



# Is Your Interior Life Sufficient for the Coming Seduction?

RETURN Conference, Breakout Session  
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## Is Your Interior Life Sufficient for the Coming Seduction

### I. THE COMING STORM AND THE PATH OF WISDOM

**<sup>12</sup> “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”**

**(Matthew 24:12)**

#### A. Pressure, Seduction of Sin, and Betrayal in Relationships

1. When Jesus spoke of the mounting trouble that would come at the end of the age, He did not minimize the interior life but revealed it as the central subject that would determine our course, whether toward being victorious in love or undergoing love grown cold under fear (Lk. 21:26), offense (Matt. 24:10), lust (Lk. 21:34, 35) and deception (Mt. 24:11).
2. In an hour of emotional upheaval and trouble, wisdom is to be anchored in unspeakable divine love, comfort, joy, and stability. The fuel of this fire is acquired by voluntary pursuit of intimate knowledge of the Man Christ Jesus. Deep agreement with His purposes and His ways.

#### B. The Greatest Commodity: The Interior Oil of First Love for Jesus

**<sup>1</sup> “Then the kingdom shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. <sup>3</sup> Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took oil...with their lamps.”**

**(Matthew 25:1-4)**



1. Jesus connected preparation for the end times to intimacy with God. The greatest commodity in this urgent hour, and what is most needed at the end of the age, is the relational knowledge of Jesus depicted as oil in the lamps in Matt. 25. There is nothing more critical or precious than the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph 3:8).
2. We are to resist the foolishness of putting ministry first. Wisdom is to connect with the Holy Spirit in prayer and the Word in active intimacy with Jesus FIRST.
3. There will never be a more seducing time to make our ministries, our popularity and our favor *first* than in the hour that Paul spoke of as when “people will be lovers of self...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (II Tim. 3:2, 4).
4. We must acquire living understanding of who He is—not picking and choosing parts of Him—but embracing all that He is as beautiful and agreeing with all of His purposes and plans. This knowledge will light a fire of love in our hearts that will not be quenched in the midst of pressure, turmoil, persecution, and delusion (Song 8:6, 7). Hearts so tenderized with passion that they cannot be cooled by offense at Jesus or others.
5. This *oil* also represents our first love for Jesus that He implored us to not lose (Rev. 2:4–5). Only profound passion for Christ and deep understanding of *Him and His Return* will preserve the heart from offense and sufficiently meet the coming onslaught of seduction, fear and deception.



### C. The Path of Wisdom

1. Jesus offers a clear path of wisdom. We are to press for this oil by seeking relational knowledge of Jesus with the grace of prayer, fasting and meditation on His Word (Mt 25:1-13). This will both prepare our hearts with vibrancy in an hour of great darkness and will equip us to be a source of wisdom and truth to others in that hour (Dan. 11:33). It is this vibrant knowledge of God – the truth and wisdom superior to the seduction – that prepare our hearts to be joined with Jesus in love and agreement.
2. The *oil* speaks of the presence of the Spirit touching our heart related to the beauty of Jesus as we spend time with God (2 Cor 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). The oil of the Holy Spirit touches our hearts in many ways. Our *heart becomes tenderized*, we are enabled to feel more of God's desire for us. Our *desire for Him is enlarged* by encountering His desire for us. Our understanding is *illuminated with revelation of God's beauty*. We experience an *impartation of zeal for righteousness*, helping us in our struggle with besetting sins.

### D. A Voluntary Wilderness

1. This living reality of intimacy with Jesus comes through an ever-deepening discovery of Jesus in all His beauty through prayer and His Word. The way we do this is simple and not difficult yet requires time and perseverance. We carve out time in our schedules to come before Him in prayer, take His Word, and converse with Him over it, feeding on His beauty (Lk 10:38-42).
2. Though not popular and in direct conflict with today's culture—both inside and outside the Church—this is a *voluntary wilderness*, this lifestyle that Jesus laid out in the Sermon on the Mount. It's a way of living in consistent prayer, regular fasting, and simplicity of lifestyle so as to give more away.



3. Can we find places of solitude where our hearts can begin the journey of the fire of transformation? Will we embrace the grace of fasting that Jesus freely offers to the hungry—a grace that takes our hunger and increases it?
4. We do this not to escape from the world but to actively resist its sway and seduction in our hearts. Illusive ties of friendship and allegiances to the world get severed here as we reach out of love for Jesus in prayer and fasting with desire for the most precious and holy friendship—the intimacy for which we were fashioned (Jas. 4:4–5).
5. Acquiring the oil of intimacy with Jesus will certainly cost us. It might involve missing out on some ministry opportunities or other occasions, perhaps spending less time socially with friends or living more simply so we don't have to work as much. This isn't easy, but the internal rewards are incalculable.
6. Love always involves capacity. We think we can take so much in and still have room for the Lord. Yet over and over, the Word of God speaks of the inability for the heart to go in many directions. We cannot serve both God and money. We cannot have both friendship with the world and friendship with God. We cannot love Jesus in fullness and at the same time possess all of the lesser clings and lesser affections.
7. The interior life is not changed in a day, but gradually. He answers our hunger over time, and progressively our affections are laid hold of and our hearts begin to burn.

