Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – March 11, 2018

***The Last Days!*** What happens next?

Life Lessons from Four Apostles

In the Mean Time. . .

Or, Six Principles to Practice While Waiting for Jesus

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

 Paul has encouraged his readers to stay strong in the face of persecution and comforted them in their trials and losses. Most of all, he has assured them of Christ’s return. Which will happen. For sure. But maybe not right away. So, what now? How do we please God while waiting for His Son?

***Respect God’s leaders.***  vv. 12, 13a

 We are disciples of Jesus, who places leaders in our lives. When they are worthy, we should respect and follow them. Hebrews 13:7, 17

***Practice God’s peace.***  vv. 13b, 14, 15

 Living peacefully means that we adapt to the needs of others. For the lazy, that involves a warning; for the discouraged, that involves com-fort; for the weak, that involves patience; for those who wrong us, that means loving and doing good to them as we would others. 2 Cor. 13:11, 12

***Obey God’s will.*** vv. 16-18

 God’s will is a constant commitment to joy, prayer, and thanks-giving. These are the non-negotiable habits of a converted heart, just as love is its non-negotiable attitude toward others. Philippians 4:4-7

***Live God’s truth***. vv. 19-22

 The tested prophetic word is to be followed as a word from God. To ignore the truth of God is to quench His Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:29-33

***Trust God’s purposes***. vv. 23, 24

 Paul shifts from our work to God’s, *i.e.,* His work in conforming us to holiness in Christ’s image. He has called us to this, and will accomplish His purposes in us. Guaranteed. Romans 8:28-32

***Affirm God’s family***. vv. 25-28

 We must remember that we are birthed into God’s Kingdom and family. Therefore we owe our brothers and sisters prayer support, fellowship, and as much good as we can do for them. Colossians 4:12-18

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***Last Days Life Lesson***

***As God’s family, confident in His purposes, we actively await Christ’s return by following His leaders and obeying His will,***

***seeking daily to pursue peace and to live out His Word.***

 ***Going Deeper--For Growth Groups:***

1. What is the difference between respecting worthy leaders and mindlessly obeying abusive ones? Are leaders respected today?

2. If verses 13b-15 are about peace-making, how is this different from a “peace at any price” attitude? Why is peace so evasive?

3. How do God’s commands and promises work together for our holiness?

4. “Rejoice!” is a command. Why is it often difficult for us to obey?