

# WAITING FOR JESUS TO RETURN

For the last few weeks, our series has been WAITING. We have looked at what the scriptures teach us concerning....

1. **Waiting for Provision**
2. **Waiting for Answers**
3. **Waiting for Miracles**

If you haven't had a chance to listen to those messages yet, I encourage you to get on our website or YouTube channel and catch up on the principals we have discussed so far, because they are all interrelated and build on each other.

Today I want to talk about something we are ALL waiting for... The Return of Christ. Our wait began the day Jesus ascended into heaven

## **Acts 1:6-11 (NIV)**

<sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

<sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

<sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

I so love this scene... They are looking intently into the sky and God sends two angels to interrupt their gaze and to give them an important message

As we wait for Jesus to return there are at least 5 battles that we must face.

## 1. The Battle of being PREPARED

One of the first messages of the ascension is “GET READY”. Earlier Jesus had told the disciples...

### **Matthew 24:36-39 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, <sup>[a]</sup> but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

### **Matthew 24:44 (NIV)**

<sup>44</sup> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Just a few verses later we read that Jesus told them a parable about 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins to emphasize their need to be ready for his return.

### **Matthew 25:10-13 (NIV)**

<sup>10</sup> “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

<sup>12</sup> “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

<sup>13</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

## **Larry Norman's old song "I Wish We'd All Been Ready"**

*Life was filled with guns and war And everyone got trampled on the floor  
I wish we'd all been ready*

*Children died, the days grew cold A piece of bread could buy a bag of gold  
I wish we'd all been ready*

*There's no time to change your mind The Son has come and you've been left behind*

*A man and wife asleep in bed She hears a noise and turns her head, he's gone  
I wish we'd all be ready*

*Two men walking up a hill One disappears and one's left standing still  
I wish we'd all been ready*

*There's no time to change your mind The Son has come and you've been left behind*

*There's no time to change your mind How could you have been so blind  
The Father spoke, the demons dined  
The Son has come and you've been left behind*

## **"People Get Ready... Jesus Is Comin'"**

*Lord I'm ready now.*

*I'm waiting for your triumphant return. (You're coming so soon).*

*This world has nothing for me,*

*I find my peace and joy solely in You. (Only in You).*

*I want the world to see,*

*You're alive and living well in me.*

*Let me be a part,*

*of the harvest for the days are few. (You're coming soon).*

*[Chorus:]*

*So People get ready, Jesus is coming*

*Soon we'll be going home.*

*People get ready, Jesus is coming*

*to take from the world his own.*

*There's a day that comes*

*when we will be divided right and left.*

*(For those who know Him and those that do not know).*

*And those who know Him well, will meet Him in the air.*

*Hallelujah! (God is within us).*

*And those that do not know, they will hear 'Depart I knew you not.'*

*For my friends you see,*

*there will be a day when we'll be counted.*

*So know Him well, know Him well.*

**WEAPON:** By FAITH, reach out and take hold of the Salvation that Jesus offers you. And through FAITH maintain a daily relationship with Christ

### **Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)**

**2** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh<sup>[a]</sup> and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

## **2. The Battle of FEAR**

The second battle we might face in waiting for Jesus to return is Fear. Isn’t it interesting that fear is a battle we face with each kind of waiting we have talked about so far. This fear can come in many different forms.

For instance, an abnormal fear that we will miss His return for some reason. Often the enemy turns what should be a normal fear of God and conviction of the Holy Spirit into an unfounded fear that somehow, no matter how hard we try we will not be ready.

Another kind of fear in this area, that I’m sure we have all battled at one time or another goes something like this... *“I don’t want Jesus back right now because there are things I want to do first.” “I want to get married” “I want to become an adult” “I want to have kids” “I want my family to get saved”*

Regardless of the particular type of manifestation of this fear, our weapon to defeat it is the same

**WEAPON:** TRUST in God’s goodness and timing and be filled with the HOPE and JOY of his return

### Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the **blessed hope**—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Did you hear what that scripture said? Jesus return is our blessed hope because he loves us, gave himself for us, forgave us of our sins, redeems us, purifies us, helps us do what is good and right.

## 3. The Battle of DOUBT

### 2 Peter 3:3-10 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> **They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”** <sup>5</sup> But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup> By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. <sup>7</sup> By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

<sup>8</sup> But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

**WEAPON:** RESIST the temptations of the enemy that say He is never coming back by FILLING your heart and mind with the truth of the scriptures that promise His return.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

## **4. The Battle of WEARINESS**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.

### **Revelation 16:15 (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

### **Matthew 24:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

### **Luke 21:34-36 (NIV)**

<sup>34</sup> “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly<sup>(B)</sup> like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

**WEAPON:** Stay VIGILANT in expectation

## 5. The Battle of COMPLACENCY

### **Matthew 24:12-14 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, <sup>13</sup> but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom<sup>Ⓢ</sup> will be preached in the whole world<sup>Ⓢ</sup> as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

4 times in the book of Revelation we hear these words... “I am coming soon” Yet it is easy for us to grow complacent concerning Jesus words in Matthew 28

### **Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,<sup>Ⓢ</sup> baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>Ⓢ</sup> <sup>20</sup> and teaching<sup>Ⓢ</sup> them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you<sup>Ⓢ</sup> always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>Ⓢ</sup>

**WEAPON:** With urgency fulfill his mission for the church