First Baptist Friendswood Students

Daily Discipleship — November 22-27

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus promised that one day He will return and fully establish God's kingdom. Until that day, Jesus instructed His followers to make the most of their time, living as His ambassadors and telling others how to be part of the coming kingdom.

LIVING IN EXPECTATION — MARK 13

WE CAN EXPECT PERSECUTION — MARK 13:5-13

5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

WE CAN EXPECT JESUS'S RETURN — MARK 13:21-27,32-33

21 "And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand. 24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. . . . 32 But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION — LAST THINGS

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Jesus will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous will be condemned to hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever with the Lord.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

WE CAN EXPECT PERSECUTION — MARK 13:5-13

• How can you tell if what someone teaches about Jesus is true? What should you do if it isn't?

• What does persecution look like for Christians today?

• Why does Jesus say it's "necessary that the gospel be preached to all nations" (v. 10)? What is our role in this command?

WE CAN EXPECT JESUS'S RETURN — MARK 13:21-27,32-33

• Should we be afraid of Jesus's return? Explain.

• How should we respond if someone claims to know the exact time when Jesus will return?

• What would it look like for you to "watch!" and to live "alert!" (v. 33)?

How can you practically live out your faith in Jesus with eternity in mind? Who in your life needs to know about Jesus?

LIFE CONNECTION

Has someone ever lied about you? Not only is being lied about hurtful, but it's hard to recover from and can damage our reputation beyond repair. Many people lied about Jesus and His ministry and they still do today. As Christians, we should expect persecution, but that's hard to wrap our minds around in today's culture. Jesus prepared His disciples for rumors, persecution, difficulty, challenges, and pain. He never promised that we would live easy, peaceful lives, but He has given us reason to believe and trust in His goodness and faithfulness, no matter the circumstance. If you've been lied about, mistreated, misquoted, or anything else along those lines, you're not alone. Jesus experienced all of those things and never wavered as an example for us today. You may not expect certain struggles, but Jesus will be with you through them all. Instead of asking, "Why me?" ask, "How can God use this?" to shift your perspective.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD — 2 TIMOTHY 4:2

What time of the day are you most alert? Do you do your best thinking in the morning or late at night? In this week's main lesson, Jesus offered His disciples a good bit of advice and warnings about events that were to come: false prophets, persecution, and the end of the age. Jesus's advice was: Be ready! Be alert! Pay attention!

This week, we'll read Paul's second letter to Timothy, which is full of advice and encouragement. Paul's message is similar to the one Jesus gave His disciples: Be ready! Be alert! Pay attention! In today's passage, Paul told Timothy (and us) to "preach the word," meaning simply to communicate the truth of God's Word. Does this mean that we have to shout in the cafeteria or preach to crowds of people? No. It means that we each have the responsibility to speak God's truth and to share the gospel. When? "In season and out of season" means always—not just at church, at camp, or on our good days, but in all seasons. We never know when God will give us an opportunity to share the truth of God's Word, but we can always be prepared. Maybe you'll be asked to share about your faith in youth group. Maybe a friend will ask you why you read your Bible. Maybe you'll have the opportunity to pray with someone who is hurting. Maybe that family member you've been praying for is finally ready to hear the gospel. Will you be ready at any time? Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." Only a few verses earlier, Paul explained that this is exactly what Scripture does (2 Tim. 3:16). God's Word corrects, rebukes, and encourages us. Scripture and the Holy Spirit do the work, but we communicate the Word patiently, teaching and helping where we can. So, we must be ready to do exactly that. How? By growing in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word and always being ready to share God's truth.

• How has Scripture corrected, rebuked, or encouraged you in your own faith?

• Are you ready to "preach the word" if an opportunity comes today? What do you need to do to get ready?

PRAY

Jesus, when the time comes to "preach the word," help me to be ready. Give me the words to say and the courage to say them.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH — 2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

"God helps those who help themselves." "Everything happens for a reason." "Cleanliness is next to godliness." "God wants you to be happy." "God won't give you more than you can handle." "Follow your heart." "Live your truth." "All roads lead to heaven."

You've probably heard at least some of these phrases and maybe even said them yourself, but are they true? Or are they just phrases we repeat? In today's passage, Paul wrote that a time is coming—and really is already here—when people won't listen to sound doctrine, accurate biblical teaching. Instead, people will listen only to whatever they want to believe rather than the actual truth. Does this sound like our culture?

Reread those quotes. They all sound good, right? But if we know God's Word, we know that none of these popular phrases are accurate. They're popular because they are what people want to hear. These myths (and so many others like them) make us feel better about our sin rather than convicting us. They put our selfish desires over real need. They allow feelings to dictate our actions over sound truth. They paint Jesus as an accepting Friend only rather than a Savior, God as an equal rather than the Creator, the Holy Spirit as emotional support and justification rather than the Counselor and Truth-Teller. When we listen to myths like these over biblical truth, we ignore the seriousness of sin, the holiness of God, and our neediness for redemption. So, how do we keep from being deceived? How do we know what is truth and what is a lie? We must commit to knowing God's Word, not simply reading it. We must spend enough time with the Lord and in His Word to meditate on who He is.

• What other myths have you noticed people, even believers, accept as truth?

