BEING READY FOR THE RETURN OF THE LORD





The importance of being rapture ready

- I will begin by looking at a passage of Scripture in the gospel of Matthew

Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” **(Matthew 24:36-39)**



“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But **know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.** Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

(Matthew 24:40-44)



Jesus Himself also said in relation to the times that we are now living in,



“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” **(Luke 21:34-36)**

- The next major event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture of all true believers



- There are no other things that need to happen prior to the rapture of all true believers

- Hence the importance of always being ready for the rapture. The Apostle Paul wrote about this event in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

(1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)



- So given the imminent rapture of all true believers how then should we be living our lives as Christians

- What should be our priorities in the times that we are now living in





- In this teaching I will be sharing some things in relation to how we should be living our lives given that the coming of the Lord is at hand

1) Our relationship with Christ and spending time in God's word must be our greatest priority in life



The Apostle Paul wrote,

"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." **(Ephesians 3:17-19)**

- It is in spending time alone with the Lord with an open bible that we get to know God intimately



- It is so important that we are continually full of God's word and full of the Holy Spirit and that our greatest priority is to practice the presence of God in our lives, especially given the secular and lawless times that we are now living in

King David wrote, "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." **(Psalm 16:11)**

Jesus Himself said,

"'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment." **(Mark 12:30)**



- **It is our love for God that will help us to be not entangled by the things of this world in the perilous times that we are now living in**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” **(2 Timothy 3:1-5)**



- So most importantly in the times that we are now living in, we need to make our relationship with Jesus Christ and spending quality time in God's word our greatest priority





- Having a time and place to meet with God with an open bible each day is such a great key to growing in our love for the Lord
- We must never get so busy in life that we neglect our prayer life. Prayerless people are powerless people

Jesus Himself said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." **(John 14:21)**



- **It is our genuine love for the Lord that will cause us to want to glorify God in the way that we live our lives and to always seek His will for our life**
- Intimacy with the Lord and feeding on God's word is crucial to growing in Christlike character, especially given the lawless times that we are now living in

Jesus Himself said,

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” **(John 15:4-5)**





The Lord said to Joshua before he was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land,

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." **(Joshua 1:8)**



- **So given the times that we are now living in, our greatest priority needs to be our relationship with God and studying His word**

2) **That we always pursue unity with other believers as we make our love for others a great priority.** (We are most spiritual when we love others unconditionally)



The Apostle Peter wrote, "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." **(1 Peter 3:8-9)**

- Unity is crucial to seeing God’s blessing and favour upon our lives and churches



- The Devil will always be looking for opportunities to sow strife and discord between believers, often exaggerating the faults in others

- We must simply give him no opportunity to do so as we simply choose to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. None of us are perfect and we all need God’s grace

Jesus Himself said,

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**



The Apostle Peter also wrote,

"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." **(1 Peter 4:7-9)**



3) **That we hold no unforgiveness or resentment towards others at a time when Jesus said many will be offended**



Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in,

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many." **(Matthew 24:10-11)**

- We will have many opportunities to be offended in life and ministry



- We also have a very real enemy, the Devil who will continually try and get us offended towards others, especially those that we are meant to do life together with

- We also live in an imperfect world full of imperfect people

- We must simply choose to be good forgivers

- **Unforgiveness towards others will also negatively affect our relationship with God. We must simply be quick to always forgive those who have hurt us**



Jesus also said,

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." **(Mark 11:25-26)**

4) **We need to be always anticipating the rapture of all true believers as we continue to also actively live for the Lord**



In the book of James we read, "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the LORD is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" **(James 5:8-9)**

- It is so important that we are always living our life as though we were expecting the Lord to return today

- This will greatly affect the way that we live our life and the choices that we make in life

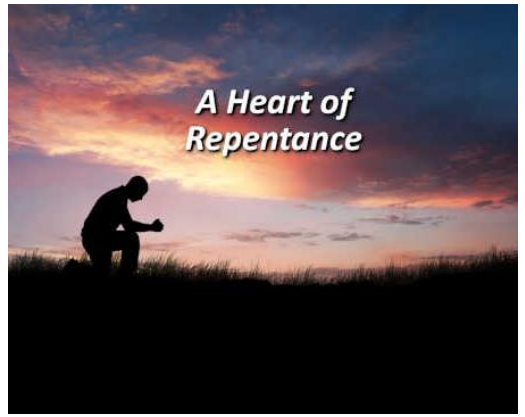


- Whilst always being ready for the rapture we must also be always good stewards of our time and talents as we make commitments to see God's plan for our life coming to pass

