

I STILL Believe (Part 7)

Sunday, September 20, 2020

Luke 18:8 (NIV)

8 ...I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Let's review the statements of faith we have studied so far...

1. **I Still Believe** in the One, Eternal, Self-existent God, creator of the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen; His love of and desire to reveal himself and have relationship with those whom he has created.
2. **I Still Believe** in the Trinity of the Godhead as being revealed as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. **I Still Believe** that sin separates us from God and that the result of that sin is death or eternal separation from God in Hell
4. **I Still Believe** that God's remedy for Sin is Salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus and His work upon the cross.
5. **I Still Believe** that we are called to walk, by that same faith, in relationship with Jesus Christ, allowing the presence of His Holy Spirit to transform us into a new creation
6. **I Still Believe** that The Bible is God's Holy Word. That The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.
7. **I Still Believe** that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the gift Jesus promised to all who believe
8. **I still Believe** in The Church
9. **I Still Believe** in The Ministry and its offices as given by God to the Church
10. **I Still Believe** that God Answers Prayer
11. **I Still Believe** in Divine Healing
12. **I Still Believe** God Provides
13. **I Still Believe** God wants us to Forgive

I am going to take the next couple of weeks to close out our series, "I Still Believe" with one more statement of faith

I Still Believe (Part 7)

I Still Believe God has a plan for the Last Days and has revealed that plan to us in His Word

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 24:3-14

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

James 5:7-8

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.

I am not trying to establish and argue for an exact timing of events with this message but rather give an overview of the events leading up to and including the period that we refer to as The Last Days or End Times

There is a broader reference to The Last Days and a more specific time period both of which we refer to as the last days

We also refer to these events as the End Times, and The Day of The Lord

Looking at the broader sense of The Last Days, Gods plan reveals to us many things and knowing, understanding, and believing in that plan helps us to stand firm to the end

Evil Will Increase

- Days of Noah

Matthew 24:37-39

³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ 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; ³⁹ 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.

Going about normal life, but no knowledge of what is coming.

We need to look back to Genesis to see the underlying cause

Genesis 6:5

⁵ The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

- Evil good good evil

Isaiah 5:20

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Isaiah 5:24

²⁴ ...for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 5:25

²⁵ Therefore the LORD's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down.

The open door for the increase of wickedness was caused by the refusal of Gods people to know, understand, believe in, and live by Gods Holy Word

- Wickedness will increase

Matthew 24:12

¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

- Last days men will be...

2 Timothy 3:1-5

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Romans 1:28-32

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Birth Pains or Tribulations (small t)

Matthew 24:1-8

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Revelation 6:1-8

6 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” ² I looked, and there before me was a

white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³ When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵ When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

⁷ When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

John 16:33

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

1 Peter 4:12

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

The Judgement of God

Isaiah 26:9

⁹ My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.

Romans 11:22 (ESV)

²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

We hear a lot about the love about the judgement of God. Don't forget that Gods judgements are meant to bring us to repentance and an understanding of his love, mercy, and forgiveness

John 16:8-11

⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

A Great Falling Away

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (AMP)

3 Let no one in any way deceive or entrap you, for *that day will not come* unless the apostasy comes first [that is, the great rebellion, the abandonment of the faith by professed Christians], and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction [the Antichrist, the one who is destined to be destroyed], **4** who opposes and exalts himself [so proudly and so insolently] above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he [actually enters and] takes his seat in the temple of God, publicly proclaiming that he himself is God.

This falling away occurs because our love of God (love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength) grows cold

Matthew 24:12

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

Love of what - God!

Revelation 2:4

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.

Last Days Revival

Joel's prophecy began its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, but continues to be fulfilled in these last days

Acts 2:17-18

17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream

dreams. **18** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

David Wilkerson saw the promise of Isaiah 54 applying to a last day's revival.

Isaiah 54:1-3

54 “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,” says the Lord. **2** “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. **3** For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

Why, because God is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance
(2 Peter 3:9)

Be Ready

Matthew 24:44

New International Version

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

Matthew 25:1-13

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2** Five of them were foolish and five were wise. **3** The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. **4** The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. **5** The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. **6** “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ **7** “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. **8** The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ **9** “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ **10** “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. **11** “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ **12** “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ **13** “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Luke 12:35-38

35 “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, **36** like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. **37** It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. **38** It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak.

Rapture Of the church

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

16 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. **17** 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.

Romans 8:23

23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

Titus 2:13

13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— **52** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Many disagree as to the timing of the Rapture, but what is most important for us is that we believe and are ready for it to take place and that until he comes to get us, we stand firm in our faith.