

Keep Watch (1)

- When do we "keep watch"?
 - and for what?
 - what abilities do you need to display to be good at keeping watch?

Ten Virgins

- Reference to contemporary engagement customs!
 - Jules and Dave, Ruth and Euan!!
- First century wedding customs: betrothal, great commitment, then bride-groom would go and collect bride from her parents house and bring her back to his place, where there would be the party....
 - there would folk accompanying the groom to go fetch the bride, but would have been mostly male friends and family
 - and there would have been a wider group accompanying the bride and groom together...
 - but the female relatives of the groom would have been left at the groom's home, the place where the party was to be held, ready to welcome the groom and his bride... at whatever time they arrived!
 - in Jesus' story, some of the girls were ready for the return, had thought ahead, had counted the cost and made sure they had enough oil; they were serious about their aim of welcoming the groom when he returned with his new wife;
 - contrast is with those girls who were not ready, who hadn't counted the cost; who were prepared to leave their post rather than wait empty handed for the bride-groom; who hadn't thought: what will it be like when he comes back?

Keep Watch (2)

- *2 sides to this keeping watch...*

Warning: Charlie Peace

- In July, 1854, Charlie Peace, a well-known criminal in London, was hung. The Anglican church has a ceremony for everything! Even for hanging... So when Charlie Peace was marched to the gallows, a priest marched behind him and read these words from the Prayer Book:
 - *"Those who die without Christ experience hell, which is the pain of forever dying without the release which death itself can bring."*
- When those chilling words were read Charlie Peace stopped in his tracks, turned to the priest, and shouted in his face, "Do you believe that? Do you believe that?"
- *The priest, taken aback by this sudden verbal assault (by a violent criminal), stammered for a moment and then said, "Well.... I.... suppose I do."*
- "Well, I don't," said Charlie, "But if I did, I'd get down on my knees and crawl all over Great Britain, even if it were paved with pieces of broken glass, if I could rescue just one person from what you just told me."

Eagerness

- Flip side, hinted at here more than explored, is anticipation of heaven:
 - most wonderful party and celebration ever
 - bundle all the excitement and eager anticipation you can imagine, take away any fear of let-down or disappointment...!

Conclusion: If you died tonight, would you be ready?

- *An Australian minister told of how a man stood up in a midweek prayer service at his church and gave a testimony: "I was at King's Cross in Sydney (city centre area, where homeless hang out), waiting for a traffic light to change so I could cross the road. As I stood, there someone tugged on my jacket, and when I turned this shabby-looking man looked at me and asked, "Sir! If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?" That question haunted me for more than three weeks. I could get no rest as it came back to me time and time again. I had to find an answer to it, and I found that answer in Jesus."*
- A couple of years later, another man stood in the same church and gave a testimony that had an incredibly familiar ring to it. He, too, had been at King's Cross in Sydney, when a derelict man pulled on his jacket and asked him the simple question, "If you were to die tonight, do you know where would you spend eternity?" This second man giving his testimony went on to say that that question haunted him for several days and eventually drove him to his knees, and motivated him to give his life over to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 25:1-13 Jesus says: Keep Watch Fintry, 24/2/2008, am

- *A couple of years later the minister himself was in Sydney. He went down to King's Cross on the outside chance that he might find that derelict man. He stood on the corner scanning the faces of the people around him, and he felt someone tug on his jacket. When he turned, there was a man who was obviously poor and ragged. Before the man could say a word, the pastor raised his hand to silence him and said, "I know what you're going to say. You're going to ask, if I was to die tonight, where would I spend eternity?"*
- The old derelict was amazed and asked how the pastor knew that. The pastor told him about the two men who had given testimonies at his church and how they had become Christians because of the haunting question he had raised when they visited the city. The man was reduced to tears and said, "Mister, some eight years ago I was an old drunk. But then I gave my life to Jesus. I'm uneducated. I don't know how to say or do much. The only thing I could think of was to go around and ask people this same question over and over again. I've been doing it for eight years, mister, and today was the first day I had any idea I was doing any good at all!"
- If we were to die tonight, would we be ready?
 - how have we responded to what Christ has done for us, using what He has given us for his glory?
- *Name to yourself one thing you want to act on... pray it through, God's help in that change...*