The Apostle Paul wrote near the end of his time here on earth, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**



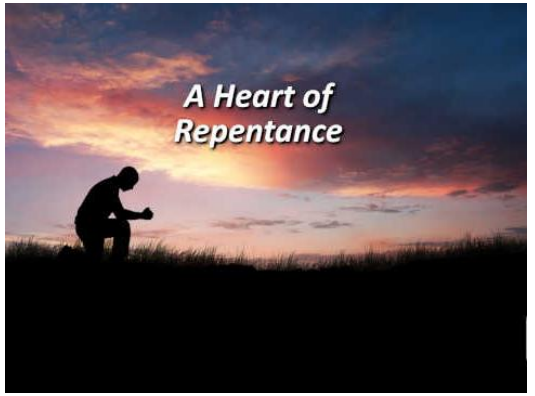
5) **The importance of having a repentant heart and always keeping short accounts with God** (This is such a great key to always having a sensitivity as to what is right and what is wrong)



The Psalmist wrote,

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer." **(Psalm 66:18-19)**

King David, the only man referred to in the bible as being a man after God's own heart wrote,



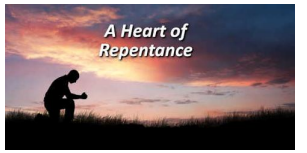
"Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting." **(Psalm 139:23-24)**

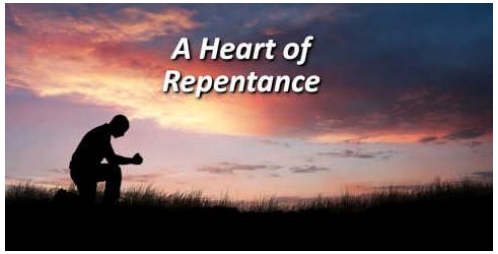
- It is so important that we are always quick to repent of any known sin in our lives
- Persisting in known sin will harden our hearts and affect our relationship with the Lord



In the book of Hebrews we read, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end," **(Hebrews 3:12-14)**

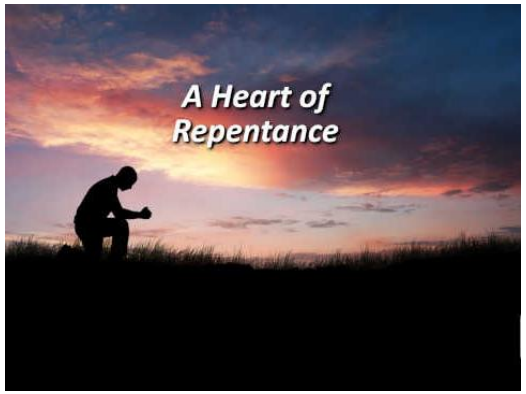
The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons," **(1 Timothy 4:1)**



- **Having a repentant heart and living a life of simple obedience to God's word is such a great key to shutting the door to deception entering into our lives**

- **Keeping short accounts with God is such a great key to maintaining a soft heart and to being always ready for the rapture of all true believers**



The Apostle John wrote,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **(1 John 1:9)**

6) That our focus is always on the eternal things. That we live our lives with eternity in mind



The Apostle Paul wrote,

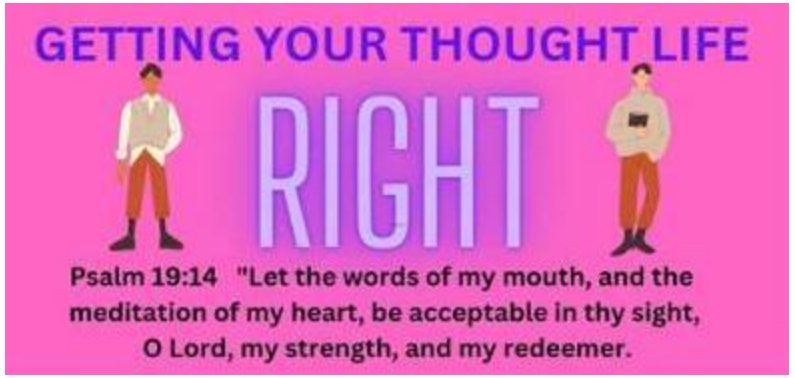
"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." **(Colossians 3:1-4)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." **(Romans 12:2)** 