## II. THE LOVE THAT MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH

<sup>25</sup> ***“Then the kingdom shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom.”***

***(Matthew 25:1)***

- A. The Father is Preparing a Bride to be Made Ready for the Son (Matt. 22:2)



1. The Bible uses wedding language to describe His Return and this is how we posture our hearts related to that Day: as a betrothed bride who longs for His return. The Father will give His Son a Bride out of the nations, and as the end of the age culminates, He will bring this revelation of Jesus' identity as Bridegroom to centrality, experienced in the hearts of the Body of Christ. Knowing the Bridegroom God will be the burning light and experiential consolation that yields a perfected and mature love in the Church.
2. The Lord is zealous to bring the first commandment to first place in His Church. The Father has no intention of offering His Son a disconnected, dull, and indifferent people. The Son will return to a fervent Bride who loves and longs for Him with every facet of her existence —individually and corporately. A Church from every nation, overcome in worship, will cry out in unity with His Spirit: Come, Lord Jesus! (Matt: 22:37; Rev. 22:17; Ps. 27:4).

#### B. The Revelation of the Bridegroom

1. We cannot overestimate the power of the revelation Jesus the Bridegroom. Drinking of His beauty as the Bridegroom will be fuel of fiery love in His Bride. His joy, passion, kindness and tenderness will scatter the fog of our fears and shatter the weight of our shame. It's the revelation that He feels deep passion for us and, though we are weak, He is moved by our love.
2. Jesus is the jealous Bridegroom who gave His life for us and refuses dormant love from us. We are the beloved, chosen inheritance of the Lamb, purchased and redeemed, that He might present us to Himself in splendor (Eph. 5:25, 27; Rev. 19:7).
3. He is the holy Bridegroom who has deep delight, passion and jealous love for us. Encountering this holy heart and beauty *wrecks us* and we joyfully give Him our all.



4. One of the most common misconceptions of Jesus relates to how He feels about us. We think that He is mostly unemotional and distant, except for maybe how disappointed He is with us. Yet His heart is full of desire and love for us (Eph. 3:16-19; Jn. 15:9).

***<sup>9</sup> “You have ravished My heart, My sister, my bride. You have ravished my heart with one glance of your eye...”  
(Song of Solomon 4:9)***

5. Do you know how you move His heart? Do you know it so deeply that you believe it and agree it with it? You cannot discover Him as the Bridegroom and leave unchanged. It's meddling. It's invasive. It gets into the narrow space of the deepest heart, where we guard and defend and protect. Our guards are brought low and we are pierced.
6. We love because He first loved, and living in confidence of His desire and jealousy causes our hearts to burn interiorly, come what may (1 John 3:16).

***<sup>6</sup> “Set Me as a seal...for love (the love of God) is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. <sup>7</sup> Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.”  
(Song of Solomon 8:6-7)***

C. A Love More Powerful than the Onslaught of Accusation and Betrayal

***<sup>10</sup> “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.”  
(Matthew 24:10)***

***<sup>26</sup> “...And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”  
(John 17:26)***



1. The miracle that Jesus is bringing forth in His people at the end of the age is the splendid transformation of the global Body of Christ into a radiant church (Eph. 5:27). This radiance lies in the perfection of her love and the fulfillment of both the first and the second commandments. We will possess and impart a love that covers over a multitude of sins and is gentle and kind with accusers (1 Pet. 4:8).
2. Amidst the most adverse relational backdrop of all time, where brother is betraying brother and children turning against their parents, the Lord invites us into His burning love as the only safe place to abide and be preserved by.
3. Even beyond forgiving and blessing our enemies, Jesus wants to bring His Church to the miraculous place of seeing brothers and sisters who mistreat us as He sees them, feeling for them as He feels, and saying over them what He says. He wants to so transform our interior by the depths of His extravagant grace and love and by intimate knowledge of His heart and ways.
4. In an hour of emotional upheaval and trouble, the Church will thrive by His Spirit, anchored in unspeakable comfort, joy, and stability. No matter the persecution, pressure or darkness, she will burn with a love that many waters cannot quench and floods cannot overcome (Song. 8:6, 7).

D. The Burning and Shining Witness of the Bride

**<sup>10</sup> “My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand. His head is like the finest gold... <sup>16</sup> Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, □ And this is my friend, □ O daughters of Jerusalem!”**

**(Song of Solomon 5:10-16)**



1. Bound together in love, in the context of the greatest mistreatment and testing at the end of the age, we will be unoffended in love, lifting our voices and proclaiming together the majestic splendor of Jesus. Drawing out of experiential knowledge and a burning interior, our lamps will be filled with the oil of intimacy, shining brightly, until He comes.
2. In the time of trouble, living knowledge of Jesus will break forth out of the interior lives of the Church, like light dispersing across the earth. Love will abound in us, a love unquenched, no matter the persecution, mistreatment, deception or darkness we face. Out of hearts will come the voluntary love and agreement of Jesus—all that He is and all that He does. He is our One Desire, our Bridegroom King and Judge.

