

1 Thessalonians 5 - The Waiting Room – part 7

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18—We are pursuing the answers to the question “what do we do while we wait on the what God has for us.”

--We are moving quickly toward a remodeled sanctuary, but will this church (i.e., you and I) be remodeled—will you be?

--We can pay to change the building, but there is not enough money in the world to change our hearts.

For many years a large silver star adorned the top of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. One day in the 1800s, the Roman Catholic Church, which shares a part of the building with a Greek Orthodox Church, decided to take down the silver star and replace it with their own star. But the Greek Orthodox Church refused to let them do that. The Greek Orthodox Church was supported by Russia, and the Roman Catholic Church was supported by France. But Turkey actually ruled over Palestine at that time. When Turkey sided with the Roman Catholic Church, Russia declared war on Turkey. France and England allied themselves with Turkey and fought what history calls the Crimean War, which lasted from 1853 to 1856. At the end of that war the star came down.

--The world is looking to the church for answers, but, if we aren't careful, we become part of problem instead of the solution.

--The way we avoid that is by doing what God says; this includes waiting well.

Last time we began looking at this trilogy of commands that have the exponent of “this is God's will for you” attached to them.

1. Adding to our list of things to do.

1. Rejoice always --The word order is different in the Greek for emphasis: “At all times be rejoicing”.

--We tend to major on the minors and then, in turn, minor on the majors--waiting for the minor points of God's will all the while neglecting the major points.

--As always, the best way to know the will of God is to do the will of God.

2. “Pray without Ceasing” – Literally means constantly in prayer.

--Doesn't mean you just stay on your knees all day; it does mean that prayer is to be a way of life for us.

--Joyful believers are also prayerful believers, and prayerful believers are joyful believers.

--Luke 18:1 – loosing heart is loosing joy, loosing our focus – the remedy is constant prayer.

--Philippians 4:6-7 – The only way out of fear and anxiety is to pray constantly about “everything”.

--Fear comes to a sheep when he looks around and realizes he can't see his shepherd. Prayer is just staying next to the shepherd.

--Ephesians 6:18 – “at all times” --Being filled with the Spirit is staying close to where the Spirit of God is;

--It's not a fill up station where we get fueled and then run on our way; It's not food that we eat at certain times; it's oxygen; it's the air we breathe.

--The Spirit of God emanates from the presence of God.

--Out of the presence of God comes joy and dependence in prayer.

Pray without ceasing doesn't mean non-stop, it just means a running conversation where there are no periods--only commas and semicolons.

--Its not only words; praying without ceasing is attitude, submission, recognizing His presence in all that we do and wherever we go.

Nehemiah (just a regular dude, not a priest or theologian, has a government job) has much to teach us.

--He is broken hearted to hear that the wall of Jerusalem was still in ruins and petitions the king to oversee its construction (kinda where we are--rebuilding).

--He's passionate about it and completely dependent on God throughout—his dependence is expressed in his prayer life.

--He accomplishes in 52 days what no one could get done in the previous 40 some odd years!

--He prays no less than 9 times throughout his little book for mercy, wisdom, protection, intervention, and strength. **Nehemiah 2:4; 4:4; 5:19; 6:9**

--Nehemiah is a great model for constant prayer: in the middle of his job, swinging a hammer, in the middle of a meeting, a conversation, between breaths—he's praying.

2. Do we do this? Jesus' model prayer is great place to start.

"Our Father who art in Heaven" perfect place to begin our prayers.

--This reminds me I'm not alone in this and my fellowship needs to be in focus constantly— "Let us know that you're our Father."; "strengthen your people"; "fill them with their need for you." etc.

"Hallowed be Thy name." —what a great pattern for constant prayer!

--"I pray that You'd be glorified" in this person, in my actions, in my driving, in my sleeping, in my TV watching, in world events, etc.

"Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done on earth"

--"Its Your will that all come to repentance, so I pray for this person..."

--"I pray that kingdom would be revealed in this tragedy..."

"Give us this day our daily bread" Now we present our needs.

"God give me wisdom", "God here are my concerns, here are the things making me anxious"; "

--Its not just my needs because: "Give us..." praying for my church family, my community, the world at large.

"Forgive us..." – Not just my sins but "ours"; "as we forgive others"

"Lead us not into temptation"

--**Matthew 26:41** – Prayer is a great way out of temptation and a great escape from evil and the Evil one.