

10 Keys to Preparing for that Day, I Thessalonians 5:11-22 Pleasant Plains 6-21-2015PM NICK ANGEL

- Our daily Bible study is taking up through Paul's letters to the Thessalonians this past week and next week, as well. We know from **Acts 17:1-10** that the Apostle Paul, along with Silas, spent some time in Thessalonica teaching in the synagogue with the Jews. There were some that were receptive to Paul's teachings, but many others were not so receptive at all. In fact, Paul and Silas had to be snuck out of the city by night so they would not be harmed by the Jews who were stirring up the crowd because of their jealousy.
- That is a little background for Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians. From the letter itself, we see that Paul had a tremendous love and respect for these brethren. So much so was his love that he doesn't even open the letter with any sort of rebuke or harsh words. This kind of nice opening was always a part of Paul's letters to churches. We know that his letters to Rome, Corinth, & Galatia were not exactly sealed with a kiss, but we still understand Paul greatly loved all of those brethren, but he had to admonish them when he learned of sin or unfaithfulness with a group. This letter to the Thessalonians was one of great encouragement. Throughout the entirety of the book, the Apostle continually expresses his love for the group (**1:2; 2:7,8**), his desire to be with them (**2:17,18; 3:9,10**), and he continually commends their faith and love (**1:3-9; 2:13,14; 3:12,13; 4:1,9,10**). This certainly seems to be a strong church that is doing well.
- But even the strongest churches still have issues from time to time. In reference to this church, it seems as if there had been some kind of false teaching concerning the Lord's return. We can only infer that the teaching was concerning those who had already died and then when the return would already happen. Paul addresses those who had already passed away in the Lord in **4:13ff**, and then he addresses the return in **chapter 5**. Paul's conclusion seems to be that we simply don't know when it will happen because it will come as a thief in the night. (**5:2,4**) He did not want them to constantly be worrying about the return because they were "sons of light and sons of day." (**5:5**) He transitions from talking about that day to talking about how they could be prepared for that day beginning in **v.11**. Let's consider the 10 things that Paul tells the Corinthians they should be doing in order to be prepared for that day.

1. Encourage and build one another up.

- A. They actually seemed to already be doing this, but he wanted them to "excel still more" in doing so. (**4:1,10**)
- B. This life is a long race, not a sprint. It can be so easy to become weary and tired and allow the difficulties of this race to get us down.
- C. Paul encourages these brethren, and all brethren for that manner, to constantly be encouraging one another to keep up the good fight and recognize that their fighting and pressing isn't in vain, but that something great is waiting for us! (**Gal. 6:9**)

2. Appreciate and encourage church leadership.

- A. They deserve to be appreciated because they are trying their very best to lead you to heaven.
- B. They are trying to do everything they can to make sure that their flocks are going to make it to heaven. (**Heb. 13:17**)
- C. It would be foolish of us to not allow them to be preparing us for that day when the Lord returns.

3. Live in peace.

- A. Again, this life is already difficult enough... but it becomes all the more difficult when we are constantly struggling with others.
- B. This life is so much better when everyone is at peace and we are loving one another and working together.
- C. Sadly, I'm convinced that some people don't like peace. They just want to stir up trouble for everyone involved. Brethren, let's not be like that. Instead, let's seek to find the peace that can make our wait for heaven wonderful. It can be obtained! (**II Cor. 13:11-14**)

4. Deal lovingly with the weak.

- A. There will be times when our brethren will struggle and falter. How will we respond? Will we seek to berate them, or will we seek to continue to love them?
- B. **Galatians 6:1,2** says that we who are spiritual are to seek to restore the one that is overtaken in sin. Why? Because we want them to be ready for the Lord's return.
- C. It takes effort, but we must admonish, encourage, help, and be patient with those of ours that are weak. Again, we want all people to be ready for the Lord.

5. Seek after good for all people.

- A. When people are involved, mistakes will happen. It is easy for us to react negatively when we have been wrong, but we must seek out the good for all, even those who have wronged us.
- B. A family member might have a bad day and say something hurtful. A shepherd or the shepherds might make a mistake in dealing with a situation. The preacher might even say something in not the best way possible. How will we react? Will we blow up and make a big scene, or will we be patient and know that we all make mistakes?
- C. Again, let's consider **Galatians 6:1**. We must be patient and loving because we can easily make the same mistakes. We need to show love towards all people because we're all wanting to be ready for Jesus.

6. Always rejoice.

- A. Many things in this life can get us down. Sickness, violence, hatred, and evil make the news far too often.
- B. However, we don't have to focus on the bad all the time. We can instead decide to focus on the good. We can rejoice in the great good that happens every day.
- C. Paul shared this same urging with the Philippians. (**Phil. 4:4,5**) The Lord is near! Let's all rejoice and be ready!

7. Always be praying.

- A. Prayer is the constant lifeline in the life of a Christian. We must be a praying people.
- B. Again, consider **Phil. 4:6,7**. Our constant prayers to God can feel us with peace because we know that the Lord is in control. He is with us, even through all of the craziness, the Lord is with us!
- C. What better thing can we be doing than allowing God's peace to comfort us as we await for His Son's return?

8. Always be thankful.

- A. This prayer that we can give to our God should comfort us and we must express our thankfulness for His great comfort. (**Phil. 4:6,7**)
- B. We have so many things to be thankful for in this life. Our physical blessings and even more so our spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ.
- C. By focusing on the blessings with a thankful heart, our wait for the Lord's return will be bright in a world full of darkness.

9. Allow the Bible to guide.

- A. As we wait for the Lord's return, we must make sure that we are actually ready.
- B. We can be made ready by allowing God's Word to direct us in how we should live this life. John wanted to make sure that the audience of **II John** was walking in the right way and allowing the Bible and the doctrine of Christ to lead them the way that they should go. (**II John 3-9**)
- C. If we truly want to be ready for that day then we need to make sure that we are allowing God to guide us in the right way through His inspired Word.

10. Hold fast to all that is good.

- A. This means that some things are not good and thus we should stay far away from them. We are sons and daughters of light and day. We should have nothing to do with darkness. We should remain alert. (**5:4-6**)
- B. If we truly want to be ready for that day then we are going to have to call that which is evil, evil and that which is good, good. We cannot have fellowship with darkness and God at the same time. We will have to choose which one we will be a part of. (**I John 1:4-7**)
- C. Being ready for that day means we are ready for our lives to be judged. We must make sure that we have clung strongly to that which is good so that we might live for eternity with our Good God of heaven.

The Thessalonians seemed awfully concerned about the return of the Lord. They should have been, and we ought to be concerned as well. We must make sure that we are ready. We can be ready by following the instructions of God's inspired writers like the Apostle Paul. I want to be ready for that day and I hope you do too. May God help us all to be preparing for that day when His Son returns in the clouds to gather up His own.