Jesus Himself said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

- The simple fact is that we live in a world full of distractions and temptations and secular values

- With this in mind we continually need to keep our focus on the eternal things and to live a disciplined thought life by being quick to take all wrong thoughts captive before they take us captive



- Given the brevity of this life and the nearness of the rapture, we need to be always purposely living our lives for the Kingdom Cause by prayerfully involving God in all of our plans



In the book of Proverbs we read,

"Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established." **(Proverbs 16:3)**

- Prayerfully involving God in our plans helps us to consistently live our lives with eternity in mind so that our lives bear much eternal fruit



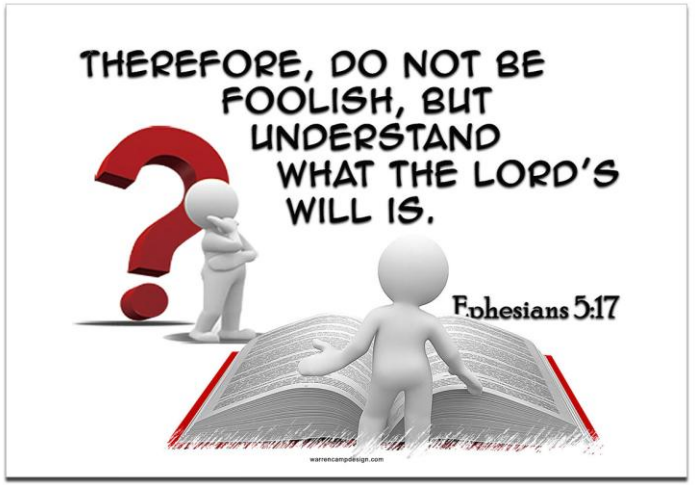
- Without this commitment we will invariably be drawn away from the things of God and be undisciplined in the use of our TIME, TALENTS AND RESOURCES

- So especially given the distractions of the smart phone and social media, purposely living our lives with eternity in mind is such a great key to being fruitful in our Christian Walk and to being always ready for the rapture





7) The importance of knowing and following God's will for our lives and being good stewards of our spiritual gifts



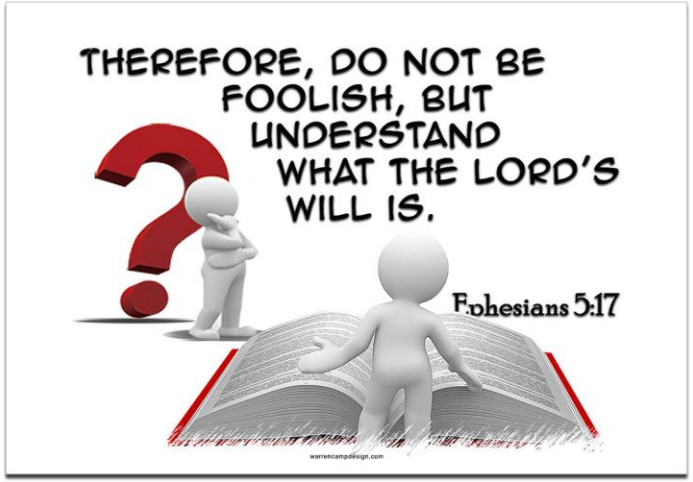
The Apostle Paul wrote,

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." **(Ephesians 5:15-17)**

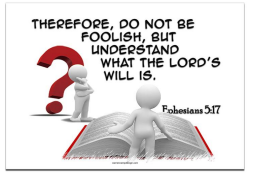
- Jesus Himself during His time here on earth always endeavoured to do the will of His Father in heaven

