

Do You Have Oil in Your Lamp?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become integrated into our daily lives. It has evolved into an incredibly intelligent servant for humans for now. This AI can serve as a virtual friend, create poems, summarize books, and create images. It can even act as a counselor, a doctor, and a lawyer. This technology looks exciting and useful. My Chat Bot doesn't seem to be threatening. However, it also poses a frightening challenge as it surpasses human intelligence capabilities.

AI supercomputers are used in national surveillance systems in China, the U.S., and other countries. These systems can monitor and record all conversations and movements of individuals, leaving nothing hidden. This is not a new concept. For instance, ten years ago, Chinese police officers were equipped with AI glasses that could instantly provide personal information about individuals passing by. What are your thoughts on this issue?

We all feel that we are living in the last day of the last day. After Jesus came to the Earth, the last day started. Prophets say Jesus will come back very soon. The second coming is known as the Parousia, is mentioned over 1,500 references in the Old Testament to over 300 in the New Testament. It is mentioned eight times more often than the first coming of Christ as a human being two thousand years ago. Today's parable lets us to be aware of our preparation of Jesus' second coming.

Today's ten virgins parable starts with the passage: "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom." This parable has many possibilities of interpretation since it is written in the language of metaphor. I will focus more on the way that is more helpful for our preparedness for the Lord.

This parable reflects the marriage customs of the Jewish tradition, which may be unfamiliar to us. At that time, after the betrothal, the bridegroom goes back to the father's house and prepares a place in the father's house for their future new life. Betrothal is almost like a marriage in that custom. When he prepared, usually it takes one year, the bridegroom had to go back to the bride's house and bring her to their new home. The bride did not know when the bridegroom would arrive. When the bridegroom finally arrived, all of his friends shouted that the groom was coming and started their marriage celebration joyously.

Who is the bridegroom the parable? Jesus, who is a King bringing a new messianic world to earth. The story features two groups of bridesmaids, Until the bridegroom comes, we do not know who is foolish and who is wise. All ten bridesmaids have come to the wedding, all have their lamps, and all are dressed for the wedding. It is not their appearance, lamps, or attire that distinguishes the wise from the foolish, but rather their preparedness with oil. Five of the bridesmaids have prepared enough oil, while the other five have not. When the bridegroom does

arrive unexpectedly, all the bridesmaids, tired from waiting, fall asleep. Upon hearing the announcement of the groom's arrival, they all awaken and rush to light their lamps. The foolish bridesmaids realize they do not have enough oil and ask the wise bridesmaids to share, but the wise refuse.

Their rejection makes our heart uncomfortable. However, this parable was not about kindness, generosity, or community. Jesus instead illustrates the mindset of those seeking the heavenly kingdom.

Here, we need to understand the key word 'oil' correctly. What does oil mean? Or what does 'having oil' mean? The interpretation is quite open. From the Greek language, and from the context, we can understand it more clearly. **In its original language, oil is elaion. It has the same pronunciation as the word 'mercy', eleos. This makes contact with Jewish traditions that used oil as a symbol for the heart of God, and for doing good - Christlikeness in our heart and life.** Christian Spirit as we follow Jesus Christ.

The same word eleos is used in the parable of forgiveness. Do you know the story? There was a debtor who owed a King an amount that would take two hundred thousand years to pay off. He pleaded, and the King had deep compassion on the servant and forgave the entire amount. He didn't reduce the debt or made a payment plan at all. After the servant left the King, he encountered a person who owed an amount equivalent to only four months' wages. He treated him very harshly and put him in prison. The King then called him again and said, "Shouldn't you show mercy to your fellow person, as I showed you mercy?"

You can now understand the meaning of the word mercy. **One important concept of eleos is the forgiveness with merciful heart. It is the same meaning with the verse in Galatians 6:2, it says "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." This means showing love and mercy, bearing the burdens, sins of others.**

It is human reality living on the earth. So the Bible says that we should still bear burdens each other with a merciful heart. It is not a choice, but an obligation. This will help you accumulate eleos, the oil in the lamp.

There was a man in the hospital who had two wounded arms that were hung around his neck. Despite being unable to use his arms, his neck was functioning well, allowing him to eat. How much work does a neck do? It's supposed to support the weight of the head, perform all the necessary functions for survival, and now it's carrying the weight of two arms. How difficult and heavy it must be!

The neck supported the arms, helping them to be restored by bearing the weight of the wounded ones. The Bible signifies this kind of support and assistance. It's a challenging task that doesn't eliminate the unhealthy and wounded arms. Instead, it involves bearing each other for restoration. The life of mercy and kindness involves helping, supporting, saving, or restoring

others through your sacrifice. This act accumulates oil in your lamp. We can't possess this Christlike, saintly heart at the last moment when friends of the bridegroom shout, "Jesus is coming!" It's too late when he arrives. You become foolish bridesmaid, lacking enough oil and not invited to the wedding banquet.

Jesus will come very soon and will seek his brides. You should be prepared with oil. He will not look for pastors or theologians at all. Instead, he will seek those who have oil in their lamps—those who live merciful, kind, and righteous lives. All ten bridesmaids are Christians, but only those who have faithfully followed Jesus' way day by day can accumulate the oil in their lamps.

For now, we are protected by the righteousness of Jesus. Now is the time when there is no condemnation or guilt, even when we sin or make mistakes. We can simply start anew with joy and hope for the next opportunity. God is walking with you and guiding you. He is watching our growth in sanctification joyfully and lovingly. This incredible love story is written in the book, *Song of Songs*, the great love story between Christians and Jesus.

At some point in time, this journey will end. It is the time that our human life finishes or the time that Jesus comes during our lifetime. It is very soon. Do you follow daily with the Lord? All of my sermons have a special part that you can apply to your life. Are you mindful of what you heard, making a note and applying them to your life? At some point in time, you will be judged or evaluated according to the book of life, which cannot be compared to AI super computer. God will reveal all your words and actions, and even deep hidden motivations of your soul.

Enough oil should be in the lamp. There is no accidental saints. Nobody wakes up one morning and thinks, "Wow, would you look at that! I became a saint." No. It never happens that way. It is a process that takes time and intentional effort to follow Jesus. It doesn't help simply come and go to the church and do the Bible study.

If you do not intent to be with Jesus and follow Jesus daily, you won't become a person of love in Christ. Daily, we need to walk with Jesus as an apprentice of the master. It is by being with Jesus and by living with Him, then, oil will be accumulated in the lamp.