The Oil

1. **Introduction:** We will be discussing the use of oil in the Bible. Specifically, we will be headed toward Mt 25 and the Parable of the Virgins. First, we will explore the meanings of oil throughout the Bible to be better able to understand Jesus' teaching.

2. **Background**

   a) **Uses of oil in the ancient world** - Oil was a staple of diet for the people living in the area of Israel. It was used to make bread and cakes, as a medicine, for lamp fuel, in perfume and ointments and for religious offerings and rituals. (Zonderman Complete Concordance pg 9024) It was used as a commodity in exchange for other goods. (2 Ch 2:10) Olive oil was a symbol of wealth and luxury.

   b) **First used as an offering**: One of the first mentions of oil in the Bible is found in Gen 28:18-22. Jacob fell asleep and had a dream where he saw the angels of heaven ascending and descending on a stairway and God spoke a promise to him. He immediately recognized he was on holy ground. He took the stone upon which he had laid his head, made a pillar and poured out oil over it. We must realize that oil was a precious commodity. As he was traveling, he would have a limited supply. So this was a lavish offering on Jacob's part.

   c) **Used in the temple**: Oil was listed as one of things the people of Israel were to give for use in the temple. The oil was used for the lamps, with the grain offerings and spread upon wafers. There was a special mixture of oil that could only be used in the Holy Place. The lamp oil had to be "clear" or "pure" oil – the best virgin olive oil. The First Fruits offerings were to have oil poured on them to make them sacred to the Lord. Sin offerings could not use oil – they had to use blood for purification. References from: Ex 25, 29-31, Lev 2, 5.

   d) **Used for anointing**: The first priests, Aaron and his sons, were anointed for their priestly service by oil being poured over their heads. The oil and blood from an animal sacrifice were spattered on their garments to make them holy. Ex 29, Lev 21 The kings of Israel, Saul, David, Solomon and Jehu, were anointed by the prophets pouring oil over their heads and prophesying over them.

   e) **A sign of blessing**: Oil was part the blessing given in God's "covenant of love". See Dt 7. Lack of olives was a sign of a curse.

   f) **Associated with joy**: God has anointed us with the "oil of joy" and has given us an "oil of gladness instead of mourning". Heb 1:9, Ps 45:7, Is 61:3
   "The presence of oil symbolized gladness (Is. 61:3) while its absence indicated sorrow or humiliation (Joel 1:10). Similarly oil was used as an image of comfort, spiritual nourishment, or prosperity (Dt. 33:24; Jb. 29:6; Ps. 45:7)." New Bible Dictionary pg 844

   g) **Tithes and offerings**: Israelites were to tithe on the olive oil they produced and in the first fruits offerings they brought to the House of the Lord.

   h) **Used in healing**: Oil used in ointments and other treatments. In the law, there was provision for healing where the priest would anoint a person with a skin disease with oil. (Lev 14) In the New Testament, Mark 6:13 records the disciples as anointing the sick with oil and praying. James 5:14 commands the sick person to "call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord."

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i) **Provision during famine**: 1 Kings 17:7-24 records the story of miraculous provision for a widow. The Prophet Elijah requests her to use her last flour and oil to make him a cake. After she does so, her flour and oil jars do not run dry until the rains come on the land.

This is a picture in our lives of the abundant provision available from God.

j) **Provision and canceling debt**: 2 Kings 4 records the story of Elisha and the widow of a prophet. He told her to gather all the vessels from her neighbors and then to pour the oil into them. The miracle happened and the oil kept running until all the jars were full. She was able to pay off her debt and have enough money to live on.

This is a picture of the "pour it out, pass it on, be refilled" principle of the Holy Spirit.

k) Summary: The oil represents purity, clarity, holiness, consecration, preciousness, provision, prosperity, light, blessing, joy, healing and freedom. Oil is a required tithe and offering to the Lord.

3. **What is an anointing?**

An anointing is when God wants to give a person His power to do works of righteousness. This can be for leadership, for ministry, for healing powers, for prophetic utterance and many other reasons. It is usually released through the laying on of hands in the New Testament.

a) Saul was anointed King over Israel with having oil poured over him.

"Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, 'Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance?' " 1 Samuel 10:1 NIV

a) Aaron and his sons were anointed and ordained to serve as priests.

"After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests." Exodus 28:41 NIV

b) Christians have an anointing by which we can know God's truth.

"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. … As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him." 1 John 2:20, 27 NIV

"Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV

"oil was used in the anointing of Kings and Priests in order to install them, symbolic of the Holy Spirit's empowerment for their work. All believers have the promise of this anointing." Foundations of Pentecostal Theology pg 114

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c) Jesus was anointed by God

"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." Acts 10:38 NIV

4. The "Parable of the Virgins" – read Mt 25:1-13

a) "At that time" – What was Jesus speaking about just before He spoke this parable? He was talking about the end times.
b) Traditions – In ancient Israel, a groom and his groomsmen would go to the Bride's home. The bridesmaids would greet them and go back to prepare the bride. The Groom would return home to prepare the banquet. The groomsmen would return and carry the bride in a sedan chair to the banquet. The marriage ceremony took place and the feasting began.
c) Not having enough oil - Commentary notes: "Preparedness is an individual thing. It cannot be borrowed from someone else." Zonderman Handbook to the Bible pg 573
d) God is speaking of entering into an intimate relationship – one where we are His Bride and He is our Groom. Those who were ready entered into His Presence eternally. To those who were not ready, He said, "I don't know you." Think about what it takes to know a friend or a spouse. It takes time, conversation and doing things together. It is the same for our relationship with God. We need to get to know Him through His Scriptures, through prayer and through listening and obeying the Holy Spirit.
e) We need to be watchful and be prepared for we don't know when Jesus will return.

5. If the Lord were to come today, how many of you feel ready to enter in? Do you have enough "oil"? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Do you have God's anointing in your life? Are you doing the things the Holy Spirit has directed you to do?

6. Prayer: "Father, please forgive me my sins, my complacency, my laziness. Please forgive me for not walking in all you have for me. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me walk daily with You in intimacy. Help me to walk in the anointing You have in my life. Father, I boldly ask for more of Your Holy Spirit, for more anointing to do the righteous works you have for me. I ask for strength and energy. Help me to keep You as priority number one. In Jesus' Name"

10/27/07
HAJ