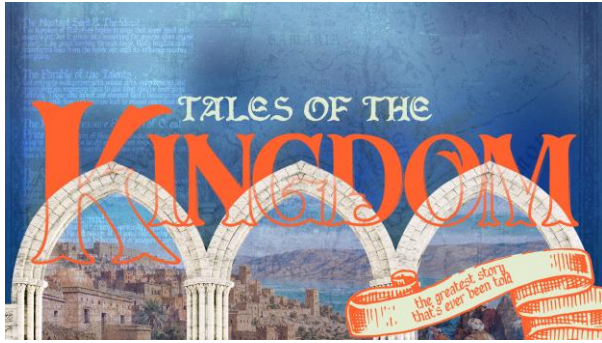




STUDY GUIDE: July 26, 2026
Message Series: Tales of the Kingdom
Message Title: Faith That's Ready
Teaching Pastor: Ellis Hopson

Warm-up / Icebreaker: (10 min.)

If someone gave you one hour to prepare for a surprise guest coming to stay at your house for the weekend, what's the very first thing you would do?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, thank You for inviting us into a relationship with You. Open our hearts today as we study Your Word. Help us not only to hear Your truth but to live it. Teach us what it means to be ready for what You want to do in and through our lives. Strengthen our faith and draw us closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Get Started: (30 min.)

- If you knew one month from today you would experience a major life event (good or bad), what is one thing you would start preparing for today?
- Pastor Ellis said, *"God doesn't want a transactional relationship with us—He wants one that transforms our lives."* What do you think is the difference between those two kinds of relationships with God?

Read Matthew 25:1-13.

- What differences do you notice between the wise bridesmaids and the foolish bridesmaids? What ultimately made the difference?

"Being ready is all about making your faith your own." — Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read Proverbs 10:14 and Matthew 25:7-9.

- Pastor Ellis said, *"Real faith isn't borrowed."* What are some ways people unknowingly borrow someone else's faith instead of developing their own relationship with God?

"Deep faith is personally developed." — Pastor Ellis Hopson

Reflect and Commit: (30 min.)

Read James 1:2-4.

- Why do difficult seasons often strengthen our faith more than comfortable seasons? How has God used a challenge in your life to deepen your relationship with Him?

Read John 15:4-5.

- What practical habits help you stay connected to Jesus and continue growing in your faith before difficult seasons come?

"Being ready isn't reactive—it's proactive." — Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read Matthew 25:10-13.

- Jesus ends this parable by saying, "Keep watch." What do you think that looks like in everyday life? How can we remain spiritually ready without living in fear?
- Pastor Ellis challenged us to *"Walk in while the door is open."* Is there an area of your spiritual life where you've been putting off obedience? What is one step you can take this week to move toward Jesus?

"Imagine having a faith of your own that isn't borrowed, but deeply and personally developed. Imagine being prepared for life's most difficult trials, because you know the One who's greater than them all. Imagine a life where you weren't just letting the days pass you by but were ready and prepared for God to move in and through you instead. You don't have to imagine - all you have to do is walk in. His presence is an open door - so walk through it, and be ready and prepared for whatever life throws at you, and whatever He wants to do through it." — Pastor Ellis Hopson

Gather Prayer Requests: (5–10 min.)

Pray:

Father, thank You for calling us into a relationship with You instead of simply asking us to perform religious duties. Help us to develop a faith that is our own—one that is rooted in Your Word and strengthened through daily dependence on You. Prepare our hearts for whatever lies ahead and teach us to recognize Your voice before life's challenges come. May we faithfully walk through every door You open and live each day ready for Your return and for Your work in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.