

Todd Alexander - Tuesday Evening

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Garden of your heart that's well tilled and well watered, that Jesus is planting seeds of great faith.

For three and a half years, Jesus created a haven. It was a safe haven of ultimate trust. That was the ingredient that Jesus had with his disciples. He, he had their trust and, and they had his trust.

And I think one of the themes that we notice in the scriptures with Jesus and his disciples is that he understands that growth happens underground before it breaks through to the surface. Growth happens underground before it breaks through to the surface, and I think that Jesus had great patience with his disciples, their doubts, their fears, their concerns.

So I think the lesson that we can learn from Jesus is to just keep planting seeds, keep nurturing those seeds and trust in the power of God's word and watch care to make those seeds grow, and that should bleed into every part of our life.

So Jesus concludes his public presentations that Tuesday and he secludes his disciples for lasting, intimate, final appeal. He was anticipating Judas betrayal and also anticipating the Last Supper, and he takes great care to remind his disciples to watch and pray.

Now, that psychological impact of Jesus's last week, I'm sure it was overwhelming, and that Tuesday evening, that Olivet discourse and the Last Supper, those were defining moments that the disciples could reflect on for inspiration and instruction, and we can find all of these in, in the following chapters. Matthew 24 and 25, Matthew 13 and Luke 21:7, 36. That's Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13 and Luke 21:7,36.

Now, rather than being overwhelmed with his own safety, Jesus delivers a lasting lesson to his disciples through his example of submission to the will of God. I think that's one of the most potent things that Jesus left with them was his example to the submission to the will of God, and they could not conceptualize that idea that Jesus would, would have to die. But he was teaching them that true wealth lies in seeking the will of God. Now I will.

I grew up learning the details of these parables in Matthew 24 and 25. You should see my Bible. I have all kinds of written notes in the margins. I got one of those wide margin Cambridges, which I really love by the way. But I just recently put all of these experiences together and to consider them as an act of pastoral care by Jesus for his disciples.

Now I treasure the doctrinal insights that I have learned. But Jesus was curating Tuesday evening just like he curated the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Remember that storm that the disciples went through? They were shoveling buckets of water out of the boat. If they had buckets and Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat, they couldn't understand it.

It was against their intuition. They just didn't make sense, and they woke up and Jesus, they woke up Jesus and said, don't you care that we're going to die? I think Jesus curated that experience. He curated that experience to show them that their faith was essential.

And I think that's what Jesus was doing on Tuesday evening. He curated Tuesday evening just like he curated that storm on the Sea of Galilee. It was a living parable.

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It proved that he was the Messiah on the water. He could control the elements, and in retrospect, the disciples would see that he was the Messiah from this moment too. Tuesday evening, Jesus delivered meat in due season. He delivered spiritual energy in the form of his words.

I think that's a big idea. I think Jesus's words had spiritual energy. They were like vitamins that you could take and get spiritual energy, and I think that's what Jesus was doing. These were intimate moments that mean a lot to me.

And this is what I was dwelling on during our memorial service. These intimate moments. I called it the intimate gospel. One of the insights that we get from Matthew 24 and 25 and all of these experiences where Jesus sequestered his disciples was that energy is more important than time. Jesus didn't have a lot of time, but he gave his disciples his focused energy.

And I think what it teaches us is that five minutes of present energy is worth more than hours of scattered energy. Let's think of that five minutes of focused energy. That might be all we have during our fellowship and during the breaks. That might be all we have with our children or grandchildren. Five minutes of focused energy is worth more than hours of scattered energy.

And that scattered energy, if that's the main thing we offer our family, our children or spiritual children, then we're going to suffer collateral damage that's going to be monumental.

Here are some of the sources of scattered energy. Trying to please others. Was Jesus trying to please anybody else? No. Here's another source of scattered energy.

Worried about what others think of us? How about this? Trying to comply with political and social power influences. How about this? Trying to serve two masters.

And all of these things will lead us to an unfulfilled life and an unfulfilled mission. So here are some present energy one liners from Jesus that night, and I think these give us insights into Jesus's emotional appeal, the first several that he gathered, and these are power packed focused energy points. The warnings against deception.

How about this? Take heed that no man deceive you. Wow. Take heed that no man deceive you. Wow.

Don't you love that? That tells you that Jesus had confidence in this disciples. Peter, Matthew, John. Oh, Jesus had confidence in me. He's telling me to let anybody deceive me.

How about this? See that you are not troubled.

How about this? Do not believe it. When he was referring to the false claims of the Messiah and then he said so be on your guard.

