verse 8, "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.'" What they're saying is, "Look, we have to think with the end in mind. If we pour out some of the oil from our lamps and put it into your lamps, we're not going to be able to complete the task because what we've got to do is we've got to go out and meet the bridegroom and then have enough oil to accompany him all the way back. If we give some to you, the lights are all going to go out as we're coming back." That's what they're saying.

So they say go to the dealers, go into the city. You know, I don't know, you know, if there would be a dealer at midnight still selling oil in old Jerusalem but they say go buy some for yourselves, wake him up, I guess. Verse 10, "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." What does the marriage feast represent? It's the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's Jesus comes back and is united with his true church, and now a marriage feast starts and the doors are shut. In other words, Jesus is saying, "When I come back, at that point there's no more opportunity for second chances. It's too late to get your oil. It's too late to get right with me. It's too late. When I come back, the doors are closed. It's game over. The marriage feast starts."

So look what happens to these five foolish virgins. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'" So these virgins, they claim to know the Lord on some level. And "he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'" I do not know you. You weren't actually part of this wedding party. I don't know who you are. And Jesus' point, verse 13, is this, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." "I am coming soon," he says in Revelation. "I am coming soon and no one knows the day or the hour," but the day that he comes with a trumpet played in the air and a shout, at that moment it will be too late for you to get right with God. It will be too late. He is coming soon and Jesus says, "We don't know the day or the hour," and so there is an urgency for you. Get right with God now.

Remember there was a man that came to Jesus and Jesus said, "Follow me," and he said, "First, Lord, let me go bury my father, let me go take care of my estate and then I will come." And Jesus said, "No, it's right now or it's never." Jesus is saying the same thing to you this morning, "It's right now or never. You follow me. You take up your cross. You renounce your old life and you see this treasure that's right here in front of you and sell everything that you have so that you can possess this treasure. Oh, and by the way, I'm coming soon and so it needs to be now. You need to prepare your hearts now."

I opened this morning by asking you about the state of your soul, where are you with God? And these questions and these realities that we've talked about, they are questions that only you can answer. I don't know your heart. Only Jesus knows your heart. I can hear what you say, you know, if you say, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," I can hear that but deep down only you can gauge whether Christ is truly the treasure of your soul. Only you can gauge that. But here's the good news: you're here this morning, you've heard this message in the providence of God, and if Christ isn't the treasure of your heart,

if you have just kept Christ on the sideshow, now, today is the day of salvation for you. Don't walk out these doors without taking up your cross and following Christ. I mean that because then your soul will be lost forever. For all we know he's coming back today. We don't know the day or the hour but you need to get right with the Lord.

I'm going to be right up here after the service, I know Kenny will be as well. Look, it's very simple, trust Christ with your whole heart. If you have questions about that, please come and talk to me. Nothing is more important.

*Heavenly Father, we are just struck by the realities of faith and the amazing grace that is offered, heaven, the kingdom forever, an eternal kingdom that will not fade away and, Lord, I just pray that we would all have the eyes of faith to see it, that we would not be entrapped by the things of this world but we would see what really matters and we wouldn't play games with our soul, we would trust Christ and enter the kingdom, we would press into the kingdom urgently, forcefully, that nothing would hold us back from entering the kingdom of Christ. We love you. We trust you. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.*

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