Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – April 8, 2018

The Last Days! What happens next?

Life Lessons from Four Apostles

Standing Firm in The Last Days

Awaiting Christ’s Return: Four Essentials

2 Thessalonians 2:13–3:5

 In contrast to those who have refused God’s grace and chosen instead to embrace lies and eventually antichrist, the Thessalonians are God’s people by election and by faith. Now they actually participate in God’s mission rather than opposing it. Notice the interplay between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility/actions. Paul narrates four key realities for joy-filled waiting.

***Praise for Divine Love*** 2:13, 14

 Notice the “moving parts” of God’s salvation of fallen mankind: God chooses; the Spirit sets apart; Jesus dies; the gospel is pro- claimed. All of that is God’s doing. Man’s part? “Belief of the truth.” The only two things one can do with a gift is receive or reject it. In this case, the gift is Jesus, who comes in the truth of the gospel. See the process laid out clearly in Romans 8:28-32; 10:5-17.

***Plea for Human Perseverance*** 2:15-17

 God’s activity does NOT imply man’s passivity! Now that we have entered into God’s life, we continue by His grace and through His resources. How? “Stand firm and hold to the teaching!” Those who truly have received saving grace will NOT finally fail to apply that grace to their lives, in spite of doing so imperfectly. God gives us all we need to assure victory: love, grace, eternal encouragement, strength. God energizes in us what He requires of us. Ephesians 2:1-10; 6:10, 11; Philippians 2:12, 13

***Prayer for Gospel Success***  3:1, 2

 Paul’s most common prayer requests center around the mission of getting the gospel to the nations, including protection from God’s enemies. Once again, it’s about the message: the gospel of God’s love and grace. Ephesians 6:19, 20; Colossians 4:3, 4

***Promise of God’s Faithfulness*** 3:3-5

 All glory to God: He is faithful, gives strength, protects, and directs hearts back into persevering in Him and in His love. Few scriptures better show how God is the source of everything, even in our own attitudes and actions. Salvation is of the Lord. Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; Hebrews 13:20, 21

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***Last Days Life Lesson***

***God’s eternal, sustaining love for His people in the gospel***

***calls for great praise, perseverance and prayer for the spread of His message and the protection of His messengers.***

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

1. With God’s love so clearly portrayed in the Cross, why do so many doubt His grace and good

 will?

2. Scriptures like this one emphasize both God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. Why do we have a difficult time squaring those truths?