

Week 7: Living Expectantly

“Ready for His Return”

Main Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Big Idea: Because Jesus is coming again, we live with purpose today.

Introduction: Are You Ready?

There are some things in life we know are coming, but we don't know exactly when.

You know winter is coming, even if you don't know the exact day the first snow will fall.

You know your birthday is coming, even though you may not be thinking about it every day.

You know a family member is coming to visit, but you may not know exactly when they'll pull into the driveway.

When you know someone is coming, you prepare.

You clean the house. You get things ready. You make plans.

The Bible tells us something much more important is coming:

Jesus Christ is coming again.

We don't know the day or the hour. But we know the promise is true.

And because Jesus is coming again, the question isn't simply, "**Do I believe Jesus is coming?**"

The question is:

"Am I living ready for Jesus to return?"

The return of Christ isn't supposed to make us afraid. It is supposed to give us **hope, purpose, urgency, and confidence.**

1. The Return of Christ Shapes How We Live

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Paul gives us a powerful picture of what is coming:

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God." — 1

Thessalonians 4:16 ESV

Jesus isn't coming back quietly.

He isn't coming back secretly wondering whether anyone will notice.

The King is coming back.

The Bible teaches that Christ will return, the dead in Christ will rise, and those who belong to Him will be caught up to meet Him.

That truth should change the way we live today.

If I really believe Jesus is coming again, then I can't live like this world is all there is.

I can't make my career my god.

I can't make money my purpose.

I can't make possessions my identity.

I can't spend my entire life chasing things that won't matter in eternity.

Jesus is coming.

That means what we do today matters.

The question is:

If Jesus could return at any moment, would I want Him to find me living the way I'm living?

Not perfect.

Not sinless.

But faithful.

Serving.

Praying.

Loving people.

Sharing the Gospel.

Forgiving.

Growing.

Doing what God has called me to do.

The return of Christ gives our everyday lives eternal significance.

2. We Pursue Holiness While We Wait

Titus 2:11-12

Paul says:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.” — Titus 2:11-12 ESV

Notice something important:

Grace doesn't just save us. Grace teaches us how to live.

We sometimes talk about grace as though grace means God doesn't care how we live.

But biblical grace doesn't give us permission to live however we want.

Grace changes us.

Grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness.

Grace teaches us to say no to the things that pull us away from God.

Grace teaches us to live differently.

Why?

Because we're waiting for Jesus.

Verse 13 says:

“Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” — Titus 2:13 ESV

The Second Coming of Christ is called our **blessed hope**.

That means while we're waiting, we're not sitting around doing nothing.

We're allowing God to work on us.

We're becoming more like Jesus.

We're putting away things that don't belong in our lives.

We're pursuing holiness.

We're getting our hearts right.

We're keeping short accounts with God.

Because we don't want Jesus to return and find us spiritually asleep.

Holiness isn't about looking religious.

It's about belonging completely to Jesus.

3. We Remain Faithful in Our Calling

Jesus didn't save us just to sit and wait for heaven.

He saved us to **serve Him while we're here.**

Every believer has a calling.

You may not stand behind a pulpit.

You may never preach a sermon.

You may never lead worship.

But you still have a place in God's kingdom.

You can encourage somebody.

You can pray for somebody.

You can serve your church.

You can raise your children to know Jesus.

You can share your testimony.

You can help someone who is hurting.

You can give.

You can invite someone to church.

You can be a witness at work.

You can simply live your life in such a way that people see Jesus in you.

Jesus is coming, so stay faithful.

Don't quit because it's difficult.

Don't stop serving because somebody didn't appreciate you.

Don't walk away because somebody hurt your feelings.

Don't abandon your calling because you're tired.

There are times when we get discouraged and wonder if what we're doing matters.

It matters.

Your faithfulness matters.

Your prayers matter.

Your service matters.

Your witness matters.

Your obedience matters.

One day, we're going to stand before Jesus.

And on that day, the question won't be whether we were the most popular.

It won't be whether everybody liked us.

It won't be how much money we made.

The question will be whether we were faithful with what God gave us.

4. We Live With Hope, Not Fear

Paul ends his teaching about the return of Christ with these words:

“Therefore encourage one another with these words.” — 1 Thessalonians 4:18
ESV

That's important.

