**Burnt Out**

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.” —Matthew 25: 1–10

**Insight**

Are you waiting for something that seems like it’s taking forever?

How are you handling the wait?

What are you doing in the wait?

And have you ever thought of what you will actually do if and when that thing actually happens? When that moment arrives? When that person enters your life? When that dream happens? When that job offer comes?

What then?

*Are you prepared?*

The “Parable of the Ten Virgins” reminds us of the importance of being ready when that thing we are dreaming about actually happens. And it convicts me of my behavior these past few months.

You see, I dream of writing books, and I’ve actually had some recent interest in my ideas. I’m also a freelance editor, and I’ve spent a number of years encouraging other writers to be patient and not give up during the journey toward publication—to keep on submitting, that numerous rejections are common, and to keep on building “platform” (blogging, pitching articles, Instagramming, etc.).

Yet here I am after the quiet of ONE agent submission to the book I feel God calling me to write, and I’ve folded. I’ve given into feelings of rejection and have just about stopped writing these past few months. I spend time scrolling through other writers’ Instagram feeds and feeling quite bad about myself.

I let my oil almost burn out.

But God. He uses His word—His stories—and whatever is available and happening in our lives to speak to us if we will listen.

He is speaking to me now through the “night” to keep making preparations—to keep my oil jar filled. In this case, it could mean returning to the Tuesday morning writers’ chats that fuel my creative fire, preparing a proposal to the other two agents and one editor who expressed interest, starting that Facebook page I’ve been thinking about for months—*THE GROOM IS COMING*. God birthed this book idea. The dream will be fulfilled. This just might not be the door-opener—the “groom” for my manuscript, per say. Or, maybe it is, and it just isn’t time yet. (I haven’t yet received an official rejection.) And will I be ready for it? How am I preparing not only in practical ways but also spiritual ways? Am I spending time in study with the Lord? Am I letting Him use this time to build character and strength and confidence?

While I realize I may be taking great liberties with this biblical passage, it spoke to me in a personal way, a way others may also relate to.

Is there an area of your life taking too long between the anointing and the appointing (as Danny Rogers so awesomely illustrated in his sermon this past Sunday)? David was anointed king as a youth, but it took YEARS for him to be appointed king. How can you wait with purpose? How can you prepare in the time between the anointing and the appointing?

*Wait for the Lord;*

*be strong and take heart*

*and wait for the Lord. —Psalm 27:14*

**Reflection**

* Is there something in your life you are waiting for? Preparing for? Called to do? How can you wait “well” and not grow discouraged? What can you do to make sure you are ready when the “bridegroom” arrives?
* How can you keep the “oil jar filled” in those times of waiting?

**Prayer**

Father God, help us to keep hope when the waiting is taking longer than we had expected. Help us to be patient and keep our lamps of hope, joy, and expectation burning steady as we wait for your promises for our life. Help us to prepare well in the wait. Show us step by step the practical and spiritual ways we can *wait well*—with purpose and intention and expectation—and help us hear your voice, Lord.