

Last Week's Sermon Summary

『The Parable of the Ten Virgins』

Pastor Takaaki Inoue
1 Thessalonians 5:1-8
Matthew 25:1-18

❶ **【A faithless and perverse generation where everyone falls asleep】** In this parable, the bridegroom represents Christ, the bride represents the church, and the ten virgins who are the bride's friends represent Christian believers. Five of them were wise and prepared lamps along with oil, while five were foolish and had lamps but no oil.

“The bridegroom was delayed” (verse 5) refers to the delay of Christ's return. Paul says this world is “night.” It is as if this world were a realm without “God who is light,” where the future is unseen. And because it is night, everyone becomes sleepy. In the Bible, ‘sleep’ signifies the loss of faith. Here too, it says, “They all became drowsy and fell asleep” (verse 5). Jesus said, “O faithless and perverse generation!” (Matthew 17:17), showing how difficult it is to keep believing in this world. The devil makes God's word seem like mere fairy tales, creating the illusion that the wisdom of this world is more real than God's word. Perhaps 90% of the world's information is about this world, while only 10% is about the kingdom of God. In this way, people gradually sink deeper into darkness until they can see nothing at all.

❷ **【The Foolish and Wise Virgins】** At midnight, a cry rang out: “Here comes the bridegroom! Go out to meet him!” All the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. But the lamps of the five foolish virgins were going out. So they asked the five wise virgins, “Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out.” (verse 8) But

the wise replied, “No, there isn't enough for us and you. Go instead to the shop and buy some for yourselves.” (verse 9) While the foolish went to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. He entered the bridegroom's house with the five wise who were ready, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins returned with their oil, they cried out, “Master, Master! Open to us!” (verse 11). But the master replied, “Truly I tell you, I don't know you” (verse 12), and they were not allowed to enter the house (the kingdom of God). “ (verse 11), but the master replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” (verse 12) They could not enter the house (the kingdom of God).

I find this parable utterly perplexing. Why didn't these foolish virgins prepare oil? Since this church has many lamps, I always peek into the cups to check the candle wax level. And if I think it's insufficient, I immediately go to the Buddhist altar shop to buy more candles. Otherwise, the flame would go out during worship and be useless. Similarly, if they knew the bridegroom was likely to be delayed, why didn't they look inside their own lamps? If they had looked and noticed there was only a little oil left, they would have realized it was far from enough and would normally have made preparations. In other words, the foolish virgins did not check their own lamps. The lamps represent faith, since all ten virgins possessed it. We must examine that faith against the words of Scripture. When we stand before Christ, we must consider whether our faith will hold up. These foolish virgins seem to have lived as if Christ were not before them at all.

Faith is something we always practice with God before our eyes.↗

Weekly Report

The United Church of Christ in Japan

Miyakojima Church

Mission Established December 1, 1957

Church Established December 2, 2001

2-6-17Miyuki-cho, Miyakojima-ku, Osaka 534-0012

TEL06-6922-1120 FAX06-6922-1120

E-mail address:

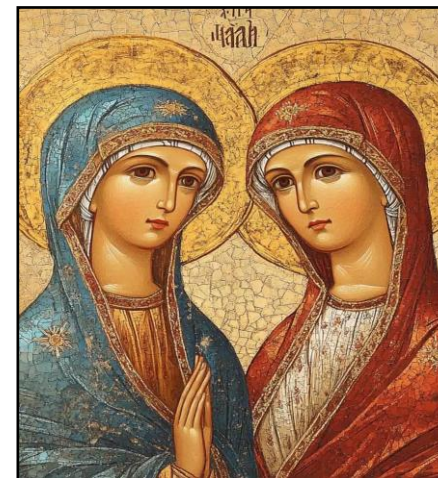
HomepageAddress: <https://miyakojima-church1.com>

Postal transfer 00920-4-1442 Japan Miyakojima

Mission Senior

Pastor Takaaki Inoue

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《Martha and Mary of Bethany》

Miyakojima Church's 2025 Mission Policy

Motto : "Let's prepare for the construction of the church "

Scripture : " The toil of those who build houses is in vain, unless the Lord Himself builds them " (Psalm 127:1)

Goals for FY2024

- 1 Observe worship services every week and aim for an average of 27 people to attend services.
- 2 We invite one person to worship in one year.
- 3 We value the fellowship of believers.
- 4 Make concrete preparations for the construction of the church.