A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 25:1–13: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise ones replied, ‘No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’ But he said in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Focus Questions

1. Who did the ten virgins take out their lamps to go meet?
2. What did the five foolish virgins not bring with them?
3. How many virgins fell asleep while the bridegroom was delayed?
4. What did the foolish virgins ask the wise virgins to give them and why?
5. What did the wise virgins reply?
6. Where did the wise virgins go when the bridegroom came?
7. What happened when the foolish virgins arrived?
The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Directions: Spend a few moments reflecting on the painting Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins by Francken Hieronymus the Younger and then discuss the following questions.

1. What activities are the five virgins on the left engaged in? What objects are scattered at their feet?
2. What are the five virgins on the right doing? What objects are at their feet?
3. Compare the clothes between the two groups of virgins. Where are each of the groups of virgins looking?
4. Which do you think are the wise virgins and which do you think are the foolish virgins?
5. Why do you think that the artist chose to portray the virgins in the contemporary clothes of his time?
6. What event is being portrayed at the top of the painting within the cloud? What significance does it have on the main scene below it?
7. In the parable, all ten virgins fall asleep; therefore, the parable is less about staying
awake than being prepared. How does the painting illustrate this lesson?
8. Why do you think the wise virgins did not share their oil with the foolish virgins?
9. What can you do to be prepared for Christ, the bridegroom, in your own life?