

Living With Expectation

Text : **I Thes. 5: 1-17**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Do you like surprises ?

1. Some hate all surprises, but most like good surprises. (**unexpected gift**)
2. We learn to deal with the negative surprises. (**car won't start**)

B. Sometimes we know something is going to happen, but just don't know when.

1. **ILL.-** When you pull pranks on a friend, you know retaliation is coming, but when ?
2. **ILL.-** When war comes a soldier knows he will be deployed, but when ?
 - a. His every decision considers the possibility of deployment.
 - b. He prepares for deployment and lives in readiness.

C. The life of the Christians is spent in anticipation of going home to Heaven.

1. Christians are an army deployed on foreign soil.
 - a. Though the battle continue, our victory is assured.
 - b. We know that we will be shipping out for home, but don't know when.
2. The Apostle Paul encouraged the brethren to be patient in waiting for Jesus.
 - a. **I Thes. 1: 9-10** **For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**
 - b. Paul encouraged all of us (*Via the Thessalonians*) to live for the day of Christ's return.
 - 1) **I Thes. 3: 12- 13** **and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.**
 - 2) **I Thes. 5:23- 24** **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.**
3. Waiting for Christ's return is one of the fundamental tenants of the Christian religion.

As Christians we live in joyous expectation of the return of our King to take us home to enjoy our ultimate victory.

I. The return of Jesus is certain. The Christian can and does count on it.

A. Read & Exegete ... John 14: 1-6

1. **Vs. 1** ... Faith requires that we believe what Jesus promises.
2. **Vs. 2** ... The purpose of Jesus leaving the earth is to work for us.
 - a. He is preparing a place “for” His followers.
 - b. There’s plenty of room for all who come He takes there. (**Many dwellings**)
3. **Vs. 3** ... Jesus promised to return “for” His followers.
 - a. “if I go and prepare a place” His return is as sure as His leaving.
 - b. The ultimate plan of Jesus (God) is to have us with Him. (**daily fellowship**)

B. Jesus promised that He would come for us.

1. Jesus proved Himself to be God by the resurrection. (**Rom. 1: 4**)
2. God cannot lie.
 - a. It is actually impossible for God to lie.
 - 1) **Tit. 1: 1-2** Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
 - 2) To lie would defy the righteous nature of God.
 - 3) Because of His infinite power, if God were to say something that was not true, it would immediately become true.
 - b. Trusting the promise of Jesus is the “anchor” of our faith.

Heb. 6: 17-19a In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one ... (**God wants us to live in expectation.**)

C. The Apostle Peter assured us that our place in Heaven would be ready and waiting.

- I Pet. 1: 3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

II. No one knows when the Lord will come.

A. God has made it clear that he does not intend for man to know when He will come.

1. **Mark 13: 31-33** Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
³² But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*.³³ Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come.
2. **Acts 1: 7-** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

B. To seek to know what God does not want us to know is the sin of rebellion.

1. Today, many are obsessed with end of time things.
 - a. Many have been misled by speculators proclaiming that which God has not given.
 - b. Religious charlatans take advantage of people's fears to get money. (**TV preachers**)
2. That which God has not clearly revealed is HIS, and not for man.
 - a. **Deut. 29: 29-** The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever,
 - b. We must walk humbly before God, not be filled with pride. (**We've no right to know.**)
Micah 6: 8- He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

C. The one who has surrendered his whole heart to God has no need to know.

1. God has no responsibility to tell us what HE has planned.
2. We have the responsibility to submit and to serve every day as if it were our last.

III. God wants Christians to live every day as if it might be the day Jesus comes.

A. Jesus taught this in many places and in many parables. (**Luke 12: 35-40**)

1. **Luke 12: 39-40** But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.⁴⁰ You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.
2. **Matt. 25: 1-13** ... 10 Virgins ... Stay ready even if His coming is delayed.
3. **Matt. 25: 14-30** ... Talents ... We must use everything to serve until He comes.

B. In effect, Jesus comes back for the individual on the day He dies.

1. **Luke 12: 16-21** ... The rich man had his retirement planned, but God called Him.

2. **Heb. 9: 27** ... One cannot change His destiny after he dies.
(**When the final gun has sounded the game is over. No more point can be scored.**)
3. **When will you die ?**

C. Christians are taught to live as if the Lord will come very quickly.

1. James wrote of the soon coming of the Lord.
James 5: 7- 8 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸ You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.
2. Paul taught that we should work with urgency because the Lord is coming
Rom. 16: 20- The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (cf - **II Pet. 3:8**)

D. His coming is something Christians anticipate with great expectation.

1. **II Pet. 3: 10-13** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
2. (Remember our text) **Read ... I Thes. 5: 1-11**

*** Not praying for the Lord to return would indicate that we had some reason to fear His appearing.**

Paul here says news of His coming is motivation for encouragement.

IV. The coming of Jesus will be a triumphant event.

A. The last enemy to be put under the feet of Jesus is death.

1. **Read ... I Thes. 4: 13-18**
2. This will be the final victory.
 - a. Death, the ultimate power of Satan will be removed. ... **I Cor. 15** ... whole chapt
 - b. **Vs. 25-26** For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

B. When Jesus returns to take you home to Heaven, it will also be for Him to receive glory because of your faith.

I Thes. 1: 9-10 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed— ...

C. When Jesus is glorified in His victory, we will share in the celebration.

Phil. 3: 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

CONCLUSION :

A. In this life, we are given the opportunity to prepare for that eternal home.

1. Jesus went to prepare an eternal dwelling for us.
2. He left us on the earth to continue His ministry here.
 - a. We are to recruit as many people as possible for His heavenly kingdom.
 - b. We are to glorify His name by actively loving all those He created.
 - c. We are to transform ourselves into His image by the renewing of our minds.
3. When He returns, all those who have come in and have dawned their wedding garments will be taken to join Him at His eternal banquet table.

Heb. 9: 28- so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

B. Therefore (**Read ... Heb. 10: 35-39)**

INVITATION :

1. Are you eagerly awaiting the coming of the Lord ?
2. **OR** ... Do you live in fear of His coming or your going to Him.
3. Jesus invites you to join forces with Him on earth so you can live with Him in Heaven.
4. Won't you come to Him before He comes to you.