

The Good Oil

Matthew 25:1-13

Rev J Shannon

I was listening to my devotions this morning and the reading was Matthew 25:1-13. You know, the one with the 10 bridesmaids waiting for the groom. Some bring oil and the others don't and when the groom arrives after midnight, the 'wise' maidens trim their lamps and go into the wedding party. The other maidens asked for help but the wise maidens knock them back. The 'bad' maidens race to town to buy some oil and when they get back the door is closed and they aren't allowed in. Although I am a bit fond of the hymn "keep your lamps trimmed and burning", I've never been a fan of this reading because two things always stood out to me:

For a start, the "wise" maidens wouldn't share their oil. It was not very sharing and caring. On top of that, Jesus is set up as the rejection character when they beg "lord open up for us" and he says, "Truly I tell you – I do not know you." Ouch.

Now maybe I am hypersensitive to rejection but that just sounds like "the mean girls" to me. It seems such a judgmental rejection. I know, I know, the whole message is "be ready at all times for the Lord is coming"

But until this morning, I think I was missing the point.

You see, the real question is: what is the lamp? And what is the oil?

Think about it.

If the lamp is to light our way and light up our lives – what does it take to feed it?

In lockdown, it is easy to let good routines fall apart. I nearly skipped my devotions this morning because I'm dull today – like the weather. I didn't really want to get out of bed.

But if I don't oil the lamp – then not only can I not light the way – I can't light the world. The same goes for you too. You can't know Jesus (and he can't know you) if you are not feeding your spirit and keeping it alive and alert.

so my challenge for you is....

what routines are you doing or creating that will feed your soul – and give you a moment every day to be closer to God?