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## The ten virgins

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Jesus told a parable about 10 virgins. It's in Matthew 25. Five women brought enough oil to keep their lamps lit during the long night, while the other five ran out of oil. Those who didn't have enough, left to buy more and when they returned, the party had already taken place. They missed it.

What if the oil represents loving kindness? And what if the five wise women prepared themselves for life by being full of love, cultivating extra affection, compassion, grace and goodness? They carefully cultivated their character to be filled with enough patience to take them gracefully through trying situations. The other five cared less. They quickly ran out of patience. Selfish and self-centered, they arrogantly demanded that others give them the love and affection they lacked on their own. But each one has to soften their own character, don't they, in order to be a proper vessel for loving kindness? And so, the five impatient ones missed the party, and perhaps missed the point, blaming others more than themselves.

We can redeem mistakes. Not by demanding that someone else fix our mistakes with their love and forgiveness, but by being loving ourselves and letting our lives overflow with affection, genuine caring and that extra patience that carries us all the way to success. No one can do that for us, but Christ gives us the humility to be wise and learn to love. Then we can earn Christ's benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy [L]ord."