

1 Thessalonians 5 - The Waiting Room – part 11

I Thessalonians 5:19-20—We are pursuing the answers to the question of “what do we do while we wait” and we began adding last week what *not* to do.

--The last time we started looking what the Word God has spoken to us and I prefaced it with a brief excursion into what is the Word of God.

--Scripture is “Something that is inspired by God” – **II Timothy 3:16** – it certainly is that, but with our ever-evolving language just saying “inspired” diminishes the force of what is written here.

--We throw the word “inspired” around way too much in our language: “I felt inspired to do or say such and such”, “that message was inspired.”

So, are we going to raise these things up to the level of Scripture? Hardly!

--Scripture is “Something that God has breathed” – a far better interpretation for our understanding.

I Thessalonians 5:19-20

We want to make sure we don’t do that since quenching the Holy Spirit is the same as cutting off our air.

--So, we are in desperate need of correctly understanding what prophecy or prophetic utterances are.

--The definition is complicated due to the fact that we have already assumed we know what prophecy is—thinking we already know stuff makes it harder for us to know stuff!

1. We started last time looking at one aspect of prophecy: foretelling the future.

--Don’t despise that! The Bible is 100% accurate with regard to the future.

--If you want to know the future, read the Bible.

Jesus fulfilled 456 specific prophecies made about Him in Old Testament in His first coming.

--For every prophecy of His first coming, there are 8 of His second coming—these were written down so we could know for certain future events.

--“I don’t need to know that stuff—it’s not important for my life.” So, you are the one who decides what is and isn’t important? May I submit to you that this is part of what despising prophecy means—don’t do that!

--Foretelling the future isn’t all that the Bible is and it isn’t all that prophecy is: **II Peter 1:20-21**

--This is how the Bible was created: not by men’s ideas like the criminals and their religions we saw last week, but by the Spirit of God.

2. Prophecy isn’t just foretelling the future; it is also setting forth the instructions and will of God for the present time.

--As an example: Moses is said to be the greatest prophet of Israel and as such he wrote the first five books of the Bible which set forth God’s will for His people.

--More than 95% of his writings have nothing to do with predicting any future event but were, instead, God’s **instructions and will for the present time.**

--We find something similar in all the writings of the prophets—their prophecies are both predictive of the future and instructive for the present time.

--So, Prophecy, as it is lined out in the Bible, is both predicting and preaching.

--Therefore, everything that is set forth in the Scriptures whether predictive or instructive is 100% accurate, and you would do well to heed every word of it.

--That shouldn’t be too much of a revelation for most of us, but it still does not fully deal with the message we are hearing in I Thessalonians.

3. Prophecy is foretelling the future and it's setting forth God's will for current living, but is also making application of both those things to the Body of Christ.

I Thessalonians 5:19-22 – This isn't talking about just the Bible, the Word that God has breathed by His Spirit.

--How do we know that? "**Hold fast to what is good and abstain from all that isn't.**" This cannot be referring to the Bible since it is "God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in..."

--So, what is this particular form of prophecy? Its what I'm doing up here right now—preaching and teaching and applying the Bible to our lives as a congregation.

--Preaching and teaching which includes not only what I'm doing up here, but also what happens in our Sunday school classes and Bible study groups are all this form of prophecy.

--It is the only form of prophecy that you need to weigh to see whether it is good or bad.

The charge to all would-be preachers and teachers is: **II Timothy 4:1-3**

--When that is being done, do not take it lightly; this is not a form of entertainment.

--This is not entertainment; this is declaring the mind of God for local church or Bible study.

--This is telling you how to act, think and order your life in a local, practical and personal sense—do not despise that!

4. How do we despise this form of prophecy?

1. By approaching teaching and preaching like we're shopping for a new car or picking something to eat from the menu.

--"We go there because we like the teaching and preaching." Ok, why do you like it?

--Is it because you know the people who are doing it are doing their best to bring you a message from God's heart whether it's good or bad?

--Also, you know God has called you to that congregation and the teaching and preaching there are for you since God has called you there?

--Or is it because you think like Goldilocks when it comes to preaching:

"This one is too long and this one is a red-neck and this one has his eyes too close together, but this one is just right."!?

2. By considering it unnecessary for ourselves.

--I've heard this many times through my years of ministry: "I don't go to organized church or any particular church because all I need is the Lord and His Word."

--The Lord and His Word? The same Lord and Word that tells us not neglect the gathering together of the Body Christ, the same ones that told us pray and appoint leaders over us to speak to us and declare the mind of God to us on a regular basis.

--To those who think this way, I have a few questions for you: Who are your elders, deacons, pastors? The Bible clearly teaches the placement of these in the life of a believer.

--"Well, none of the local churches teach the truth and they are full of hypocrites." Possibly.

--Or could it be possible that you are rebellious and prideful and don't like to submit yourself to God's delegated authority?

--Could it be that you don't like the accountability of being faithful to an assembly of believers who know your business because your business isn't what it should be?

--"I listen to all kinds of good preachers and teachers online or on television." First let me say that I doubt seriously that you are faithful to that. You dabble in it but you are not faithful since you aren't already obeying the Scriptures about being a faithful to a local body.

--Even if you are faithful, you are still not obeying the instructions of the Bible that say we are to be a faithful part of a local body.

--The word **for** the local body comes **from** the local body.

--Paul doesn't tell the church members in Corinth to submit themselves to the teachers and preachers in Thessalonica, does he?

--I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7; 17