

The Midnight Cry

by Andrew Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of responding to the call of the midnight cry and coming to Jesus now, before the door of mercy is closed forever.

Scripture: John 6:37, Ephesians 1:6, 2 Peter 3:15, Revelation 3:18, Revelation 5:12, Revelation 22:16

Topics: "Second Coming", "Salvation"

Description

Andrew Miller preaches about the long-suffering and patient grace of the Lord Jesus as depicted in the parable of the ten virgins, emphasizing the importance of being prepared for His second coming. The door of mercy is open, and the Lord is waiting in grace to receive and pardon all who come to Him, actively seeking and saving the lost. The parable serves as a solemn warning to the careless and a comforting message to those eagerly awaiting His return, highlighting the urgency of responding to the call of salvation before it's too late.

Transcript

The long-suffering and patient grace of the Lord Jesus shine very sweetly to faith in the parable of the ten virgins, which represents the great body of professing Christians, true and false, wise and foolish. The heart loves to dwell on Him who lingers in His compassion for those who are still outside; who have the lamp of profession, but no oil to sustain the light. He is unwilling to shut the door. Wide open it stands, both night and day, speaking after the manner of men. Seven times the blood of the cross is sprinkled on the throne, and seven times before it. God's claims are fairly and fully met; the throne and the way up to it are reconciled; and whosoever will may now enter in through faith in that precious blood. All who come are pardoned and "accepted in the beloved." . . . "Him that cometh to me," says the blessed Lord, "I will in nowise cast out." Thus the way is open to faith, and thus it remains, during the period of the Lord's long-suffering. "And account," says Peter, "that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." He lingers on the throne, He keeps the door open, for the salvation of souls. Precious thought! He waits for the salvation of lost sinners. May we share in His sympathies, and seek to win souls for Him. Ephesians 1: 6; John 6: 37; 2 Peter 3: 15.

But not only is the door open, and the Lord waiting in grace to receive and pardon all who come to Him, His love is active and unwearied - it goes out to seek as well as to save the lost. The midnight cry, so full of solemn warning to the utterly careless and mere professor, is full of comfort to those who are looking and longing for His coming. To the latter it will be a morning of cloudless joy, the dawn of eternal day: to the

former it will be the beginning of endless sorrow, confusion, and eternal night.

But why not listen to the cry now? It is full of the purest mercy and affectionate warning, It as good as says, "Why will ye die?" "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Once more hear and weigh these words, of priceless value, because they seek to awaken the careless from their fatal slumbers, and the wise virgins from their unwatchfulness. "And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Who can mistake the meaning of these words? The midnight, we are assured, is past, the morning must be near; hope springs up in the heart; like the chilly night traveller, who hails with transports of delight the first appearance of the morning star. There, unbelief would be folly, or worse. Who would think of denying that the morning must be near when the midnight is past? And thus it is now to faith and hope, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Already the church, as awakened by the Spirit, has heard His voice, and responded to His expecting love. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22: 16, 17.

But we dwell not at present on the beautiful attitude of the church as here presented; our thoughts turn for a moment to the foolish virgins and the utterly careless.

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven is the one all-important event placed before both saints and sinners in the New Testament; not death, as is commonly said, or the uncertainty of life. Of course, we may die, and life is always uncertain; but the testimony of scripture is not to these, in order to arouse the slumbering virgins, but to the coming of the Lord. When He comes, the real condition of all is manifested, whether in the vigour of youth, and dreaming of many years to come, or in the feebleness of age, and feeling that the end is near; or whether making a profession of Christianity, or living according to the course of this world. And as this great and decisive event may take place, for anything we know, before the dawn of another day - before this paper is finished - should not the thought of it, the terror of it, awaken, alarm, arrest the most careless?