Jesus Himself said to His disciples,

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." **(John 4:34)**



- Flowing in God's will for our life is a key to experiencing God's favour and blessing upon our lives and to our lives bearing much eternal fruit



- Given the nearness of the rapture of all true believers, it is so important that we are good stewards of our gifts and talents so that we maximise our effectiveness here on earth
- Once we are in heaven there will be no need for evangelism. So, whilst we are here on earth it is good to help as many people as possible to come to Christ before the rapture of all true believers

The Apostle Paul also wrote,



“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. **(Romans 12:6-8)**



8) **That we are sure of our own salvation. That we have a clear understanding of the basis of our right standing with God. That our faith is grounded on the finished work of Christ on the cross** (That we have simply received the gift of eternal life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ)



The Apostle Paul wrote,

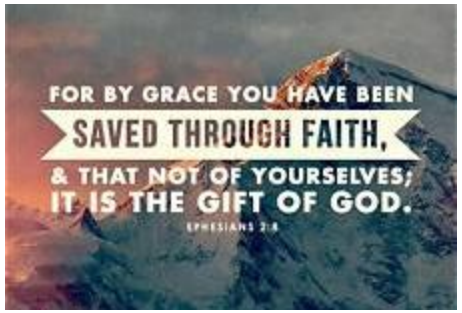
"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

Jesus Himself said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” **(Matthew 7:21-23)**



- It is even possible for some people to be full of religious activities and to be involved in acts of ministry but who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

- This is particularly evident in those people full of religious works but who do not reflect the character of Christ in the way that they conduct themselves but rather practice lawlessness



Jesus Himself also said,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **(John 3:3)**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” **(John 3:5)**



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” **(Galatians 2:16)**



In the gospel of John we read,

"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." ***(John 1:11-13)***



In the book of Acts, we read the words of the Apostle Peter,

"Repent therefore and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out*, so that *times of refreshing* may come from the *presence of the Lord*." **(Acts 3:19)**



- So, our salvation and right standing with God is simply based on us receiving the gift of eternal life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ

- Upon receiving Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Saviour we can be assured that He will never leave nor forsake us and to be absent from the body is to be with Him in heaven



In the book of Hebrews we read, "…For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" **(Hebrew 13:5-6)**

The Apostle Paul also wrote, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." **(Romans 8:38-39)**



- For those who have not yet received the gift of eternal life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, I will now say a prayer where you can receive the gift of eternal life. Upon saying this prayer, you will then be eternally secure

Dear Father God today I turn from my sins to live for You. I believe that Jesus Christ died for all of my sins and arose from the dead three days later. Today I invite Jesus Christ to come into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour and best friend from this day on. Baptize me with the Holy Spirit I pray in the Name of Jesus, Amen.



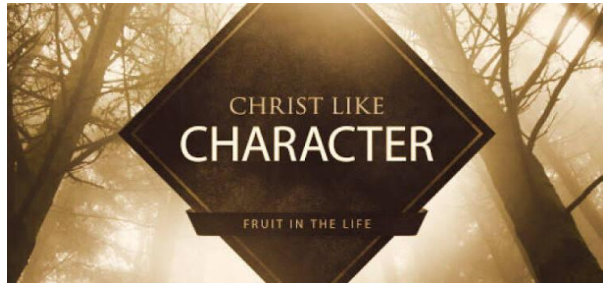
9) That we are mindful of the importance of living like a Christian. The way that we live our life matters



Jesus Himself said,

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." **(Matthew 5:16)**

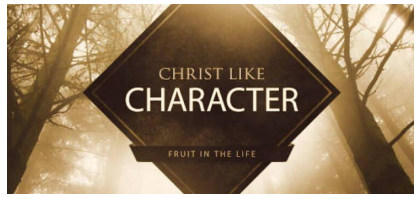
- The way that we live our life matters



- People need to see that we have a genuine love for them and that we have a genuine passion for the things of God

- The way that we live our life has the potential to either draw people to Christ or even push them away

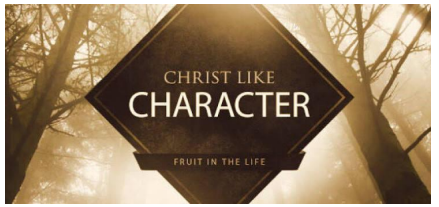
- Given that there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain it is so importance that we continually choose to walk in the Spirit so that people will be drawn to Christ in us the hope of glory