I have told you everything ahead of time. I think that present energy, those one liners were important. Here's one about perseverance. But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

What was Jesus talking about? I think he was getting them ready for the unexpected, and I think that's what's happening right now. We don't know what's going to happen in, in the in the short term future, but we know what's going to happen in the long term future. Brother Lynn did an excellent job of showing us the end days and giving us insights into that.

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I didn't think about singular versus plural. I love that. But Jesus was getting them ready for the unexpected and that's what he's doing for you, and you're opting into that by attending to his words.

How about these one liners for watchfulness and preparedness And I've got a little coin of a little phrase for you. The ABCs of our Christian life always be consecrated the ABCs, and I think that's what Jesus was living leaving with them for watchfulness and preparedness. Therefore keep watch because you do not know on what day our Lord will come. That's Matthew 24:42.

How about this one? So you must also be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. That's in Matthew 24:44. How about Mark 13:33? Be on guard, be alert.

How about Luke 21:34? Watch out that your hearts do not become weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day close on you suddenly like a trap. He was setting them up for the wise and foolish virgins parable with that one, wouldn't he? So they could connect the dots.

And I think Jesus's call to watchfulness refers to being aware of prophetic events and maintaining a state of spiritual readiness. I have some friends over in Israel you might have seen. Met one of them on the TBI webinar we did. I think it was about 2020, I forget. But anyway, I had a 90 minute segment with a retired Brigadier General Gal Hirsch, and he's a close friend of mine and he ran the whole campaign in Lebanon in 2006 and 2008.

And he wrote a book called Follow Me, and I think this is what Jesus said to us too. He said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men follow me. Anyway, he wrote a book called follow me 18 essential lessons on leadership. I'd like to just read four, four of those lessons that he has.

Number two from Brigadier General Gal Hirsch is cultivate steadfastness.

Remain committed to your vision even in the face of adversity. That perfectly explains what Jesus was doing here. He was cultivating steadfastness in his disciples as he was committed to his vision even in the face of adversity. Number number two, inspire vision, and that's what Jesus was leaving a legacy with the disciples.

Communicate your vision effectively and motivate others to achieve it. Jesus was a master storyteller, wasn't he? And he clothed the facts. He clothed the truth in a story as powerful as anybody could ever do. So powerful that we're unpacking it even to this day.

So inspire vision. Number three. Prepare to pay a price, and leadership often demands personal sacrifices and difficult choices. It could be in reputation.

It could be that you're going to be crucified. It could be that you're going to be hung upside down and crucified. It could be that you're going to be have your head cut off. It could be that you just lose all social capital within the way areas where you make your income. But prepare to pay a price.

That's what Jesus was teaching. Play each role as your last. This is the fourth and last of his leadership lessons that I'm going to share with you. Play each role as your last, and I think that's the way we should look at the Olivet discourse as the intimate gospel, as Jesus's last role with his disciples.

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And this is where we can partake of that spiritual food.

Here are some more one liners for future events. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Don't be deceived. Persevere.

Make sure you have oil in your vessel.

So here are some thoughts that I've been thinking about in the Olivet discourse. It happened at the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem, and I think the Mount of Olives provides a symbolic backdrop for Jesus's final appeal to the disciples, and I recollect Genesis Chapter three, verse eight, it says, and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, talking about Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3, verse 8, and they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden. So in the Olivet discourse in the Mount of Olives, there was a sunset over Jerusalem. It was getting cooler, the heat of the day was turning colder.

And Jesus would be telling them the story of the wise and foolish virgins, about keeping olive oil or oil in their lamps, in their in their vessels. So picture yourself with Jesus on the Mount of Olives, and what do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell?

What do you feel? And what do you desire? Put yourself there. Go back in time and put yourself there. Get in your time machine, it's easy.

All you got to do is open your Bible, read the Scriptures, you're in your time machine. Jesus fed their spiritual minds.

They were not naked before God like Adam and Eve were, because God received them through his Son, and this is what Adam and Eve were missing in the Garden of Eden.

In the Olivet discourse on the Mount of Olives with Jesus, the disciples felt that they had arrived. The disciples saw Jesus fully submitted to God, and Jesus was getting ready and fighting the serpent on their behalf. They didn't know it at the time, but Jesus was fighting the serpent in that Garden of Eden. He was the seed of the woman that would bruise the serpent's head.

And he was fighting the serpent during his entire ministry, during his temptations in the wilderness, and even in this moment when the forces of evil were after they were lining up.

Jesus said the Son of Man must be lifted up 28 times just in the book of Matthew. That's incredible. Here, Starting with verse 17 and going through 26, here are some of the phrases. Shall be betrayed into the hands of men shall sit in the throne to give his life a ransom for many social also the coming of the Son of Man be by the way, the Son of Man is kind of a code word that his disciples would have known and the Pharisees would have known that he was the claiming to be the Messiah. Because of the prophecies in Daniel chapter and Daniel.

