In spite of whatever demonic force is over this area, in spite of how we feel, whether good or bad about the state of this ministry and in spite of outward circumstances, I believe every meeting in this place should bring in the Presence of the Living Christ of God. I am not longer as interested in outward results or signs or wonders as I am in PRESENCE, and I believe we are entering a season when He will graciously come to visit us in these meetings in this place and in our individual lives, but we have our part to play. We must pray, repent, forgive others and walk in love. I long for a visit from JESUS, the only One who really matters, and I believe you do too!

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Prayer Study 340

THE LAST DAYS

LESSON TWO

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

<u>Matthew 25:1-13</u>

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish (thoughtless, without forethought) and five of them were wise (sensible, intelligent, and prudent). For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take any (extra) oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil along with them [also] with their lamps. When the bridegroom lingered and was slow in coming, they all began nodding their heads, and they fell asleep. But at midnight there was a shout, Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to meet him! Then all those virgins got up

and put their own lamps in order. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise replied, These will not be enough for us and for you; go instead to the dealers and buy for yourselves. But while they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came and said, Lord, Lord, open [the door] to us! But He replied, I solemnly declare to you, I do not know you [I am not acquainted with you]. Watch therefore [give strict attention and be cautious and active], for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come.

1. Why do I include a parable about the kingdom of heaven with a study of the Last Days? Because the culmination of the Last Days will be the Second Coming and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Here Jesus is emphasizing the uncertainty of the time of His return and the necessity of being prepared. When will the Kingdom of Heaven be like ten virgins? When He comes at the end of the age.
2. Virgins symbolize the Church people (many theologians disagree with this and say they represent only the Jewish people. I believe the parable has an immediate and local meaning but also a wider and universal meaning.) There are many in the Church today who think they are saved, but they have no real relationship with Jesus.
3. Ten in the Bible is the number that makes a thing complete. Herbert Lockyer tells us that where there were ten Jews, there a synagogue could be built.

4. Lamps symbolize one's witness for Christ.
5. Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
6. Notice that all the virgins, whether wise or foolish, nodded off to sleep as they awaited the Bridegroom. I believe that much of the Church is asleep, especially the Western World Church, including the American Church.
7. The Bridegroom came at midnight. Midnight is considered the darkest hour.
8. The foolish virgins did not take enough oil because they thought the Bridegroom would come sooner than he did.
9. We cannot borrow a relationship with Jesus. When He comes, it will be too late for those who have not accepted His gift of salvation .
10. As we discussed in Lesson 1, we do not know the day nor the hour when Jesus will come, but we can know the season, if we are sensitive in the Spirit and know the signs of the times.

I think that it is very important to emphasize again, that no one knows the day Jesus will come. Many people have made predictions, but, of course, none of these predictions have come true. In many cases they have wounded the Body of Christ and will be accountable for false prophecy. ***But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*** (Matthew 24:36).

Barclay tells us, "When a couple married, they did not go away for a honeymoon. They stayed at home; for a week they kept open house; they were treated and even addressed, as prince and princess; it was the happiest week in all their lives. To the festivities of that week their chosen friends were admitted; and

it was not only the marriage ceremony, it was also that joyous week that the foolish virgins missed, because they were unprepared." Will you be ready when He comes?

MULTITUDES IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets. Amos 3:7

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. Joel 3:14

Now, therefore, fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt, and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:14-15

JESUS IS CALLING YOU TO THE BANQUET

Then said He unto him, A certain man gave a great supper and bade many. And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must need go and see it; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have bought

five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and, therefore, I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly in to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of these men who were bidden shall taste of my supper. Luke 14:16-24

MANY ARE REJECTING CHRIST

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Luke 13:34-34

William Barclay again: "Nothing hurts so much as to go to someone and offer love and have that offer spurned. It is life's bitterest tragedy to give one's heart to someone only to have it broken. That is what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem; and still He comes to us, and still we reject Him. But the fact remains that to reject God's love is, in the end, to be in peril of His wrath."

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE HIM OR RECOMMIT YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST NOW?

Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

What really is salvation? We have wrongly been taught that salvation refers only to being *saved* from righteous wrath so that we can go to heaven. A word study in the original Greek tells us that salvation, initiated by the *born again* experience, is so much more. It includes deliverance, help, rescue from a dangerous circumstance or harmful state by a savior, rescue from earthly enemies, freedom (from guilt and sin and punishment), health, and welfare. *For ALL the promises of God in Him are "yea" and in Him "Amen", unto the glory of God by us.* 2nd Corinthians 1:20

EXCUSES FOR NOT ACCEPTING CHRIST

(source unknown)

I AM TOO BAD OR TOO GREAT A SINNER: 1st Timothy 1:15 says Jesus came to save the Chief of Sinners, and though their sins be as scarlett (Isaiah 1:18), Jesus is able to save to the "uttermost" (Hebrews 7:25) and will not "cast away" any who come to Him (John 6:37).

