

Home group notes - w/b 2nd December 2013 - The Day of the Lord

Use as much or as little as you wish. Do not rush through to answer all the questions; if you spend the time on just one area, that's fine.

Share two things about your likely future which you are looking forward to, and two things which you are anxious about. In what ways are you preparing for these? *Remember some for prayer later*

Read Matthew 25:1 At what time? Refer to Mt 24:3-4, and 24:15-16. *The Temple was destroyed along with a lot of Jerusalem in AD70 because of a revolt against the ruling Roman empire. But is Jesus referring to more than this? See 24:30*

Read Mt 25:1-13. *A story of Jesus using a wedding celebration as the setting. Such celebrations lasted many days, and time was not of the essence! So when the bridegroom arrived was up to him... Make sure people know the story. There are no hidden complications to understand. Maybe find a picture or model of an oil lamp of the time. If your group like doing adventurous things, you could even make some out of clay during the study or for next week!*

Clearly something to do with being prepared for meeting God / Jesus whenever his Day comes for you. *Virgin or young woman – interchangeable.*

What was it the foolish ones did or did not do? What were they presuming? In what ways are you relying on the ways things have always been, or are now, seeing no need to change in awareness or readiness?

In what ways do we need to be 'ready'? How do we achieve that state? Mt 25:13 give one answer from Jesus himself: what do you think 'keeping watch' involves? Think of a ship, or a defensive castle.

What is the chilling phrase in verse ¹²~~24~~ which we assume applies to those not ready to meet God when their time comes? How can we make sure he *does* know us?

Verse 11 echoes the people of Israel who just assumed they were fine with God, but had no living relationship with him – see Jeremiah 7:4-10. What could we say or do to encourage complacent people around us to know God and be known by him? How do we foster personal relationships with our friends? And how might this apply to our relationship with God?

NB not a reason for us to live in worry about our salvation: see Rom 10:13. But are there ways in which God is asking you to be more prepared? To know him even better? Might be different for each of us.

Can preparedness, in this parable, be transferred? Do you know people who just assume they are Christian because...?

If there is time, have a look at Luke 21:34-36 where Jesus addresses a similar theme. What specific things does he advise, and how might they apply today?

Are you really looking forward to being with God for ever? If so, what might we be able to say to a society obsessed with prolonging / saving this life apparently at all costs? How could we be practising looking forward?

Pray: for each other; for things which have come up in the study; for specific needs or anxieties about the future or about faith.