

“Like Giants: *He Will Do It*”

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. 1

Thessalonians 5:23-24

Getting on the Same Page

All of us have spent ample time making preparations for something. Whether a test, athletic contest, receiving guests to our home, or work. We use our energy to prepare because of what we know is coming.

In the last section of 1 Thessalonians, Paul issues 17 commands! As Christians, we can have 2 dangerous responses to these commands: We can either anxiously try to follow them and shame ourselves when we fail, or we can stop trying altogether because we know we can't.

But Paul is very clear in this section: Jesus has done the heavy lifting...He will do it. If we are in Christ, Jesus HAS saved us, he IS saving us right now, and he WILL save us for eternity. WE do nothing to save ourselves, transform ourselves, or keep ourselves saved. That is ALL Jesus' work.

So, what role do we play in all this? We are to make preparations. As Christians, we are to prepare for Jesus' return by giving our world sneak previews of HIS coming kingdom. We don't make preparations in order to be made right with God, but because in Jesus, we have already been made right with God. Of course, we aren't going to be able to perfectly prepare. We aren't going to always love our enemy, pray without ceasing, rejoice in all circumstances, or regularly give thanks. But those are examples of how we are to make preparations for Jesus' return. As we partner with God in making these preparations, God transforms our hearts, gives us a deeper security in him, and uses our lives to draw others to himself.

If we understand the Gospel, preparing for Jesus' return should not bring us angst, but joy. In Judaism, there was a belief that the Messiah wouldn't return until Israel was righteous. In Christ, we know that Jesus didn't wait for us to become righteous; he entered our brokenness and became righteous FOR us.

When we understand this, Jesus becomes beautiful to us. And we want nothing more than to make preparations for Jesus's return...even if what he asks of us is difficult. Jesus does the heavy lifting. He has, is, and will. You can count on it.

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28. What stands out to you?
- Discuss a time when you made preparations for something significant. What were you preparing for? How did you feel? How did it turn out?

Study

- Respond: What we spend our energy preparing for now reveals what we believe about the future

- Respond: If you are in Christ, Jesus does the heavy lifting. You don't make preparations for his return IN ORDER to be made right with God, but because in Christ, YOU ALREADY ARE right with God.
- Respond: Jesus didn't wait for us to become righteous. Instead, he entered our brokenness and became righteous FOR us.

Apply

- Discuss what it might look like to prepare for Jesus' return in the following areas:
 - Forgiveness
 - Care for the needy
 - Care for the environment
 - Getting rid of jealousy/envy
 - Generosity
 - Practicing patience, self-control
 - Building my identity in Jesus
 - Practicing gratitude
 - Purifying my thoughts
 - Sharing my faith