I AM AFRAID I CAN'T HOLD OUT: God will not permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear (1st Corinthians 10:13). We are not to keep ourselves but are kept by the power of God (1st Peter 1:5). Christ is able to keep us (Jude 24), and no man

can pluck us out of His hand (John 10:27-29). He who has begun a good work in us will continue it unto the end (Philippians 1:6).

I WILL BE PERSECUTED: Yes, all who live Godly lives will suffer persecution (2nd Timothy 3:12). Jesus suffered persecution for us (1st Peter 2:20-21), and we must not let even those of our own household keep us from Christ (Matthew 10:34-39). The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed to us (Romans 8:18) .

I AM SEEKING BUT CANNOT FIND HIM: You must search for Him with "all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). As Christ is seeking you (Luke 19:10), if you are really seeking Him, it won't take long for a seeking Savior and a seeking sinner to find each other.

I AM TRYING TO BE A CHRISTIAN: It is not "trying" but "RECEIVING!" (John 1:12)

I CAN'T BELIEVE: In most cases the reason is an unforgiving spirit (Matthew 5:22-24 & 6:15), some daring sin (Matthew 18:8), the love of the world (1st John 2:15), business or social entanglements (Mark 8:36, 2nd Corinthians 6:14-17), being ashamed (Luke 9:26). Isaiah 55:7 (*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD, and He* [JESUS] *will have mercy upon him, and* [return] *to our God, for He will abundantly pardon)* will show you what you must do, and Galatians 6:7-8 (*Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who*

sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life) will show you the consequences if you don't. Romans 10:17 (*So that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God)* shows you how faith-the opposite of unbelief-comes.

IT IS TOO LATE: The dying thief story tells us it is never too late until we are dead (Luke 23:39-43).

INCONSISTENCIES OF CHRISTIANS KEEP ME FROM CHRIST: Jesus said, "…What is that to you? You follow Me" (John 21:22). The Bible tells us that it is not wise to compare ourselves to others, that we are not to judge one another, that we are not to judge another man's servant, that everyone of us shall give a personal account to Christ (2nd Corinthians 10:12, Romans 14:4, Romans 14:10-12). Christians are trying to follow Christ and Satan is trying to prevent them, and sometimes Christians are inconsistent, but we do not follow men(Romans 7:18-25). We follow Jesus.

I DO BELIEVE, BUT I DON'T FEEL SAVED: Feeling is the FRUIT, not the ROOT of salvation (Galatians 5:22, 1st Peter 1:8). The Bible nowhere says we are to trust in our "feelings" for salvation, but we are to trust in the PROMISES of God.

REACTIONS OF THOSE WHO SAW HIM

THE EMMAUS DISCIPLES

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us along the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures? Luke 24:32

THE ROMAN CENTURION

And when the centurion, who stood facing Him, saw that He so cried out and gave up the spirit, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. Mark 15:39

MARY MAGDALENE

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked in to the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She supposing Him to be the gardner, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). John 20:11-16

THOMAS

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them.

Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" John 20:22-29

ANOTHER LOOK AT DISCERNING THE SEASONS

In Lesson One we look at discerning the seasons. We know that there are people with an anointing to discern the seasons. This company is typed by the tribe of Issachar. Issachar as an individual is not mentioned in scripture except at his birth. All other references to Issachar are to the sons of Issachar or the tribe of Issachar. His name means *he will be hired* or *he will bring reward.* The tribe of Issachar was listed as part of David's mighty men who among others were equipped for war and came to Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to David. In 1st Chronicles, most likely written by Ezra the scribe and priest, it is said of Issachar: *of the Sons of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do* (1st Chronicles 12:32a). How we need people today who are discerning and have an understanding of the times and who know what the Church ought to do.

A FINAL LOOK AT DATE SETTERS

There are over 200 predictions on record concerning the end of the world. Some of the predictors are Christian ministers who should know better. Some are false prophets, and some are founders of various cults. The predictors seem to never learn. When their predictions don't pan out, they often just move the date for His return forward. The following are just a few of those have predicted the end of the world:

Herbert Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God:
1936, 1943, 1972, 1975

The Jehovah Witness Organization: 1941

Jeane Dixon: February 4th, 1962

Jim Jones: 1967

Charles Manson: 1969

William Braham: 1977

Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Chapel: 1981

Pat Robinson, founder of CBN: 1982, April 29, 2007

Lester Sumrall: 1985, 2000

Louis Farrakan: 1991

Sun Moon, founder of the Unification Church: 2000

Harold Camping: 1994, May 21, 2011

Again, we must stick to Bible scripture. Matthew 24:36: ***"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven but My Father Only."***