Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – March 25, 2018

*The Last Days! What happens next?*

 Life Lessons from Four Apostles

Preparing for The Last of The Last Days

Anticipating Apostasy and Antichrist

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

 A first-century “left behind” rumor had frightened the church, saying that Christ already had come. They had missed out! Paul reminds them of Jesus’ teaching, which Paul had repeated, that before Christ returns, two things would happen: first, a great falling away from the faith, and second the rise of an evil ruler who claims to speak as God. Jesus said: “l will return, Don’t try to guess when; it will be a while. Now, get busy, for there is work to do!”

***Don’t let false end-time rumors steal your joy!***  vv. 1, 2

 False reports of His return are precisely what Jesus predicted (Matthew 24:5; Luke 21:8, 9) and were common even in the first century. The story was, “Jesus has returned and you missed it!” See 2 Timothy 2:16-18. Paul is referring to the one and only appearing of Jesus of which he spoke in 1 Thess. 4, 2 Thess. 1, and 1 Corinthians 15, when believers are comforted and their enemies punished on the same day.

***Why? Because two things will signal Jesus’ return:*** vv. 3, 4

 The Apostasy: There will be a general, widespread decrease in people’s love for God. People will lose interest in spiritual things, having given themselves over to pleasure and idolatry. Matthew 24:9-11; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5

 The Antichrist: Related to a general falling away from the faith is a rise of false teachers and teachings. Although this already had begun in the first century, it will be accelerated at the end, with the rise of a final expression of evil, in a person so arrogant as to speak as God Himself. For now there are restraining forces at work, but at that time the restraints will be taken away, and “the lawless one” predicted by Jesus and the Prophets will appear. Matthew 24:15; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3

***So it’s important to remember what’s been revealed.*** vv. 5-8

 Once again we see Paul returning to what’s already been said, both by him and Jesus (Matthew 24; 1 Thess. 4, 5), not adding ideas:

 1. For now, evil is restrained from its full impact. vv. 5-7

 2. Near the last of the last days, Antichrist will be revealed. v. 8a

 3. When Jesus returns, He will destroy the evil one and all who have refused grace and truth in favor of lies. vv. 8b-12

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***Last Days Life Lesson***

***We need not be frightened that we have missed or will miss***

***the Day of the Lord, since the clear signs of the great apostasy and Antichrist will precede Jesus’ return in judgment.***

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

1. Paul refers back to the traditions of Jesus and the Prophets for the Last Days doctrines. Why do you think people complicated these with added extra layers? Why are we so easily led astray?

2. Jesus says that we are to be ready at any time for His return. How does that square with these signs that precede His coming?