Paul didn't say, "Terrify one another with these words."

He said:

Encourage one another.

The return of Jesus is good news for the believer.

This world may be uncertain.

The economy may be uncertain.

The future may be uncertain.

Our circumstances may be uncertain.

But Jesus is certain.

His promises are certain.

Our eternal hope is certain.

Jesus is coming back.

That means death doesn't have the final word.

Pain doesn't have the final word.

Sickness doesn't have the final word.

Loss doesn't have the final word.

This world doesn't have the final word.

Jesus does.

And because Jesus is coming again, we can face tomorrow with hope.

5. Don't Just Believe in the Second Coming—Live Like It

It's possible to believe the right doctrine but live the wrong life.

We can say:

"I believe Jesus is coming."

But our lives can say:

"I'm living like He isn't."

There should be a connection between what we believe and how we live.

If I believe Jesus is coming:

I should live differently.

If I believe eternity is real:

I should invest differently.

If I believe people need Jesus:

I should witness differently.

If I believe holiness matters:

I should choose differently.

If I believe Jesus could return:

I should be ready.

The Second Coming shouldn't just be something we talk about in church.

It should affect Monday morning.

It should affect our marriages.

It should affect our families.

It should affect our finances.

It should affect our attitudes.

It should affect what we watch.

It should affect what we say.

It should affect how we treat people.

It should affect how we serve.

Jesus is coming. So let's live ready.

6. What Does It Mean to Be Ready?

Being ready doesn't mean knowing the date.

Jesus said:

“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” — Matthew 24:44 ESV

Being ready means living in relationship with Jesus.

Being ready means:

Your heart is right with God.

Don't play games with God.

Don't keep one foot in the church and one foot in the world.

Surrender your life completely to Christ.

Your life is being shaped by God's Word.

Don't just hear the Bible on Sunday.

Let the Word change how you live.

You're walking in holiness.

We aren't saved by our good works, but genuine faith produces a changed life.

You're staying faithful.

Keep serving.

Keep praying.

Keep giving.

Keep witnessing.

Keep showing up.

You're forgiving people.

Don't carry bitterness into eternity.

Release it.

Forgive.

Make things right when you can.

You're sharing Jesus.

There are people around us who don't know Him.

And we don't know how much time they have.

You're living with expectation.

Lift your eyes.

Jesus is coming.

7. The Blessed Hope

Titus calls the return of Jesus our **blessed hope**.

Hope isn't wishful thinking.

Biblical hope is confidence in what God has promised.

We don't know when Jesus is coming.

But we know **He is coming**.

We don't know exactly what tomorrow will hold.

But we know **who holds tomorrow**.

We don't know how every situation will work out.

But we know **Jesus wins.**

That is our hope.

The world says, "Things are getting worse."

The believer says, "**Jesus is coming.**"

The world says, "There's no hope."

The believer says, "**Jesus is coming.**"

The world says, "What are we going to do?"

The believer says, "**Keep trusting Jesus.**"

Conclusion: Are You Ready?

Let me ask you the question one more time:

Am I living ready for Jesus to return?

Not:

"Do I know about the Second Coming?"

Not:

"Have I heard sermons about the rapture?"

Not:

"Can I explain Bible prophecy?"

But:

Am I ready?

If Jesus came today, would you be ready?

Is there sin you need to surrender?

Is there forgiveness you need to offer?

Is there obedience you've been putting off?

Is there a calling you've walked away from?

Is there somebody you need to reach?

Is there something God has been asking you to do?

Don't wait.

Jesus is coming.

And until He comes, we have a job to do.

We don't sit around staring at the sky.

We look to Jesus and keep working.

We keep serving.

We keep loving.

We keep praying.

We keep witnessing.

We keep growing.

We keep believing.

We keep going.

Because our King is coming back.

Final Challenge

This week, ask yourself every morning:

"If Jesus returned today, would I be living the way I want Him to find me?"

Then make the changes God puts on your heart.

Don't live scared.

Live ready.

Don't live defeated.

Live hopeful.

Don't live distracted.

Live with purpose.

Don't stop serving.

Stay faithful.

Don't lose heart.

Jesus is coming again.

And for those who belong to Him, that isn't a threat.

It's our blessed hope.