

Growth Group Questions

24th Sunday after Pentecost, November 12, 2023

Introduction

Last Sunday we celebrated All Saints Day (Saints Triumphant) and then in the following 24 hours we saw members Lyle Doerr, Joyce Gehl, and Eunice Rosenow go home to heaven. Say a prayer of thanksgiving together for God's grace and timing.

Into the Word – Isaiah 52:1-6

1. God gave some of the richest and most detailed prophecies about Jesus' first and second coming through the prophet Isaiah. Look up these verses for some of the most famous. Decide which coming of Jesus it refers to: his first, his second, or both.
 - Isaiah 7:14
 - Isaiah 9:6-7
 - Isaiah 40:3-5
 - Isaiah 6:1-2
 - Isaiah 52:13-53:8
 - Isaiah 53:9
 - Isaiah 53:10-12
 - Isaiah 11:3b-10
2. What reason does God give (especially in verse 6) for Jerusalem's destruction and the exile to Babylon?
3. Read Isaiah 52:7-10. As is often the case, Isaiah's here is fulfilled in partial terms by the Remnant's return from exile in Babylon but fully fulfilled on the last day.

Into the Word – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

4. Paul says he doesn't need to write about the timing of the last day. Instead he writes about what we do while we wait? Why is this a good reminder when thinking about the focus of many Evangelical Christians today?
5. Contrast the difference in lifestyle between believing children of the day and unbelieving children of the night. Why is it so difficult for us to live in the light?

6. It maybe stretches Paul's point, but what comfort does verse 10 hold out for those with Alzheimer's, mental illness, or die in coma?

Into the Word – Matthew 25:1-13

7. This whole line of teaching was prompted in Matthew 24 by the disciples' admiration of the temple. He proceeded to teach them the signs of the Last Day they should watch for and the suddenness of that Day's arrival. What does Jesus add to their understanding in this parable?
8. Some people get distracted by the details of the parable. The bride isn't included. The story doesn't really track with Jewish marriage customs. The wise virgins seem selfish. Late guests were usually admitted to the feast. But again, what is the point Jesus is making? (Always stick to the point of a parable and be careful about applying other thoughts!)
9. We know from the rest of Scripture that we are prepared for Jesus' arrival if we have faith and trust in Christ as our Savior. That means being watchful is not a matter of *doing* but a matter of *believing*. What kinds of things then truly help us remain watchful?
10. Luther's explanation to the Third article summarizes the Holy Spirit's work to keep us watchful. "The Holy Spirit has **called** me by the gospel, **enlightened** me with his gifts, **sanctified** and **kept** me in the true faith." Explain how each part of that work is nothing short of a miracle of God.

Closing Prayer (Lyrics from "Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying")

"Wake, awake, for night is flying," the watchmen on the heights are crying; "awake, Jerusalem, arise!" Midnight hears the welcome voices and at the thrilling cry rejoices: "Oh, where are all you virgins wise? The Bridegroom comes, awake! Your lamps with gladness take! Alleluia! With bridal care yourselves prepare to meet the Bridegroom, who is near." AMEN.