

*Stay awake and be ready! For you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

Wisdom is a grace of God that gives us understanding and insight into life, and the power to live life well. This grace is found most fully in Jesus, the power and the wisdom of God.

When St Paul discovered the Lord Jesus and learned his ways, he set about telling the whole world about the wisdom that he had found. He even called Jesus “the power and the wisdom of God”. He went on to say that God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom; God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. God’s ways are very different from our ways. And so, we have a lot to learn about life, and about death.

Today Paul tells the Christians of Thessalonica that the death and resurrection of Jesus has changed everything for us. We now possess knowledge and an understanding of life that mean we are called to live differently. The resurrection of Jesus has given us an insight into life’s mystery; and into what will be, beyond the grave. We live our lives now in the bright hope of immortality.

This knowledge that our faith brings is not simply concerned with our death and the afterlife. It is a faith for this world and for this life. Jesus tells his disciples to live wisely, to look ahead and think ahead. Foresight is a vital part of wisdom. To be a bridesmaid and to have a lamp is not enough. Oil of wisdom is needed for the long wait and for the unexpected.

How can we get hold of such reserves of oils of wisdom? How can we be wise? It is true that life itself will teach us many lessons, and some of them will be hard lessons to learn. But there must be a school we can go to, where such lessons, such wisdom can be more gently obtained? One such school, perhaps the most important, is the school of personal prayer. To sit still, in the presence of the Lord, in church, or at home,

FIVE WISE VIRGINS



BROUGHT OIL FOR THEIR LAMPS

and let the Lord speak to your heart – this is the place where wisdom can be found.

The ancient writer of today’s first reading says to us that wisdom is to be found by those who look for her: “One who watches for her at dawn will not be disappointed.” Wisdom is a grace of God, meant for the human hearts. The proper home for this divine gift of grace. Where else would wisdom live if not in the hearts of good and upright people?

We are not know-it-alls. We do not have a superior knowledge of life. Wisdom is a gift that embraces us in love, and teaches us humility about our own state. Let us aspire to be wise every day. Let us ask for wisdom to understand one another, to encourage one another, and to witness to the Lord, who is the power and the wisdom of God.

The foolish have no oil in their lamps. They burn themselves out through a life of self-seeking and dedication to worldly cares and vanities. They do not ever think of the Lord, much less wait for his coming. The wise, on the other hand, have oil in their lamps. They are detached from themselves and from the cares of the world, and are full of charity. They are waiting for the Lord, and desire nothing else but his coming. Let us keep our minds aglow with faith, our souls aglow with hope, and our hearts aglow with love, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ



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