

Devotional

Lamp Oil

June 6, 2021

Monday

Read Psalm 119:105 (a good verse to memorize today!)

What is your story of travel (near or far) and the world opening up to you? Did you have an odd experience like the one I had in London?

I spent five days in London before going to other parts of England and Scotland and saw everything I was hoping to see but couldn't really process that I was there actually doing it. I wasn't having an out of body experience. I wasn't overwhelmed by navigating the city or interacting with the people. Upon reflection, I think I really couldn't fully appreciate that what was going on was me being in this place and experiencing the reality of it. Perhaps it was a kind of low-level shock. Was I actually looking at Big Ben? Apparently. But it is just right there. While it is really cool, it's just a decent-sized tower with a clock. And around me are swarms of tourists, businesspeople, and government officials all going about daily life. And look – I'm on the same earth. That's the same sun. I am the same me. I enjoyed my time in London, but I think I will have to go back to have a more normal experience of it.

I think we'll have a similar experience with what God has in store for the future: the new heavens and new earth as one with Jesus ruling fully and eternally. I think we will be in such shock that it will take us some time to realize that we are experiencing God's new creation, that person over there is Jesus, and we are still ourselves – resurrected and glorious but still ourselves. And that's a fact that I want you to really internalize today – you will still be you in the future God promises. I think it can be so difficult to conceive of God's future that we lose sight of the fact that the person who will be there then is the person who is right now. You will be you. Resurrected, purified of all sin, not to die again, and yet still [fill in your name].

Jesus has invited you! And I bet you've accepted the invitation if you are reading this devotional. What do you need to do to be ready for Jesus to arrive?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 22:1-14

This teaching of Jesus has more to it than we covered on Sunday (or will today), but we can look upon it as a proof for what Jesus taught us in Matthew 25:1-13 this week. Pay special attention to vv. 11-14, why was the wedding guest not acceptable and why did he get kicked out? Isn't it enough to accept the invitation?

What do you need to do to be ready for the wedding – for the bridegroom?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 25:1-13

If you consider yourself a Jesus follower, you know that you have been invited to the wedding. You also know that there is tremendous grace in this life. It is by the grace extended to you and I through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that has brought us into a loving relationship with God. It is by God's grace that we live and have our being. It is by that saving grace that we screw up and sin time and time again and we are picked up by Jesus, dusted off, and set walking down his path again on the way to the wedding. There is tremendous grace in this life.

And so what Jesus is asking you with this teaching is what are you doing with that grace: are you living a life of laziness that is taking Jesus' grace for granted or are you – by his grace – living a life of discipleship and obedience to Jesus?

Thursday

Read Matthew 25 (the whole chapter!)

Living a life of discipleship and obedience is using what you have been given to love God and love others by serving the needs of those who need food, shelter, and visitation. Martin Luther says this, "O it is a living, busy, active might thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them. Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever." That last sentence might seem a bit heavy, but that is precisely what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 24 and 25: if you are following me but not doing the work I have put before you, you do not actually belong to me. *Pray that you would be obedient – and then do that obedience.*

Friday – please read and reflect upon Matthew 24:45-51

