

Meet Jesus Week 4: God Time (1/24-1/30)

Jesus Our Coming King

Monday: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Tuesday: Matthew 24:29-31

Wednesday: Matthew 25:1-13

Thursday: Matthew 25:31-45

Friday: Revelation 21

Keep It Active

1. Work on memorizing the memory verse for this week.
2. Consider serving, as a group, in the community as a demonstration of how the church loves others.

Diving Deeper

Living with the end in mind.

Matthew 24

As Christians, how are we to live? Jesus in Matthew 24 is laying out the end times and warning the disciples to live with the end times in mind.

"Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42) But what must we do and what steps must we take to be ready? Jesus says that not everyone "will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21) What Jesus is saying is that we must live our life putting into practice the truth of God's word. Jesus is saying that what we do in life, how we act define who we are.

William Wilberforce in Real Christianity dealt with this issue in identifying authentic Christianity. There are certain truths that the Bible teaches, truths that we embrace. They include:

- God loved the world so much that He sent His only son; Jesu Christ, to redeem us;
- Jesus willingly left the glory of His Father and became a man;
- Jesus was despised and hated and suffered because of our sin;
- Jesus willingly went to the cross and took our sins with Him so that through His death we could have eternal life;
- Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven to be with His Father;
- Because of what Jesus did, we can come into the presence of God;
- God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believe;
- The Holy Spirit works in our lives to transform us into the person God intended us to be;
- True believers have eternal life in the presence of God.

These are the basic tenants of Christian faith. We accept them as givens. Nearly everyone who attends church has heard of these truths repeatedly. “However, that does not mean that those who know these things intellectually have a deep understanding of their significance or experience their transforming influence in their lives. The appropriate response to these truths would be one of great excitement, true humility, hatred of sin, humble hope, firm faith, heavenly joy and unceasing gratitude.” (Real Christianity, pg 42) So, what makes a true disciple? Jesus offers a provocative statement: Not everyone who says or affirms that Jesus is the risen Lord and Lord of their lives will enter the Kingdom of Heaven on that future day. It is only those who actually do the will of God who will be permitted to entry. For Jesus, it is the manner in which life is lived out that demonstrates whether or not someone is honestly one of His people. One may verbally affirm Jesus’ lordship, and he may do remarkable things as Jesus did, but they will never spend time in eternity with God if they are not living the life of a disciple as expressed by Jesus. At the great judgment, Jesus will not recognize them as His own. The heart of the message is simple – to be a follower of Jesus means that behaviors and actions – the manner in which we live our daily lives – are the result of our inner life of faith. Jesus closes the Sermon on the mount with the story of two people and the houses they have chosen to build. The metaphor of the building is a depiction of life. One person hears Jesus’ words and acts on them, putting them into practice. The other hears Jesus’ words and doesn’t act on them. Two people, two different responses. The first person is like a house that is built on a rock. Its foundation is strong and secure. The second is like a house built on the sand. Its foundation is weak and unstable

and will eventually be destroyed when the storm comes. Discipleship occurs in the everyday practices of Jesus' followers. Love for and devotion to God must be accompanied by a life that honors God through the life one lives. Doing the will of God is honoring Him with how we align our faith and beliefs with the truth of God's word as we carry out our daily lives.

1. Do you do things you shouldn't be doing?
2. Are there things you know you should be doing, but don't?
3. We all have freedom to make choices. Are those choices and decisions aligning with who God desires you to be?
4. When you consider the end times, does it give you pause to reflect on your life and put into practice the truth of God's word?