

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Merlin Olson, the former NFL great, once observed, "One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we're not prepared." It really is embarrassing to be caught bluffing through an assignment or a business presentation. It's happened to me in a handful of Bible Studies, I'm sad to admit. You may look good. You may have a natural gift of gab. But nothing can cover the foolishness of a person who is trapped by their own lack of preparation. The gospel of Matthew relays just such a story about 10 guests at a wedding, 5 wise and 5 foolish:

Matthew 25:8-10 "The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9" But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go ... and buy some for yourselves.' 10" And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

Many people are trying to bluff their way through life; taking shortcuts on their training. They look for loopholes on their taxes. They dance with moral boundaries so as to look acceptable while still being considered "sophisticated." They find ways to rationalize their lack of character by living behind spiritual façades. But sadly, when Jesus does return, the consistent Christians will be ready while the unprepared will be out covering their tracks.

Major General O. O. Howard was once honored at a great reception. They scheduled it for a Wednesday night. But when they told the General, he responded sharply, "You know I am a church member, and I promised the Lord that every Wednesday night I would meet Him in the prayer meeting. There is nothing in the world that would make me break my engagement." This is a man who will be ready when Jesus returns.