

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Season of Hanukkah (The Feast of Dedication)

1. Rededication: a season of assessing ourselves and rededicating ourselves to YHWH
 2. Festival of Lights & Shining the Light: to shine our light we have to ourselves be illumined
- 14 "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Matthew 5:14-16*

B. Personal Dealings: Interesting season for me personally. The following are personal kairoses over the last several months that have been coalescing into a specific and intentional divine pattern.

1. In God's Presence: Derek Prince: "If had only an hour to pray, I would spend 45 minutes in worship and then specifically talk to God about my needs/desires at the end."
But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! John 15:7
2. Loving God Takes Time: If the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength then the majority of our prayer time should be focused on this—this doesn't make sense to our natural mind. Primarily pursuing this commandment in a focused way is inefficient and hard for the natural mind to value.
3. God's Love for Me: I can't love God without having a greater revelation of His love for me. The first step in the Great Commandment is for me to ask for greater revelation of God's love for me; I can't love God and others without growing in this
4. David's 24/7 prayer tent (of continuous praise/worship to God) is a profound wisdom: I discovered this anew in studying David's life; whenever night and day worship and ministry to YHWH was enacted in Israel significant blessings followed.
5. The Corporate Body of Messiah: Seeing the corporate element of the body of Messiah everywhere I look now. I'm naturally a lone ranger type of guy who gravitates to processing, worshiping, praying alone. I'm seeing the need for the body being together and ministering to YHWH in that corporate context.
 - a. "Our father who art in heaven" for us and others
6. Don't try harder, see more clearly

C. We preach best what we need to know the most - Martin Luther

II. BIG PICTURE: THE LOVE OF GOD

A. Growing in Understanding of the Love within the Godhead:

B. Abiding in Yeshua's Love: the ultimate pleasure is feeling God's love for us and being connected to Him

1. We are Commanded to:

Yeshua: *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."* John 15:9

Yeshua: *"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."* John 17:26

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (NKJV) Jude 1:20-21

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Yeshua here in this world. (NLT) 1 John 4:16b-17

2. The Proof of God's Love for Us:

⁹God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. ¹⁰This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 1 John 4:9-11

Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world.

All glory to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. ⁶He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. Revelation 1:4-6

3. Talk to Him About This:

a. “Thank You”: thank Him for His love

b. “Let me see and feel more” Ask for more revelation; Meditate on His love for us; ask Him to let us feel it more deeply;

C. Loving God with Our Everything: We have a greater ability to love God more deeply if we have a greater revelation of His love for us.

D. Loving Ourselves: we are to ask God for the ability to love ourselves as an outflow of His love for us; this is the qualifier of how to love our neighbor

E. Love Our Neighbor as Ourselves: We won’t be able to love our neighbor well unless we are focusing on and growing in our ability to love God. Loving our neighbor is the second commandment. When we put this in the first place, we get burned out.

III. THE PARABLE

A. Overview: *The parable of the ten virgins* (25:1-13) alerts us to the fact that faithful service can only be sustained by cultivating a heart connect with Jesus as our Bridegroom God. Some faithful leaders who serve with good motives work with a wrong spirit by inadvertently neglecting to maintain their intimacy with God. Jesus defined the essence of wisdom as prioritizing this. This parable highlighted that *Yeshua’s delay may be longer than expected.* (Bickle, 1)

B. Parable Specifics (Bickle, 2)

1. Lamp: Each of these virgins had a lamp, which spoke of a ministry that brought God’s light to others (Mt. 5:15-16; Rev. 1:20; 2:5; 11:3-6; cf. Zech. 4:2; Isa. 62:1; Jn. 5:35).

²*Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* ³*Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,* ⁴*but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* (Mt. 25:2-4)

2. Five were foolish: They took their lamps (ministry) but **took no oil.** They pursued ministry as their first priority, instead of acquiring the “oil of intimacy” in their walk with Jesus. Here, Jesus defined foolishness as seeking to serve faithfully without the “oil of intimacy.”

3. Five were wise: The wise ministries **took oil** in their vessels with their lamps. They pursued acquiring oil as their first priority before seeking to expand their ministry. Their relationship with Jesus is their most important priority, or “dream,” instead of their ministry assignment.

4. Acquire Oil: To “acquire oil” is to **connect with God’s heart.** The oil of the Spirit touches us in different ways:

a. It softens our heart, enabling us to feel more of God’s love for us.

b. It enlarges our love for Him by experiencing His love for us.

c. It illuminates our understanding by receiving greater insight into Yeshua’s beauty.

d. It imparts zeal for righteousness in us, which helps us to resist and overcome sin.

e. It imparts strength for present and coming difficulty.

f. “The strength, power and encouragement you receive from the Lord while shut in with Him must see you through the trials ahead.” David Wilkerson

C. Getting Oil

1. His Empowering Presence: Having the assurance of our salvation is a good starting point not a destination; we need His empowering presence on a consistent basis.

