

## The Walk of the Redeemed in Christ - Part 1

**TEXT:** 14 *Wherefore he, saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.* 15 *See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise* 16 *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* 17 *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

(Ephesians 5:14-20) K J V

What a light these verses cast upon the urgent need for the redeemed in Christ to walk right and draw closer to the Lord our God! “*Awake thou that sleepest*” is a solemnly plea for lukewarm Christians to get up and become “*hot*” for the Lord “*Arise from the dead*” is a call for churchgoers that are mired or “*dead*” in sin to turn from their wicked ways to pursue holiness and righteousness. “*And Christ will give you light*” – is a promise that Christ will give us the grace and show us mercy to live uprightly for Him, when we turn wholehearted to Him. V.15 expressly admonishes the redeemed in Christ to “*walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*” Christians because in V.16 Paul reminds us that, the time is too short and “*the days are [extremely] evil*” for us to be slack in any aspect of our walk with the Lord. Truly, a mere glance at this dying and changing world, confirms that there are signs the time is getting shorter before this present world passes away. We’re certainly living in some extremely evil and vicious days, where there are constantly rumors of wars, nations rising up against nations, children rising up against parents, droughts, earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, mudslides and tsunamis. The Bible says, “*All these are the beginning of sorrows*” (Matthew 24:8).

All of these ominous signs point to the impending end, doom, and gloom which are to take place before the day that the Lord finally says, “*let Us have no more of [their] abominations*” (Ezekiel 44:6) And just like that, at the snap of two fingers it will be all over. On that day the sun and moon will refuse to

shine; the stars will fall from the skies; heavenly powers will be shaken and fear will grip the mortals. Above all, the goats shall be separated from the sheep and the wheat from the chaff. The faithful servants of the Lord shall be separated from the unfaithful; *born again* Christians shall be separated from the lukewarm and the “hot” redeemed in Christ shall be separated from the “cold” unredeemed. Jesus’ disciples wanted to know exactly when all these will take place. “*But that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven*”, except our Heavenly Father (**Matthew 24:36**). Therefore, the Bible clearly implores the redeemed in Christ to be ready at all times, to “*walk circumspectly, not as fools*”, but as *faithful and wise* servants of the Living God because our Lord “*shall come in a day [we] looketh not for Him and in an hour that [we are not] aware of*” (**Matthew 24:50**). He will “*come [suddenly] as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass with great noise ...both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*” (**2 Peter 3:10**). Brethren are you ready for His second coming? Where will you be and what do you think you’ll be doing when He comes? “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*”

After the abomination that causes desolations and the tribulation that follows, the Bible says, “*The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (**Matthew 13:41-43**) the redeemed in Christ shall be gathered together “*from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven*” (**Mark 13:27**) Halleluiah! Praise the Living God for the redeemed will finally be vindicated, victorious, and have an everlasting peace with no more sorrows. There’ll be no more weeping, pains, bills and taxes, threats and diagnoses of cancer. Diabetes and fear of death will be all gone. All of that shall be swallowed up by the great fury and glory of our Lord Jesus as He shepherds the redeemed to “*inherit the kingdom prepared for*

[them] *from the foundation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34). On the other hand, it will be an indescribably dark and dreadful day for the unrighteous or the unsaved. They will wallow in eternal misery in the “*bottomless pit*” of a furnace and an “*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41).

Brethren, beloved, I am dying to ask you again, are you ready? How is your walk with the Lord? Are you truly walking *circumspectly* – and diligently preparing by living a holy and fully consecrated life unto the Lord? Brethren are you steadfastly working out your “*own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philippians 2:12), while awaiting the second appearance of the “*Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*” (Luke 21:27). Do you honestly live in great anticipation that He could appear at any moment? I suspect not many of us could sincerely answer “yes” to this set of questions. The truth is that there are still a great number of us who are living under the false assumption that they’ll someday get their wayward lifestyles together - just in time before the Lord appears. This would be okay if we knew when He was coming or if the very next minute or tomorrow were promised to us. However, the Bible declares “*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh*” (Matthew 25:13).

Our selected text, Ephesians 5:14-20, mirrors the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins: “*Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: Behold the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him! Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out’. But the wise answered saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go*

*rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves'. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'"* (Matthew 25:1-12).