• How can you practically take steps to know God's Word so that you can know what is true?

PRAY

Lord, Your truth is life-giving. When I'm tempted to believe the lies of this world, remind me of Your truth.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH — 2 TIMOTHY 4:5

Paul's letter to Timothy continues today with four pieces of advice that are really helpful for us. First, Paul said to "be sober-minded." When we face opposition or discouragement, we are to practice keeping a clear head. The idea is to be levelheaded, not hot-tempered. We must remain steady and stable, focused on the task of representing Jesus.

Paul also told Timothy to "endure suffering." Listen, Satan won't let the lost go quietly; he won't surrender without a fight. Making disciples is hard work and we will run into difficult times. Quitting is easy when living the way God calls us to live is costly. We easily think, "This is too hard. It must not be from God," but Jesus told us to expect difficulty as His followers (Mark 13:13). Paul also advised Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist." Paul simply means that we must be faithful in sharing the gospel with the lost. Evangelism—sharing the gospel—is work, but it is rewarding! Whether we share the gospel one-on-one or to a group, we are called to reach unbelievers with the good news of Jesus. Finally, Paul said to "fulfill your ministry." In other words, he encouraged Timothy to keep going, to finish. And he says the same to us. The Christian life isn't always easy, especially when we get outside the walls of our churches. But we're called to endure, to keep going, to be faithful. But we can't do this in our own strength. We depend on the Lord's power and strength. You may or may not be called to be a professional pastor or minister, but every Christian is an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). We each have a mission—to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Even as a teenager, you are a disciple-maker, and God has called you to share the gospel in your ministry setting, whether that is your school, church, team, job.

• When life is tough, how do you usually respond? How can you see hardship with "spiritual eyes"?

• What's your ministry? Who are you supposed to be reaching with the gospel? How do you need to be more intentional in your ministry setting?

PRAY

Jesus, help me fulfill the mission You have given me. Help me be more sensitive to the spiritual work around me.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH — 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

Imprisoned in Rome, Paul knew the end of his life was near. Paul said, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering." In the Old Testament, the drink offering was the final part of the sacrificial process. After the sacrifice was placed on the altar, the drink offering—usually wine—was poured over it. In Romans 12:1, Paul urged believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices, and Paul certainly did. Paul explained to Timothy that he had given his life to the cause of Christ and was in the final stage of his sacrifice to the Lord. The end was close.

But Paul wasn't worried. He looked forward to receiving "the crown of righteousness" from the Lord. He was confident in the salvation that awaited him. Reflecting on his life and ministry, Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." At the end of his life, Paul could confidently say that he worked and sacrificed in a way that not only was he proud of but he used every ounce of energy for the Lord. He held nothing back.

Can we say the same? When we come face to face with Jesus, when this life is done, can we confidently say that we poured out every bit of strength for Him? Will the people we leave behind be confident that we are in heaven? Do they desire to be where we are because of how we lived? The world constantly tells us to live for ourselves, to do what feels good now, to live in the moment. But as believers, we don't live for ourselves. We live for Jesus, His kingdom, and His mission. The worldly things we might try to live for will fade away. They'll change with trends. They'll dissolve into distant memory. But our eternal life with the Lord will never fade. When you get to the end of your life, do you want to say, "I lived my best life for me," or "I lived sacrificially, giving all my effort for His kingdom. I'm ready for my faith to be sight"? Paul was ready to go home, knowing he gave everything he had to the Lord. Will you one day say the same?

• How do you want to be remembered?

• How can you live your life sacrificially? In what ways are you holding back?

PRAY

Jesus, at the end of my life, I want to say that I've exhausted every ounce of my being for You. Show me how to live my best life for You and You alone.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH — 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

In today's passage, Paul was answering the Thessalonians' question about Jesus's return. But honestly, they had been given all the information that was available. We have too. Jesus told His disciples that only the Father knows when He will return (Mark 13:32). Talking about "end times" can feel scary. The imagery we're given in Daniel, Revelation, and other books sounds like it came straight from a scary movie. For those who don't put their faith in Jesus, the end will be terrifying. But for those who believe, the end is really the beginning.

As believers, the idea of scary "end times" isn't our future. The Day of the Lord is all good news for us! It's like watching a ball game that you recorded and already found out the score. The tension and fear of who wins just isn't there. It's still interesting to see how the winner will win, but we don't experience the anxiety and stress of those who watched the game live. Here's the good news: We know who wins in the end!

We're all curious people, aren't we? We want to know the exact date and time, so we'll be ready for that moment. But what Paul was saying is that we don't have to worry about that. We should live as if Jesus is returning any moment. So how do we do that? We live with purpose. We share the gospel so our friends and family won't be in the darkness. We rest in the fact that we have salvation, so we don't have to worry about what's to come. We protect our hearts and our minds from false teaching, from people or things trying to distract our hearts and minds away from Jesus and His mission. And we encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ. Team Jesus wins, and since we're on His team, we do too.

• What are some of your worries or concerns about Jesus's return?

• Why should we live as if Jesus will return any moment? What needs to change so that you live in this way?

PRAY

Jesus, I'm so grateful that I don't have to worry about the judgment that comes after Your return. I'm so grateful for my salvation in You. Help me walk in the light with You.