

If Heaven Is Real, Am I In or Out?

Matthew 25:1–13 · Pastor Chris Brown · Message #70

The big idea: The oil can't be borrowed. Everyone is invited, but faith in Jesus is personal, and someday the door will close.

THIS WEEK IN 30 SECONDS

The story	Watch for	A win this week
Ten bridesmaids. Same invite, same torches, same nap. Only five brought oil. When the groom came at midnight, the door closed.	• The worrier: "Am I actually in?" • The grieving: someone thinking about a loved one far from Jesus	Everyone hears that the oil is a gift we receive , not a performance, and nobody goes home alone with a heavy question.

THE GUIDE

WARM UP Break the ice

1. Chris talked about the things we watch closely, from a game score to our finances or the weather. What's something you find yourself checking, tracking or keeping an eye on most often?
Tip: Keep it fun. Checking the gas gauge doesn't help unless you fill up; watching isn't the same as being ready.
2. What's something you've been looking forward to lately that has you counting down the days?
3. Thinking back on this past week's message, what's one thing that stood out or has stayed on your mind?
Tip: Listen closely. These answers tell you who is worried and who is grieving.

OPTIONAL EXTRA · KINSHIP QUESTION

Who in your life are you becoming more like? Are you glad about that?

How: Go around the circle, 60–90 seconds each. Say out loud that passing is fine. [Tried it? Tell us how it went →](#)

KNOW IT Understand the Scripture

1. The ten women were all waiting for the bridegroom, but not all were prepared. What's the difference between *knowing* Jesus will return and actually *living ready* for Him?
Tip: Watch for "ready" turning into "busier." The foolish weren't lazy; they showed up and took part. They just didn't have the Source.
Ask: Why do you think Jesus made the wise and foolish look identical until midnight?
Read: Luke 12:35–36 · Matthew 7:24–27 (two houses that look the same until the storm)

2. If someone said that Jesus doesn't know you, on what grounds would you object? Can you give biblical reasons you know you're saved? *John 3:16–18 · Romans 10:9–13 · 1 John 5:11–13 · Ephesians 1:13–14 · 2 Corinthians 1:21–22*

Most important note this week: Steer away from résumé answers ("I serve, I go to church"). That's the "Lord, Lord, didn't we...?" defense in Matthew 7:22. Ask instead: **who is doing the work in each verse?** Every time, it's God.

Try this: Split into pairs, give each pair one passage, and have them report back what God does in it (Essentials: Small-to-Large). Don't go around asking people to prove they're saved.

Aha: 1 John 5:13 was written "so that you may know." Assurance isn't arrogance; it's what God wants for His kids.

Aha: The Spirit is God's "deposit" (Eph 1:14). In modern Greek, the same word family means an engagement ring. In a wedding story, the Spirit is the ring.

SHARE IT Connect it to life

1. Have you seen God change someone's life in a way you never expected? What did that teach you about what God can do?
- Tip:** This is the hope question. Let the stories breathe. If it stings for someone whose person hasn't changed, gently acknowledge it.
2. Chris reminded us that faith can't be borrowed. Is your Christian life running on "oil," a genuine relationship with Christ, or on the borrowed enthusiasm of your community, family or church attendance? How can you tell?

Tip: You go first, honestly and specifically (Essentials: I go / You go / We go). Your answer sets the depth.

Ask: What helps you tell the difference between a borrowed faith and your own?

Read: Romans 8:15–16 · Galatians 5:22–23. Most of us first leaned on someone else's faith. The question is whether it has become our own.

LIVE IT Put it into practice

1. The wise women couldn't lend their oil. How does knowing that God's grace can't be transferred change how you invest in the people closest to you?
- Tip:** We can't hand someone our faith, but we can bring them to the Source, like Andrew bringing his brother to Jesus (John 1:41–42).
- Ask:** What's the difference between carrying a burden for someone who doesn't know Jesus and carrying responsibility for their salvation? What's ours, and what's God's?
- Ask:** During the message, who came to mind?
- Remember:** Jesus loves them more than you do and wants them saved more than you do. That frees us to act from love, not panic.
2. Read Galatians 6:9–10 together. Where have you grown discouraged, overwhelmed or a little complacent in sharing your faith? What would a faithful next step look like?
- Close:** Pray together, by first name, for the people who came up tonight.

BE READY: WHAT TO SAY

"I don't know if I'm saved." Thank them for their honesty, then let the group help: • Ask the group: "Has anyone else doubted? What helped you know?" • If you know each other well: name the fruit of the Spirit you've seen in their life (Galatians 5:22–23). • If you're not sure they've trusted Jesus, make it simple: we all fall short (Romans 3:23); Jesus died and rose for us (1 Cor 15:3–4); trust Him and receive Him (Romans 10:9; John 1:12). <i>"Would you like to pray that together, right now or after group?"</i> Then follow up this week and loop in your campus pastor.	"Honestly? Borrowed." That's not your group failing. It may be the most important thing said all year. <i>"I'm really glad you said that. Can I pray for you right now?"</i>	Grief in the room Don't explain it, and don't speculate about anyone's eternity. Sit with them. <i>"I'm so sorry. We trust a God who is perfectly just and perfectly loving."</i> Genesis 18:25
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Set the room: Quietly put a box of tissues within reach before people arrive. It tells everyone, without a word, that honesty and tears are welcome here.

GO DEEPER: FOR YOUR PREP

One main point Don't decode every detail (why ten? why midnight?). Jesus states the point: "Therefore keep watch" (25:13), bookending 24:42.	The wedding Betrothal, then a waiting season while the groom prepared a home (hear John 14:2–3), then a surprise night-time procession and feast.
Torches, not lamps Likely oil-soaked torches that burned fast. The extra oil wasn't overpacking. It was the whole point.	First sermon, last sermon "I never knew you" ends the Sermon on the Mount (7:23). "I don't know you" ends this one (25:12). Both about relationship, not résumé.
The door was shut Last week was Noah. "The LORD shut him in" (Genesis 7:16). The door stays open a long time, and then it doesn't.	Careful with the delay In the story the delay is no second chance. Outside it, God is patient, "not wanting anyone to perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Both are true.

LEADER NOTES & LINKS

- **Still room?** New people can join with your OK through your 3rd meeting (by Sat, Oct 10). Contact your campus Life Groups team.
- **Social & Impact:** Week 3 is a great time to set a date. [Social ideas](#) · [Impact Projects](#)
- **Leader podcast:** about 10 minutes on the questions, the tricky moments and what to say. northcoastleaders.transistor.fm
- **Monthly leader email:** behind-the-scenes news, stories and a recipe or two. [Subscribe](#)
- **Tell us:** a question, a win, or something great about someone in your group? [Send it here](#)
- **Post attendance:** northcoastchurch.com/attendance

Sermon notes (fill-in answers)



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Making sense of a strange story that makes very little sense:

Remember that **CONTEXT** is everything: Every teaching has a TIME and PLACE · parables usually have one MAIN POINT · everyone back then KNEW what we don't KNOW now.

What this means for us today:

If we take Jesus' teaching seriously then: Even though everyone is INVITED, not every person is a CHILD OF GOD · Being a child of God is a PERSONAL CHOICE that can't be BORROWED or GAINED from someone else · There will be a time where this INVITATION will CLOSE and our decisions will be FINAL.

You don't have to have every answer. Create safety, guide reflection, point people to Jesus. **Thank you for leading.**