

*“Stay alert. You have no idea when the bridegroom might arrive.” Matthew 25:13 The Message*  
What does it mean to stay alert? How are we to wait?

Jesus talks to the disciples about when the Son of Man would come (Matthew 24)—How would they know?  
Jesus tells them to be ready—they won’t know the time—no one does—not the angels or Jesus  
Only God knows  
He tells them not to be lured by those pretending to be the Son of Man  
You **know** me—don’t be fooled by those you don’t **know**  
Jesus says they won’t miss the arrival of the Son of Man  
In fact, no one will miss it—but not everyone will be ready

Then he tells this parable about the 10 bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13)  
They all had lamps because it was evening—but not everyone had extra oil  
The bridegroom was delayed so they fell asleep  
When he finally came someone called out that he was there  
Those with extra oil jumped up, added oil to their lamps and ran out to greet him  
Those without extra oil found that their lamps had gone out  
They asked the others to share, but there wasn’t enough to go around  
So, they went to buy some  
But before they got back the bridegroom came  
Those that were there and ready, went into the wedding feast  
Those that had gone to buy oil missed out because they weren’t ready

What does it mean to stay alert? How are we to wait?  
First—it doesn’t mean we don’t sleep or have down time—All 10 virgins slept  
Be ready for it to take longer than you expected  
Don’t lock yourself in to the expected time frame  
Wait with supplies, emotional readiness, whatever is needed  
Be ready to **“go”** whenever God says come/go/do/be—whatever God says  
Let the **“yes”** be in you  
But more than that—being ready means doing the thing God has called you to do  
Waiting is active—not passive

The very next parable is the one about the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)  
Man going on a journey gave his servants 5, 2, and 1 talent  
Or, in today’s dollars... 2½ million dollars, 1 million dollars, \$500,000  
Those who did well doubled their investment  
The one who saved his \$500,000 for safe keeping, returned it with no more  
So, clearly waiting means taking what we’re given and using it in the kingdom  
In fact, we’re encouraged to take risks with what we’re given  
Jesus told the one who played it safe to *“...give [his talent] to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this ‘play-it-safe’ who won’t go out on a limb.” Matt 25:28 The Message*  
Waiting and readiness doesn’t mean playing it safe

Readiness is abandoning ourselves to God—risking everything to follow God

I'm convinced that the Christian community that focuses on the Second Coming, has missed it  
Spends time thinking and studying about that  
Puts all their "eggs in that basket"  
They misunderstood what it means to be ready and waiting

Next Jesus goes on to tell another parable (Matthew 25:31-46)

This one takes place in the final sorting place— "*When he finally arrives...*"

People are sorted like a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats

But it is interesting to note along what lines people are sorted

Who gets in and who stays out?

Not divided along...

Jew vs. non-Jew

Circumcised vs. not circumcised

Baptized vs. not baptized

Born again vs. not born again

Those who brought people into the kingdom vs. those who didn't

Religious vs. not religious

How often you go to church

Morals

etc.

But we are divided by those who do the works of Jesus

*I was hungry and you fed me,*

*I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,*

*I was homeless and you gave me a room*

*I was shivering and you gave me clothes,*

*I was sick and you stopped to visit,*

*I was in prison and you came to me. Matthew 25:35-36 The Message*

Doing the works of Jesus— early in Jesus' ministry, he went to the temple

He took the scroll and read from the prophet Isaiah

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the*

*oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19 NRSV*

*The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am **giving you the same work to do that I've been doing.** You can count on it. John 14:12 The Message*

Do the works of Jesus as we abandon ourselves to this risky venture with God

Romans 4:12 in the Message Bible says it this way...

*A people who are willing to live in the risky faith-embrace of God's action for them.*