

## Remembrance Sunday

### **Matthew 25: 1-13**     **The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Are you ready? What for? There seems to be many things we need to be ready for but in these uncertain days we don't know what we need to be ready for; we don't know what will and will not be possible in the coming weeks and months.

Are you ready for this Second Lockdown? Having been through one we have an idea as to what it can be like but this time the weather will most probably get wetter and windier in the coming weeks. The daylight will lessen rather than lengthen; it will be different.

When reading this passage I was reminded of the lack of toilet rolls on the shelves in the supermarkets back in March – people deciding that to be ready toilet-rolls were essential. “Why?” people asked, yet still they purchased them whenever they could. There was never going to be a shortage in the UK if people bought normally.

The panic buying began in Australia; in Australia they source their toilet paper from China. In the UK there was never really a shortage since it is a local product.

Traditions around weddings are different the world over and without an little understanding of the wedding customs in the time of Jesus this story makes little sense.. One custom was the torchlight procession; the bridegroom may have been held up at an earlier part of the celebrations on his way to the banquet.

In the book of Proverbs the writer contrasts Wisdom and Folly as two women, here 5 young girls, or bridesmaids, depending upon the translation one reads, represent Wisdom and Folly. There is the call to be ready. Ready for the bridegroom in this case. Once again the image of the Messiah comes “to the table”.

This time last year I was on holiday in the Lake District to attend a wedding on Remembrance Sunday. This will be my second year not leading a Remembrance Day service in a Church. (I will be leading one on-line on Sunday Evening.)

For me there is something special about Remembrance Services; my parent-in-laws met at the end of the war; my mother-in-law was German and my father-in-law part of the occupying force as the war concluded. It was on November the 5<sup>th</sup> 1947 that the person who would become my mother-in-law arrived in England. There was a wedding 12 days later and the rest is history as they say.

The love they developed for each other overcame the differences between nations, it formed its own reconciliation. In 1987 I was honoured to lead a service to mark their 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

Love overcomes barriers; the love of Christ overcomes the barriers between humankind and God caused by sin. It breaks down divisions and changes lives.

May we in our daily living remember the past and share the love of Christ with those we meet that friendships are created and divisions end.