During my fellowship this morning I learned a really great one liner.

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Jesus was protecting sin that was lying at the door. Remember the story of the shepherd, how the shepherd's sheep would be enclosed and the shepherd would lie in front of the doorway to keep the enemy enemies Out. I think that's what the disciples would recollect after this night. They would recollect Jesus. They would think of him sleeping in the doorway, of the shepherd, shepherds of the sheepfold.

And Jesus was teaching them that sin was at the door.

But they had to fight. They had to spurn that sin.

And Jesus was doing it not only for them, but for the whole world.

Now, Benjamin Stein is an elder in our class, by the way. He's a new elder in our class, and I really like him. He has some really good insights. Very creative young man in the way he thinks, and he told me something.

He says, you know what's special about the man of olives, don't you? And I said, no, what is it? And he says, well, that's where they. The olives were taken and pressed, and the oil was used in the temple for lighting. I said, I had no idea.

And then he went on. He says, so on Tuesday evening, this light that Jesus was sharing with us and his disciples that night shone brightly from Jesus to his disciples and by extension to us, and that spiritual light, using the olive oil metaphor for lighting the temple, that spiritual light, he was shining out in Jerusalem where it would touch the entire world, and that's what we receive from his words. I think the Olivet discourse has some key points that are similar to Psalm chapter 23.

Because this, the Mount of Olives with this moment, this intimate gospel that Jesus was sharing with the disciples was a place where they could feel at peace, and Jesus would lead them to drink from the cool waters of the truth with its intimate gospel. We Learned from Psalm 22 that the details and the realities of the crucifixion were probably on Jesus's mind. We Learned from Psalm 23 that I'm sure it encouraged Jesus, that he was doing the will of God, even though he was walking through the valley of the shadow of death, and we Learned from Psalm 24 that that would have reminded Jesus of the glorious purpose of his suffering. How about these for words that the disciples could Reflect on?

Psalm 24, verses 3 through 5. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in the hope his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of salvation.

I think Jesus was showing his disciples that God was his shepherd. He was demonstrating by example that God was his shepherd. We read this in John 16, verse 32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

But I think what was happening in the Olivet discourse is that Jesus was preparing them to follow him as his, as their shepherd, and I think Jesus was showing them something really important, that perceived failure is always passed on the way to success. They would think that they failed that night when Jesus was crucified and they were scattered like sheep. They probably regretted that the rest of their Christian life. But I think that that was just the perception of failure.

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And Jesus was teaching them that you always pass failure on the way to success, and indeed, that's what happened with Peter when he denied the Lord that failure was the motivating engine that powered part of Peter's spiritual life.

There are a few things in Psalm John chapter 17, that I think are important here. John chapter 17 and verse 2. These are some things that Jesus confirmed in his words and actions that Tuesday evening on the Olivet discourse. John 17. 2.

As thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Well, that would have shown that the eternal life comes to the disciples through God's word. Verse 3 of John 17, and this is life eternal. That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.

That would give them the assurance that. That they. That would give them the assurance and comfort that over the next several weeks that they needed to get through the difficult experiences, and then John 17, verse 4, I have glorified thee on the earth, and I have finished the work which thou has given me to do, and I think that the disciples would have gotten their commission and comfort from this.

What was the work that Jesus was given to do? It was to establish the church. It was to establish the church that would live for the entire Gospel age, and this is what the disciples and the apostles would mission on.

Verse 5 in John chapter 17, it says, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was so. I think this was Jesus praying to God to show his disciples that God would move the mountains. Jesus always prayed according to God's will. What was the mountain that the disciples would move? Remember the.

If you. If you say to this mountain, get out of here, it would be cast into the sea. Remember that. I think that mountain was Satan's kingdom. The present evil world.

The God of This air, the God of the powers of the air, and I think that was the mountain that Jesus was moving in the. With the ransom that the disciples could look back on and say, oh, that's what. That's what Jesus meant.

One of the things that always puzzled me is the reason for the disciples question in Matthew, chapter 24, verse 3. I've always been curious about this. Matthew 24, verse 3, and as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?

So why did you think the disciples asked Jesus that question? Well, I think it was because the first advent was so obscure and it could only be seen by faith, and I think that's a warning to us. We can actually miss the real Jesus. We can think that Jesus is in the bits and bytes of the truth.

We can think that Jesus is in the details of the doctrinal understanding of the harvest message. That's a blessing. The harvest message is a blessing. The bits and bytes of the truth is a blessing. I am thankful that my dad taught us the Bible growing up and we had to read the Bible every night and it was awful at the time, but I'm sure thankful I.