2. Our Divine Secret History: We need to grow in our secret history with God.

3. Daily Bread: We need daily provision; yesterday's devotional time or spiritual nourishment is not intended to sustain me today
 4. Dwelling in Our Hearts: The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of every Believer but there is something additional being mentioned in the Ephesians 3:16-19. As we exercise faith in drawing near and talking with the invisible God, He promises to manifest His presence in our hearts.
16that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:16-19
 5. A Slow & Inefficient Process: Acquiring oil is slow and inefficient
 6. Can Start Uninspired: Often we start out our times with God uninspired
 7. Small, Unnoticeable Incremental Changes: As we resolve to get oil, the changes are very small (usually unnoticeable) in the moment, but over the years as we continue in this resolve there are significant changes that will be seen.
 8. Corporate Element: It has a corporate element. We “get oil” together.
- D. Watch & Pray:** The Bible speaks explicitly (over 150 chapters in the Bible that have this as the primary focus) of an eschatological storm that is coming to planet earth directly before the return of Yeshua. Yeshua's admonition to those living in that generation is very simplistic. He calls His followers to the place of being spiritually alert by practicing an individual and corporate lifestyle of watching and praying. Watching would involve regularly prayerfully reading and meditating in the Word of God and to actively study the parts related to this time. One of the main focuses of our prayer is to be for the purpose of "getting oil" (Matthew 25:1-13). This is the act of placing the highest priority on cultivating a heart connect with Yeshua and growing in the First Commandment.
- E. A House of Prayer:** we in the Lighthouse are encouraged to morning, noon, & evening daily prayer times where we are intentional at “getting oil.”
1. We are calling the community to greater prayer
 2. Elder-led prayer—currently we have 14 times a week where we have devotional worship and prayer meetings. Ultimately we want all 21 morning, noon, and evening daily times filled with worship, prayer, and devotion to our King.

IV. ...BUT I'M A MESS!?

A. It's Not Contingent on Being Good Enough

14So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.
Hebrews 4:14-16

B. Don't Lose Hope

20“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear My voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. 21Those who are victorious will sit with Me on My throne, just as I was victorious and sat with My Father on His throne. Revelation 3:20-21

1. Laodicean church promise: a glorious promise for the most messed up church
 2. Behold I stand at the door and knock – love is a King who knocks at our door; there is an incredible promise for the most far-off and messed up of Believers/churches
- C. God Wants What We Can Give Him:** He wants our love. He can't and won't take it from us but desires us to love Him from our heart.

V. APPLICATION

- A. Recipe for Return:** Acknowledge our need(iness); Remember where you've been with Him; repent and return
- B. Taste & See:** There's a Scriptural appeal to experience our God

6In my desperation I prayed, and YHWH listened; he saved me from all my troubles. 7For the angel of YHWH is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. 8Taste and see that YHWH is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! Psalm 34:6-8

C. Assess: How are you/we doing?

D. Plan: What do we need to change? Make your desired plan accountable to another person

1. **Schedule time** daily to spend with Him (you will not have the set-apart abiding time with Him if you don't schedule it);
 - a. recommend a 30 minute daily minimum objective to start out if this is a new concept
 - b. recommend joining with at least a couple other people to worship and pray to YHWH together weekly
2. **Interact with the Living God:** Worship Him and honestly talk to Him during this time (use prayer lists or Bible verses if you need vocabulary for this time)
3. **Realize He loves you** and you have free access to Him because of His blood shed for you (Hebrews 4:15-16). Meditate on and think about this great love that He has for you. Thank Him for this love and ask Him for a greater ability to feel this love in your heart. On a human level, we don't have a desire to spend time with someone who is angry or disappointed with us. Beloved, this is NOT how God feels about us. If we realize (in even a very small way) that He loves us, we'll run to Him and not from Him in times of trouble.
4. **Access resources that help with this.** If you're stuck, I recommend availing yourself of others who have a strength in this area. I can't recommend more highly Mike Bickle's teachings on *Cultivating a First Commandment Lifestyle*. I guarantee that if you listen to these lessons and apply the principles that you will grow in the grace of getting oil. The series can be found here: <https://mikebickle.org/videos/?category=MB/Intimacy%20with%20God>

E. Act: Make the life changes

F. Review: Consistently re-assess your progress and make necessary adjustments

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bickle, Mike. Module #5: Forerunner Study Group - *Session 2: The Forerunner Message in Matthew 25*.