

Matthew 25:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Analysis

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not (Ἄμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς, Amēn legō hymin, ouk oida hymas). The bridegroom's response is chilling: **I know you not** (οὐκ οἶδα, ouk oida)—not mere lack of acquaintance but covenantal repudiation. In biblical usage, 'knowing' implies intimate relationship (Genesis 4:1, Amos 3:2, John 10:14). Christ's denial—"I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23)—means no saving relationship existed despite external religious participation.

This is the parable's devastating conclusion: entrance to the kingdom depends not on profession, association, or religious activity, but on being known by Christ through genuine saving faith. The foolish virgins attended the vigil, carried lamps, called Him 'Lord,' yet were eternally excluded. Assurance rests not on our claim to know Him but on His knowing us—sovereign election and personal relationship, evidenced by Spirit-wrought transformation (the oil).

Historical Context

Jesus concluded the parable with this pronouncement of exclusion (v. 13: 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh'). Spoken Tuesday of Passion Week (AD 33), this teaching prepared disciples for His departure and warned against presumptive faith. The early church preserved this teaching as urgent apostolic doctrine: examine yourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Does Christ know you in saving, covenantal relationship—or will He say 'I never knew you'?
2. What evidence in your life demonstrates you are 'known' by Christ beyond mere religious profession?
3. How does this parable's sobering conclusion drive you to examine the genuineness of your faith right now?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἶπεν	Ἀμὴν	λέγω	ὑμῖν	οὐκ	οἶδα
G3588	But	he answered	and said	Verily	I say	unto you	not	I know
G1161		G611	G2036	G281	G3004	G5213	G3756	G1492

ὑμᾶς

you

G5209

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 8:3 (Parallel theme): But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

John 10:27 (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

2 Timothy 2:19 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