I had that experience. But I think that Jesus was. I think it's easy for us in our world today to miss the real Jesus, and I think this is why the Pharisees missed him.

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Do we live our life in the world in a way that Jesus is obscure to us?

Do we live our life in the world today in a way that Jesus is obscure to us? How about our life?

Well, the key themes of the Olivet discourse that informed my celebration of our Lord's memorial this year were the signs of the times. The destruction of the temple, the second presence of the Son of Man, preparedness and watchfulness.

That's one of the things I struggle with. Pay attention. Todd. Todd, are you listening to me? Did you hear a word I said?

The parables that teach preparedness, these same themes are important to us at the end of the age. The wise and foolish virgins, these are really important to us. We don't have to fear because we rest safely in the arms of a loving God and we have Jesus example of courage in the face of adversity, and we are inspired by our vision of present truth. With the harvest message, we understand what's going to happen, that there's a loving plan that's going to save all mankind.

We should Be prepared to pay a price. We should be prepared to play each role as it was our last.

We should be always watching, always praying, remaining in heart communion with God.

The wise and foolish Virgins is a fascinating parable, and we understand the meaning behind it as being. It's important for the wise virgins who were watching to keep their vessel filled with oil, and in fact, the rest, the parable of the talents follows the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and the parable of the talents tells us how to keep our vessel filled with oil. It's by using our talents to dive into the Scriptures and to apply those scriptures and to do the work of God.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins answers the when and the how of Jesus Second Presence. In that parable, the foolish virgins were panicking. But what I've learned in life and what I think Jesus teaches in life is that spiritual problems are not solved emotionally. Spiritual problems are not solved emotionally. They're solved with strategy, they're solved with math, and it's solved with emphasis on the protection of our faith.

Those are the things that we can add to our faith, and this is what Jesus was teaching the disciples during the Olivet discourse. He was teaching them the things that they can add to their faith. He was teaching them the things they can subtract from their life, and they he was teaching them how they can protect their faith from distractions.

The disciples question the when and the how of his second presence. This parable is the answer, and we need to think of ourselves as Jesus disciples to understand the power of this parable, because a lot of the messaging applies to us at this time. All the disciples had grown weary of waiting. All had a lot in common.

Only half were wise, the virgins were wise, and half were foolish. Only half of them were wise about their purity. The wise were full of zeal, they were full of faith. They were fervent in love, and they were quick to obey, and the foolish were careless.

They were lacking in faith and love, and they did not value the oil as much as they valued the lamp. Think of that. They did not value the oil as much as they valued the lamp. They had just enough oil in their lamps for some amount of time, but not enough to keep it lit during the bridegroom's delay, and guess what?

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The bridegroom took longer than expected. But the five wise virgins worked to keep their lamps full all the time.

So, brethren, in conclusion, in this intimate gospel of the Olivet discourse, Jesus warned his disciples. He warned us about the difficult realities ahead, and he painted a prophetic picture of wars, of famines, of earthquakes, of persecution and even his own betrayal, and he spoke of a great tribulation, of unparalleled suffering. But through these warnings he wove threads of reassurance and hope.

And this hope demonstrated his intimate care for his disciples, his intimate care for us, the emotional well being of his disciples, the emotional well being of us, and the preservation of our faith, and he repeatedly urged them not to be alarmed. Well, have you ever tried to do something when you were afraid? You can't. You can't think when you're overcome with fear.

And that's what Jesus was telling us. Because we know the scriptures, we don't need to be alarmed. Jesus was acknowledging the fear that such events would produce. But his consistent encouragement served as a gentle hand on their shoulders, a verbal embrace in the face of future turmoil.

The big message is that Jesus emphasized the necessity of perseverance by giving them these parables and these markers or these prophetic markers, he empowered them with knowledge and he reduced in them their potential for confusion and despair when these events began to unfold. Do you feel Jesus speaking to you? I do. I. I think Jesus could be saying, hello, Todd.

When you see these things happening, remember my words and don't lose heart.

I think the parable of the fig tree. The parable of the fig tree. Wise and faithful virgins, the talents. These underscore Jesus's concern for my spiritual preparedness and vigilance. A lesson that they would treasure for the rest of their days and a lesson that we can treasure for our day.

A treasure that they would use to dispense bellies of living water to willing hearers and a treasure that we can use to dispense bellies of living water from which there is no thirst.

So, brethren, we're thankful to be with you. We're thankful for the sacrifices of the brethren at this convention and the gift of Jesus's words. That Tuesday evening is the blessing of you becoming all that God has in store for you and for your experiences of suffering and growing in Jesus to be used for the healing of the nations, and my wish is that you might be about that business. Keep your vessel full of oil and think of Jesus speaking to you that Tuesday evening.

Amen.