



**October 15, 2006**

Preaching: Pastor Ronni Verboom

Matthew 25:1-13

## “Be prepared; Toujours Pret”

How many of you have been or are now involved in Scouting? What is the Boy Scout motto? (Be Prepared.) It's similar in French: *Toujours prêt*- which means “Always ready”.

It is good to be prepared and ready for many things. Today's fire drill arises from our desire to be prepared and ready for a fire emergency here at the church. A focus on fire prevention happens every year in our community during the month of October. Kids have been having discussions and drills in their schools. **THIS IS SOMETHING GOD CARES ABOUT.** He wants us to pay attention to things like how we build our homes in earthquake and hurricane zones, and whether or not we wear our seat belts **IN ALL VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES IN EVERY SEAT OF THE VEHICLE.**

God also wants us to be prepared in our spiritual lives. He wants us to be prepared for his arrival in the midst of any moment, any day, and at the end of time. The parable Jesus told about the ten maidens calls us to readiness. This story is a bit foreign to us-- we don't have the same wedding customs they did in Jesus' time. And we don't generally light oil lamps, although our candles here in church are filled with oil.

So, what can we make of this story? What's going on with the oil? Why didn't the “good guys” share their oil? That doesn't seem very Christlike! Commentators suggest the oil in the story is a symbol for obedience to God and good works. That makes sense to me. No one else can obey God for you; no one else can do good and live faithfully for you. Each of us carries the responsibility for our OWN lives- for following the Way of Jesus.

How can we be prepared for Christ popping up in our lives in whatever way, form and time he chooses? The parable teaches us just waiting around isn't enough! Rev.

Leonard Sweet proposes four steps for us to be like the wise maidens, prepared for Christ's arrival.

1. Show up.

Though this is NOT enough in itself, it IS essential. Accept the moment, place or situation where you are as real, vital and important. Don't be waiting for "REAL LIFE" to start- when you grow up, or get married, or have a "real" job, or have kids or retire or "get my life together". THESE THINGS MAY ALWAYS HOVER OUT OF REACH.

2. Pay Attention

Be plugged into what is happening. Don't just "show up" like the math student who sleeps through class. Give your current circumstance everything you've got.

3. Be yourself

There is more energy wasted on trying to be what we're not than produced by all the suns and stars of the universe. You can't do numbers 1 and 2 without number 3.

4. Let go and trust God.

Allow God's Spirit to teach, show and draw you into living HIS WAY.

To review:

Let go

- into being WHERE and WHEN you are in any given moment of life;
- into being focused on your situation, giving it your best wisdom, insight and gifts;
- of trying to be what you are not, letting God's Spirit help you to recognize and claim the wonder of the lovingly crafted miracle you are;
- and trust God. He will not fail you or forsake you.

**BE PREPARED!** Show up, Pay attention, Be yourself, Let go and trust God. It's the way to be ALWAYS READY for Christ's presence in your life. And look at every fire drill in your life from now on as a reminder from God to be prepared for his arrival in any moment of time. Amen.