

## Life in the End Times

Intro: Today we celebrate the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem to complete His mission to earth. Though the crowds were then cheering, the countdown to the cross surely weighed on the heart of Jesus. With the victory of Cross and Resurrection now behind us, we are living what the Bible calls the Last Days, the time between the Ascension of Jesus and His Return to wrap up all of history. God's Word prepares us to live with joy and expectation in this time of trials and suffering, rejoicing in the sure hope of our coming resurrection and eternity with Jesus. I take our cue for this chapter from verse 7 with the question: How shall we live as the end of all things approaches? [Saved, Serving, Steadfast]

### Saved: How can we be armed for suffering as we follow Christ? (1-6)

- Cease from sin
  - Jesus died to free us from the power and curse of sin.
  - God's purpose for us is to die to sin, be separated from sin, and to join the resistance against sin.
  - No longer living for the lusts of men but for the will of God.
- Living life in the spirit according to the will of God.
  - NOT in *sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries...*
  - They malign us (bigots, irrelevant, harsh hypocrites, judgmental, self-serving) but they will give account to Him ready to judge living and dead.
  - *For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead,*
    - *That though they are judged in the flesh as men,*
    - *They may live in the spirit according to the will of God.*
- Appl: Saved from slavery to sin and death? Free in forgiveness in the will of God? Saved is Armed!

### Serving: How do we care for one another as we follow Christ? (7-11)

- *Sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.*
  - Dramatic contrast to the spirit of the age, which is all about satisfying self.
  - Prayer the lifeline. Why so uncomfortable about praying?
- *Keep fervent (boiling, intense, dynamic) in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*
- *Be hospitable to one another without complaint (or, eye roll).*
- *Serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*
  - *As each one has received a gift... (charisma)*
  - *Speaking the word of God... Serving by the strength which God supplies*
  - *So that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom belongs glory & dominion...*

### Steadfast in Sharing the Sufferings of Christ: How can we face suffering as Christians? (12-19)

- Counterintuitive joy in undeserved suffering
  - *To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing that at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*
  - *If reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*
  - *Let none suffer as murderer, thief, evildoer, or troublesome meddler.*
- Not Ashamed: *If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.*
  - Judgment begins with household of God: Our sin is critical; that's how the struggle is ongoing.
  - As children of God, our sins come under the cross. Nonetheless, lapses into sin need be dealt with by repentance, confession, and restoration.
  - Judgment for those disobedient to the Gospel of God, to the Godless man and sinner: What will become of them? [The question hangs. . . ]
- Entrusting our souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.
  - *Let those who suffer according to the will of God...*
  - Faithful Creator: Trust has an object in the truthfulness, the love, and grace of God.
  - *Into Your hands I commit my spirit:* Jesus' words from the Cross.

Conclusion: We live in the in-between times. Jesus is coming back for a final day of reckoning and rewards. It is critical for those of us who long for that day to be saved (from sin and belonging to Jesus), serving one another as stewards of the grace of God, and steadfastly entrusting our souls to a faithful Creator in doing right, whatever the cost.