The Apostle Paul wrote, "My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you," **(Galatians 4:19)**

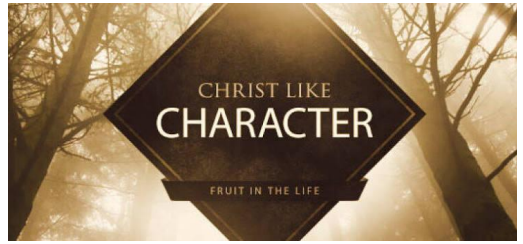
"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**" **(Galatians 5:13)**

The Apostle Paul also wrote, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” **(Galatians 5:14-16)**



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

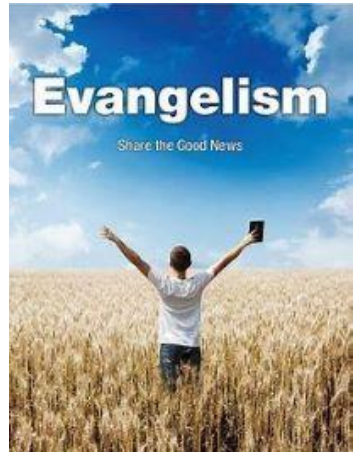
- **So given the reality of heaven and hell and the nearness of the rapture of all true believers, we need to be continually choosing to walk in the Spirit so that people will be drawn to Christ through the way that we live our life**



The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." **(1 Timothy 4:12)**

10) The importance of helping people to come to Christ given the nearness of the rapture of all true believers



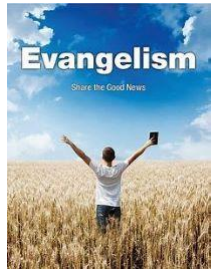
Jesus Himself said,

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, **lift up your eyes** and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" **(John 4:35)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." **(2 Corinthians 5:20)**

Jesus Himself also said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." **(Mark 16:15)**



- Having a soul's focus must be a great priority in the times that we are now living in, **AND**

11) The importance of being planted in a local Church fellowship and having the right people in our inner circle of friends



In the book of Hebrews we read, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits." **(1 Corinthians 15:33)**



In the book of Proverbs we read,

"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray." **(Proverbs 12:26)**

- I will now conclude with one important key to remaining strong in our walk with the Lord given the ungodly times that we are now living in

- That we are continually filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth



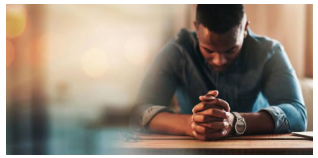
The Apostle Paul wrote, "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit," **(Ephesians 5:18)**

- **Living a Spirit filled Christian life and being continually guided by the Holy Spirit is such a great key to finishing our Christian Walk well and to being always ready for the rapture of all true believers**



Jesus Himself said, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." **(John 14:26)**

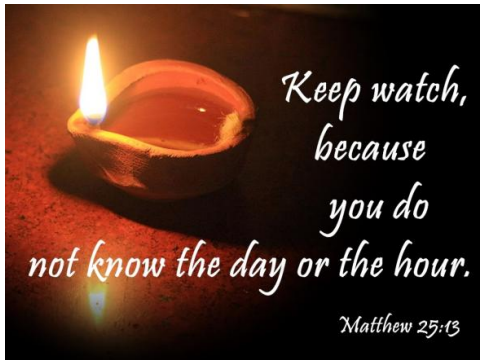
Jesus Himself also said, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." **(John 16:13)**



- **It is so important that we continually allow the peace of God to be our umpire when making decisions in life. Being continually guided by the Holy Spirit helps us to make right choices in life and to be always looking for the return of the Lord as we stay connected to the heart of God**

I will begin to conclude with the words of Jesus, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." **(Matthew 25:13)**

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." **(Revelation 22:12)**



- **So, in conclusion, how we need to simply be always ready for the rapture of all true believers and living our lives with eternity in mind and with kingdom priorities including the importance of helping people to come to Christ**

