

## 1 Thessalonians 5 - The Waiting Room – part 3

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**—This is a letter about waiting and we should be a waiting people: Christians are meant to be restless people, like battle-weary soldiers awaiting their flight home or a bride a week before her wedding. Dr. Joe Stowell tells about a conversation he had once with his friend, Ben Wood, who founded Shepherds Home in Wisconsin for boys and girls with developmental disabilities.

*I remember Bud asking me one time, “Hey, Joe, do you know what our biggest maintenance problem at Shepherds is?”*

*“I have no idea,” I replied.*

*“Dirty windows. Our kids press their hands and faces against the windows because they’re looking to the sky to see if today might be the day that Jesus will return for them and take them to His home where they will be healed and complete.”*

--That’s what waiting looks like! They are smarter than we are in many ways.

--We need to know how to wait and what to do while we wait.

--The whole of the Christian life can be understood as a waiting game we are not to be settled here, but waiting for things to change and our lives to be changed.

### **1. Listen as Paul describes the first elements of what to do while we wait. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8**

--Waiting isn’t doing nothing; waiting is doing the right things while you wait.

--God knows how we are better than any analyst – God made us the way we are, and the way we are is that we have to have something to do.

God created Adam and a perfect world, and then he did this: **Genesis 2:15**

--In a perfect world, Adam had a job—we were created to work (not fruitless labor which because of the curse, but in the image of God who is always working).

--What was wrong with the functioning of the Garden that it needed Adam’s working of it? Nothing was wrong with it, but it only worked correctly if Adam worked correctly.

--Church doesn’t work correctly without us working “I don’t understand why the church isn’t working right?” -- are you working right?

### **2. What to do while we wait**

**VV. 4-5** – The world is in the dark but you aren’t, so don’t act like it!

**VV. 6-8** –

1. Don’t sleep through it – Yawn, “that’s somebody else problem not mine, somebody else will do the praying and working and I’ll show up when it’s all done.”

2. Stay off the Juice – Be sober or self-controlled is said twice here: nothing more intoxicating than emotions, watch yourself when you are emotional.

--Sorrow, fear, anxiety can lead you to do things you would not do otherwise. – our media is tailored to produce such emotions, stay off of it.

--Sober in our thinking – “The church has changed—we haven’t spent this much in dozens of years—it can’t be good.”

--It can’t be? Jesus isn’t in charge here? He doesn’t know how to lead His church to victory? He was caught off guard like the rest of us and doesn’t have a plan?

--“**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want!**” – it’s a mind game before its anything else—be sober!

3. Must be properly dressed -- **V. 8** – One of the best indications that we are waiting for something with readiness is that we are dressed for the occasion.

--Someone is picking you up for a formal occasion and you come to the door in your bathing suit? That's not how you wait--you're not ready for what's coming next.

A sober saint is one who's dressed properly: A war is going on for the souls of men and he's dressed in his bathing suit?

--Waiting properly for this church means being properly dressed for what's coming.

--What's coming is what's been going on all along: Notice these are not swim clothes Paul is prescribing here—it is battle gear.

--The battle has been won overall by Jesus; our salvation is secure and our home is in Heaven.

--**The Battle** is for those who don't have those assurances.

--So, worst case scenario, we fall apart here and don't do anything right does that effect your eternal destination? Of course not.

--If this church and its members do not do what is right and do listen to Lord as He guides them, will that effect the eternity of others? It most definitely will.

The worst thing we can do in this process is make it about ourselves; Jesus didn't create the church for believers to have a destination and comfort –that's what Heaven is for.

--Jesus created the church for the sake of those who are not in it. Church is a rally point, a place where we prepared for the battle that is still raging for souls of men.

--The battle for our souls is over, but not for them.

--This battle has to be fought not for our sakes but for their sakes who have only the light of this fellowship and the disciples it produces as the source of them hearing the truth.

It has to go well for their sakes, not for us—not for our sakes.

--“I just hope we get a nice auditorium and the sound and lighting are good” me too!

--Here's a greater hope, that we stop thinking about ourselves altogether; and that we dress for the occasion.

--The occasion will not work with swimwear, casual wear or dinner wear. It will only go well with work wear and battle wear.

**This is where mature believers have to rise to the occasion.**

--Anybody can be unloving in words and actions, but it will take maturity to put on the armor of love (in words and deeds).

--Uncertainty breeds short tempers and immature actions, so it's time to suit up in the only armor that defeats the enemy.

We are not getting dressed for the playground but for the battle ground.

--Love and faith is what you do while you wait.

--Hope in a new and better church? It will never be enough, even if its better than it's ever been.

--Hope can only ever be in one thing: **VV. 8-9**

--Hope in a new building or better future for First Baptist just for the sake of it is misplaced and will wind up in disappointment I can assure you.

--When we start each day with a grateful heart that the things that really matter have already been taken care of and that, since God has already done the greatest thing for us, lesser things like a building and the direction of our church are a given.