Sunday, November 8, 2026

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:1-13

Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe. —Often attributed to Abraham Lincoln

If you've ever waited for something longer than you expected — a phone call, a diagnosis, a repair, a visitor — you know how time can stretch out. This is the feeling at the heart of Jesus' parable of the 10 bridesmaids. All were invited. All brought lamps. All intended to welcome the bridegroom. But the night grew long, the hour grew late and only half were prepared for delay.

Five brought extra oil. Five did not.

It's easy to sympathize with the unprepared ones. After all, who expects the groom to be *that* late? Who anticipates the long stretch of waiting? Yet Jesus' point is clear: discipleship means preparing not only for God's arrival, but for God's timing.

So, what does "oil" look like for us today?

- Oil is trust in seasons of waiting.
- Oil is prayer when answers seem slow.
- Oil is hope that doesn't give up.
- Oil is faithfulness even when enthusiasm grows thin.

What is Jesus really getting at? His parable provides a gentle reminder that faith isn't measured by *busyness but by readiness* — readiness of heart, readiness of spirit, readiness to welcome Christ in any moment. Even a quiet life can hold a brightly burning lamp.

We all face long nights: illness, uncertainty, loneliness, grief. Yet Jesus encourages us not to let our lamps go out. The late hour does not mean the groom will not arrive. It means his coming will be all the more joyful.

And when he comes, the door that opens isn't merely an entrance to a celebration, but an entrance into life with God — a joy no darkness can overshadow.

So, keep your lamp trimmed. Keep your heart open. Keep a little extra oil of hope. Jesus will not delay forever. The dawn will come.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: God of all times and seasons, help us remain ready for your presence even when the night feels long. Strengthen our faith, deepen our hope and keep our lamps burning with trust. May we welcome you with joy whenever you come. In Jesus' name. Amen.

HOMETOUCH® Activity Page

Week of November 8, 2026

Daily Bible Readings
Sunday: Acts 23-24
Monday: Acts 25-26
Tuesday: Ephesians 1-2
Wednesday: Ephesians 3
Thursday: Philippians 1-2
Friday: Philippians 3-4
Saturday: Psalms 130-131

VERSE TO REMEMBER

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

—Philippians 1:21

Can You Name the Neighbors?

Directions: What two states are tied for bordering the most other states?
Can you name the neighboring states? Try not to look at the answers below. Use this area for notes.

Answers: Tie. First, what state borders Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Missouri? Answer: Tennessee. Second, what state borders Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska? Answer: Missouri.