This account of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is indicative of our Christian lives today. We all can identify with one of the two groups of virgins. The wise virgins got God's approval because of their obedience and sincerity and that is what He expects of each of us. God wants our complete devotion to Him and to Him only. He desires men and women who will go about His business boldly and steadfastly without worldly distractions and careless diversions. There have been accounts of modern day "wise" and redeemed Christians that indeed walked *circumspectly* with great anticipation of the Lord's coming. They devoted their lives to holiness and consecration unto the Lord. They had long forsaken this world for the lifestyle of studying the Word and praying. A man by the name of David Brainerd, an anointed evangelist to the Native American Indians in the early 1900s was one such *wise* and redeemed Christian. Mr. Brainerd once said, "When I return home and give myself to meditation, prayer, and fasting, my soul longs for mortification, self denial, humility and divorcement from all things of the world. I have nothing to do with earth but only to labor in it honestly for God. I do not desire to live one minute for anything which earth can afford" (CCEL at Calvin College). Mr. Brainerd was an ordinary man like you and I but he walked *circumspectly* with the Lord and he is still remembered to this very day long after his death more than a century ago.

The foolish virgins, mind you, were not an equivalent of today's stark unbelievers of the gospel. They had every thing in common with the wise virgins. For the sake of our discussion, I would also consider them to be churchgoing Christians. They simply made the mistake of not carrying extra

oil and they got shut out of the wedding – similar to heaven for the saints. So much for the “Once saved, always saved” doctrine. We must definitely *walk circumspectly* with the Lord lest we get shut out too. The foolish virgins got dismissed because of hypocrisy and because they did not put much thought into their preparation for this wedding day. Their deceitful hearts told them “once in, you’re in”, therefore they had no fear of being rejected (like King Saul as king of Israel) or disqualified (like Moses from the Promised Land). They took their role in the wedding for granted; they each lacked humility and were presumptuous in their relationship with the bridegroom and with the wise virgins. We know this because although seeing the wise virgins carrying extra oil should have alerted them to their vulnerability and compelled them to make provision for extra oil before it was too late, but they failed to heed the sign and did not adequately prepare. Furthermore, once the bridegroom arrived they expected that their error should be overlooked and forgiven. It was not.

The sad end of the foolish virgins should be enough to kindle our souls and prick our hearts to examine our *walk* with the Lord. Remember, they simply did not carry extra oil vessels and that’s all it took for them to miss the greatest day of their lives. These five foolish virgins exemplify the same manner in which many churchgoers approach the Lord’s kingdom and his second coming. Countless churchgoers approach His Majesty very casually with no urgency or reverence. Some of us have been deluded by the belief that all we have to do is accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and we can keep on living in our old ways with no lifestyle change. Some men of God have even boldly declared that “there is no hell” because an “all loving God could not send anyone to hell”.

Such declarations and other polluted forms of the gospel have misled many and caused many to scoff at the true gospel of Jesus Christ’s second coming. A man at my gym once quipped, “Watch out, when Christ comes back again, the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. will conspire and arrest him and put Him to

death again”. WOW! Trust me, I would not have included this quote were it not for the fact that the man who said it is supposedly a Youth Sunday School teacher at a local church here in the Dallas area. What does it say to us when one who teaches others make such comments with no regards for what the Bible actually says about the second coming of Christ. Granted, he made this comment in light of the movie, “The Passion of the Christ”. However, the Bible has foretold us, *“that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying ‘where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’”* (2 Peter 3:3-4).

To those guilty of scoffing here is a Word from the Lord to you, *“beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”*. (2 Peter 3:8-9). In essence, the Lord is patiently extending a calculated grace and mercy (*longsuffering*) towards these scoffers, evil, wicked and defiled men and women, so that may come to repentance before He wraps up this generation. But, please heed these words, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise”*. He will certainly come. He will judge both “the quick and the dead”. He will wed the redeemed in Christ and they shall live with Him happily after, and He shall be their God forever. Nevertheless, to the redeemed in Christ, this is hardly the time for us to be *slack* in our study of the Word, in our prayer times, in our quest for holiness, in our attitude of thanksgiving or in any other areas of our relationship with the Lord. *See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Amen and Amen!*