

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

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## Rejoice! Jesus is Coming!

When the apostle Paul wrote the letter of 1 Thessalonians he did so intending, in part, to correct some false teaching and understanding concerning the Second Coming of Jesus. Paul assures the brethren that those who die before Christ returns will not miss out on His coming and in fact would be given preference in meeting Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18). Then he goes on to explain that the coming of Jesus in judgment would be unexpected, like a thief in the night, and that they as Christians should not be ignorant of these truths or unprepared for its occurrence (1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 10).

While many who claim to be Christians today acknowledge the promised return of Christ in judgment many it seems live as though it has either already occurred or will not. We

continue to live in sin and suffer the consequences and guilt of rebellious doubt and disobedience. It is true that because "the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Jesus warned in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins that "while the bridegroom was delayed, they all [the five foolish, TLD] slumbered and slept" (Matthew 25:5). This is Paul's admonition to the church for all ages, that is, to be sober, watchful, prepared, and encouraging.

One of the wonderful things about 1 Thessalonians 5 is that Paul follows his teaching and admonition with practical application. While we often look at individual or sets of verses in the later half of this chapter

the beauty is found in its context. Paul says we can be prepared and can rejoice in the pending coming of Jesus in judgment if we (vv 16 – 22) ...

**Rejoice always.** Joy is a staple of New Testament teaching and living! Even in the midst of a sin – filled world, even when persecuted for righteousness, the Christian has something to rejoice in. Jesus is coming... rejoice!

**Pray without ceasing.** Pray helps keep us focused on heaven and on God. We are totally dependent upon Him for all physical and spiritual blessings. Without Him, His grace, His mercy, and His love the Second Coming of Christ is a horrifying reality. Prayer helps keep us focused so we can rejoice.

**Give thanks.** The focus on God and heaven help us to live thankful lives. Giving thanks entails far more than just thanking God in prayer. Giving thanks is a way of life. Paul said that whatever state he found himself he had learned to be content (Philippians 4:11). This cannot happen without living a life of thanksgiving.

**Do not quench the Spirit.** Much has been written and speculated upon concerning this statement, yet in its context we must conclude

that the instruction here simply relates to our response to the Spirit's work. While the Spirit was miraculously guiding the church in the first century the emphasis is on the Spirit's work on our behalf in revealing unto us the will of God (Ephesians 3:1 – 13). We need to be humbly submissive to the Word of God and not live in rebellion to it.

**Do not despise prophecies.** This goes hand – in – hand with the idea of quenching the spirit. We must embrace the inspired revelation of God in our lives if we are to live joyful, expectant lives.

**Test all things.** When we have done the preceding things we must then put everything to the test. Many false prophets and teachings have emanated from the simple truths taught by Christ and the apostles. We need to put everything to the test (1 John 4:1) as to not be moved (Galatians 1:6).

**Hold fast what is good.** When we have tested all things and have separated the precious truths from the false ways of evil through purification we must hold on to those truths with vigor and valor.

**Abstain from every form of evil.** We cannot live joyful lives if we hold on to the good but attempt to

keep the evil around as well. We must desist from every kind of evil in this life. Jesus said simply, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). You cannot hold on to the bloodstained hand of Christ with one hand and the world with the other!

In conclusion Paul writes that if we do these things the "God of peace" will sanctify us "completely!" And the entire "spirit, soul, and body" will be preserved blameless, hear it, "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 23). We then can live joyful lives, knowing that Jesus is coming and that He is faithful and will do what He has promised (v 24).

What is keeping you from living a joyful life in earnest expectation of His coming? Simply focus on doing the things Paul has laid out for us in this beautiful text, live joyful, expectant lives. God loves you, He sent His Son to die for you! He's coming back to receive those waiting for Him with those who have gone on before. Will you be ready? Obey Him and be faithful.

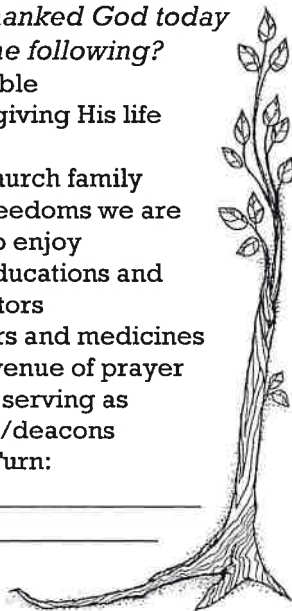
Tim Dooley

**DEAR GOD,  
I WANNA TAKE A  
MINUTE, NOT TO ASK  
FOR ANYTHING FROM  
YOU, BUT SIMPLY TO  
SAY THANK YOU,  
FOR ALL I HAVE.**

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The freedoms we are able to enjoy
- Our educations and educators
- Doctors and medicines
- The avenue of prayer
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:

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**WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST**

92 Rose Cottage Lane  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



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# Monthly Challenges

**DIRECTIONS:** *Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.*

## 1) PREPARE FOR OUR GOSPEL MEETING

**Mark 16:15** *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"*

We have a gospel meeting coming up, starting on March 22, with brother Mike Davis speaking for us that week. The success of a meeting depends greatly upon how much effort goes into it before it even starts. Some of the ways we can all take part are:

- a) invite friends
- b) invite family
- c) invite co-workers
- d) talk about it and invite people via Facebook or Twitter
- e) post flyers for the meeting up around the community
- f) if possible, adjust your work schedule to be able to attend each night
- g) leave invitations on tables at restaurants with the tip

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

*John 12:44-48*

**44** "And Jesus cried out and said, 'Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. **45** And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. **46** I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. **47** If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. **48** The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.'"