Sermon: **Be on your guard then, because you do not know the day or the hour** (Matthew 25.13)

Jesus tells some strange stories. Easy to assume every part of the story has a parallel in God’s Kingdom. Most assume Jesus = Bridegroom and we should be Wise Virgins. But they and the Foolish ones all have faults: Wise virgins seem worldly wise, selfish. Foolish virgins are unprepared. Bridegroom seems harsh.

So what is the story about? Often you must look at the punchline – TEXT.

The day or hour for what? The story begins with “**the Kingdom of Heaven will be like this**”. So it is that Kingdom we wait for. We don’t know the nature of the coming is it a global event or personal visitation?

If the story is about being ready, it is partly about recognising Kingdom in our lives. What does that mean?
Kingdom of Heaven is not just Armageddon, but whenever love is shown or spoken. How can we be ready?

TEXT. Not necessarily by being always on the lookout (reading the signs, plotting the date) It is impossible to stay awake forever – the Guinness Book of Records banned this record attempt as too dangerous.

Note that *all* ten virgins were asleep when the bridegroom finally arrived – and that was OK! TEXT.

It is about doing all we can now so that when the time comes we can quickly act.

Pregnant women are encouraged to have a bag ready for when they suddenly need to go to hospital.
Like in the story, the Bridegroom was always going to come, but no one knew exactly when.

Have you got water ready, alternative heating for an emergency like an earthquake?

The Parish is a potential Community Emergency Hub when such an emergency occurs in our community.

Mission Statement meeting next Sunday at 4pm is about getting ourselves ready for action.

These are all about being ready, when it looks like there is no need to be.

When the waiting is long it is easy to become complacent – we say we have “plenty of time”.

Do we underestimate the time and patience required to do God’s work?

Are we ready for the long haul, or do we expect instant answers? TEXT.