All who have heard the gospel of the grace of God - all who have been invited to come to Jesus - and especially all who have heard the midnight cry, but have persisted in a course of unbelief - will then be judged by the Lord as unworthy of that which they have despised, and the door of mercy will then be closed against them for ever. The wise virgins, true Christians, will go in with Christ to the marriage, and the door will be shut. But, like the door of the ark, it will now be shut by the hand of the Lord, and none can open it. Against all who refused to enter in while it stood open, it will be closed for ever. The awakening will now be terrible, but too late. "And the door was shut." This will prove an overwhelming reality to those who can find no admittance, and no oil to buy. Eternal darkness must now be their doom, and they know it. The scene is too awful to contemplate, but the Lord has said enough to convince us of what will then be, and to warn us while the door still stands wide open.

It is perfectly clear, we think, both from this parable and other scriptures, that great excitement will prevail among the foolish virgins immediately the church is gone. They are evidently taken by surprise, and astonished to find that there is no hope - that the Lord will not open the door to them. Like many in the present day, they intended to be saved, but not until it suited themselves. They never dreamed of being shut out, but of surely being saved at a more convenient season. Nearly all their relatives, friends, and acquaintances, were Christians; they are now inside; the eternal song begins; the sight of Jesus fills the enraptured throng with joy unutterable; their hallelujahs wax louder and louder; all catch the flying joy, and

rolling round the rapturous hosanna, fill the vast regions of glory with their new, eternal song of loftiest praise. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," with a loud voice they cry, "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, glory, and blessing." Revelation 5: 12.

But, once more, what of those outside? They cry too, but with a loud and bitter wail: "Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." This is decisive; there is no appeal from His tribunal. The heart sinks in despair, to be lifted up no more for ever. Oh! that careless souls would think of such things now; it is lacerating to our every feeling to write them, what must it be to endure them in hopeless despair! In Luke 13 they are represented as knocking at the door, and saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. This clearly shows that they had not only been professors, but that they had enjoyed great privileges. Of course, there is no door to knock at but the language conveys the most distressing thought of their disappointment and agony of mind; and this may continue until they fall into the hands of Satan, and believe his lie. (2 Thess. 2: 10-12.) But how could it be otherwise? From some families all will be gone save two or three; from others, only two or three will be gone; and some houses will be left without an inhabitant. Chiefest friends, too, and nearest relations, will be parted, to meet no more for ever. Then the awful thought will burst upon their bewildered minds with undisguised reality: What we refused to believe has taken place - the Lord has come, the church is gone, the door is closed, and over it is written, "There is no hope." But those who have been caught up will neither hear their cries, nor witness their agonies. In their bodies of glory, they are far and for ever removed from all scenes of suffering. The lower things will be forgotten in our occupation with the higher.

How merciful and gracious, then, my dear reader, is the warning voice of our parable! "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Time enough is given thee between the midnight cry and the Bridegroom's arrival to prove thy state, and find oil to buy. Thou knowest the easy terms on which the oil is sold - "without money and without price!" The door is open, the oil is free, free to the poorest, free to the vilest, free to thee. Come to Jesus just as thou art, but see that thou come now. There is not a moment to lose. Haste thee; flee to Jesus. Canst thou afford to lose Him, and all the friends thou holdest dear? What would be the value of all thy property and thy pleasures, if the door of heaven were shut against thee? Rich thou mayest be now, but then thou wouldst be poor indeed - Christless, friendless, homeless, godless, heavenless, hopeless. Come, then, oh come! Come as thou art! But, oh, come now! Thou wilt find all in Jesus - blessed Jesus! There is no oil, no saving grace, no Holy Spirit, no eternal life, save in Jesus; but all are thine; thine now, thine for ever, through faith in His blessed name. Oh, trust in Him alone!

When the sight of Jesus bursts upon the gaze of the wise but once slumbering virgins, what thinkest thou will be the shout of their praise? Better come and join the joyful chorus, than swell with thine own agonies the bitter wail of the lost in hell. I will now leave thee, but I hope not for ever, with the encouraging, assuring, word of Jesus: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see." Revelation 3: 18.

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