

August 28, 2015 Augustine

First Reading 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-8

Paul urges the Thessalonians to live in holiness. Specifically, he tells them to avoid sexual sins, and cheating their “brothers.”

Gospel Matthew 25: 1-13

Parable of the ten virgins, five foolish and five sensible, waiting for the Bridegroom. Their oil gave out while they waited, but the sensible ones had brought extra oil. The foolish ones left to buy oil, and in the meantime, the bridegroom arrived, and the door to the party was shut. “Keep awake, for you know not the day nor the hour.”

The Gospel is concerned with what used to be called “perseverance.” We were often urged to pray for perseverance – that is, to maintain our love for God and the effort to please Him to the end of our lives. It’s similar to Paul’s message to the Thessalonians – he says, essentially, you have received the good news – now put it into practice by changing the way you live. So, both readings concern the way we live in relation to God while we’re in the middle stretch (or last stretch) of our lives. In the readings this corresponds to the time after the “first fervor” of the Thessalonians, and the time of waiting of the ten virgins for the Bridegroom. From the placement in Matthew, after the warning and description of the “end times,” it’s likely that Christ meant it to refer to waiting for the end of the world. But since our world ends with our death, it can also apply, I think, to staying faithful to Christ’s teachings through the middle and end of our lives.

Briefly check your memory to see how many times a day you reflect on God’s existence and His commands and His specific will for you. Try to think how you might increase those times.