

**Word notes Sunday 7/11/2010 Tony Hodge**  
**Parables on the End Times**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

**Key Text: Matthew 25:1-13**

There are a number of parables dealing with the end times, like those on the Kingdom Jesus clearly wanted his disciples to understand some things about the new life here and hereafter. The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is well known and like most end-times parables has a bit of a sting – not all will make it to the banquet! Going through the details of the parable helps us see the main picture: that though we are saved (virgins – pure/sanctified) we need to keep prepared, with hearts and lives (jars) being filled with the Holy Spirit (oil) so that when the bridegroom comes (Jesus' return) we are ready with lamps burning bright (being light to the world).

There are other end-times parables in this chapter and it ends with not so much a parable but a comparison of how our lives will look depending on how we apply them to our lives now. Again there is a division between those who have lived in the Spirit and displayed characteristics of God's father-heart and those who have not (Matthew 25:34-46).

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

All 10 virgins expected to be welcomed into the banquet but only half got in. Likewise in the later passage both groups of people claimed not to have seen Jesus in need but only those who had responded to the need were welcomed. Discuss the following:

What is your immediate reaction to these stories in regards to justice, fairness, God's love, grace, Jesus' sacrifice?

How does the imperative to "be prepared" found in the parable of the Wise & Foolish Virgins fit with a gospel of grace?

What does it mean to you personally to have "jars of oil" as well as oil in your lamp? How full are they?

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Draw a quick and rough pie chart showing roughly how you spend your day, averaged over a week. (eg sleep, work, play, church/cell, housekeeping, TV/Internet). This will be different for everyone, some will be solitary, others interactive with other people.

Which ones have opportunity to witness? Do you feel "equipped and empowered" to witness in those situations or "lacking and reticent"?