

Adult Group Study Guide for July 5, 2020
Keeping Hope Alive
Matthew 25:1-13

Goal: To find ways to keep hope alive in times of despair.

Key Verse: “*Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*
- Matthew 25:13 (NIV2011)

1. Victor Frankl noticed that the difference between those who survived and those who perished in a Nazi concentration camp was the hope they had. What has helped you get through the most difficult times in your life? Where are you placing your hope in this time?

2. Review the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids in Matthew 25:1-13. What seems strange in this story? How does knowing some of the historical context help? [Notice the accepted custom of waiting for the groom and a different sense of the passage of time.] Why was it so important for the bridesmaids to be prepared for anything to happen?

3. Read the following Scripture passages: Matthew 9:14-15; 22:1-14; Ephesians 5:22-32; and Revelation 19:6-9. What do these verses have in common? In what way is the bridegroom already here? In what way are we still waiting for the wedding?

4. What evidence can you find in your experience that supports Spiritual Truth #1 – The Already, but Not Yet of the Kingdom of God? What is the best way to handle the despair that may come when we become acutely aware of the “not yet”?

5. Read Romans 5:1-5. How do these verses support Spiritual Truth #2 – A formula for Hope? What link does Paul make between suffering and hope? What are the steps toward hope?

6. Pastor Tanner ended his message by talking about Spiritual Truth # 3 – Participatory Waiting. Review the story of the Ten Bridesmaids in Matthew 25:1-13. What should we do while we are waiting for the bridegroom? How does it help to remind ourselves that it will probably get dark before the groom arrives? What can you do to keep your lamp burning?

7. How would you answer the two questions below from NT Wright’s book called *Surprised by Hope*? How will your answers shape your life?
 - a. What are we waiting for?
 - b. And what are we going to do about it in the meantime?