In my last message regarding the Second Coming of Christ, we discussed the rapture...

The “catching away” and “sudden removal” from the world of God’s church, the Ekklesia or “called out ones”.

We looked at the three beliefs that Christians hold to regarding **when** the rapture will occur (Pre-trib, Mid-Trib and Post-Trib).

I also gave you the Biblical evidence that each group uses to support their belief. Prior to studying the book of Revelation, my belief was singular…

I was a “pre-tribber” without understanding why… I’m still a Pre-Tribber, but now I believe that God will rapture His church at all three stages of the Tribulation.

The Biblical evidence that I have to support this is…

* Revelation 3:10 (Philadelphia) **Pre**-Tribulation
* 3-1/2 years (**mid**-way thru) this horrific/cataclysmic time of Judging the earth (Rev 6-19), God will again remove those who have turned to Him for Salvation. **(Before the worst of it comes)** Daniel 12:4-7
* Then at the end of that 3-1/2 years (**Post**-Tribulation) after God’s people Israel have been duped by the Anti-Christ, their Temple has been desecrated and they are backed into corner, seemingly without hope, God “suddenly catches them away”. Dan 9:27
* Then the 1000 year reign of Christ begins, but the Scriptures even reveal another Rapture (Rev 20:4-6) “Post-Post Rapture”
* Revelation 3:10

When the Tribulation period begins, the relative calm & peace that God is giving His church today to accomplish it’s mission (Matthew 28:19-20) will be over...

When the Tribulation period begins, sharing Christ & making disciples will become extremely difficult for those believers that find themselves “left behind”… They will find themselves having to:

* Refuse to take the “mark”
* Refuse to recant their faith in Christ
* Which will result in the sudden loss of 10lbs… which is the average weight of one’s head…

So let me encourage you today, don’t get hung up, and waste precious time and effort on endless debates about when or what will happen…

1. **Move Forward – in Christ -** focus on the mission God has saved & gifted you for now during the time of grace & peace that He is giving us…
* Help others get on board with the Lord.
* Set a holy example of living for others to follow.
* Serve God faithfully inside as well as outside of this building.

Preparing others to be heaven bound on the **Pre-Trib** bus!!

Why do Christians sometimes struggle to move forward with Christ?

**Have you ever noticed that you can’t think two thoughts at the same time? When you try, what do you do? Usually nothing**

If your thinking a pure thought (Godly love), you cannot think an impure thought (hate) at the same time. The one **cancels out** the other.

**It’s impossible to do…**

So the battle that every Christian faces (at some point) is…

that it is impossible for us to **move forward with Christ** and **follow the desires of our flesh** at the same time…

Which is why the body of Christ often appears lukewarm, weak and/or non-relevant to the community (serving itself) where God has placed it.

**So, moving forward with Christ is very much a choice to…**

* **Ephesians 6:13** (Put on the helmet of Salvation – protect your mind… remembering why God has saved you… to reach out and try to save others.)

I just read a statistic this week that said 95% of professing Christians have never led another person to Christ… I hope it’s not true of you.

Some might think that God must be okay with it…, if the majority of Christians aren’t leading others to Christ, and He hasn’t wiped them out…

Remember Jesus talked about the **BROAD WAY** VS the **NARROW WAY**

Have you ever wondered why God does just take His people to heaven when they give their lives to Jesus?

Because He wants to work thru those lives… so that others will repent, serve Him and be ready for His return? **2 Peter 3:9**

But Jesus wasn’t a “pie in the sky” person… He knew that for many…,

a relationship with Him just **wouldn’t be a high enough priority…**

**Luke 17:24-27**

**Luke 17:28-31**

The great thing about Sodom & Gomorrah… is that while Judgement was raining down upon their world, **God gave folks the opportunity to escape.** That’s love, mercy, grace and forgiveness.

Abraham’s nephew Lot, and his family were the only ones who heeded God’s warning and **moved forward… and following God’s instructions…**

But then Jesus says three important words in Luke 17:32

**“Remember Lot’s wife”**… Some of us know what happened to her…

Remember what they were told by the angels? **Genesis 19:15-18:**

**3 more important words…** “don’t look back”

**Genesis 19:26:** She looked back, and she was turned into a sack of potatoes!

Some have judged and criticized God harshly for what happened to Lot’s wife… **because of that one little look back!**

The problem is that **little** looked revealed a **HUGE** problem in her heart…

She looked back **because that’s where her heart was…** it’s was her world

* It’s where she saw beautiful things – **Lust of the eyes**
* It’s where her physical needs were being met – **Lust of the flesh**
* She was also looked up to/exalted in the community… **(Lot was a “righteous man”)** it’s where she was valued. - **Pride of life**

Obeying what God instructed wasn’t a high enough priority…

she couldn’t do that and what pleased her at the same time…

**she made her choice...**

Whether we want to admit it or not, we’re living in an ever increasing “modern day” Sodom & Gomorrah…

**The question is often asked what does Jesus save from?**

From loving the temporary world more than God… 1 John 2:15-17

* What does the believer see now as more beautiful than anything this world has to offer? Seeing others coming to faith, their lives being changed, discipleship, growth in grace, faithful and holiness.
* How are the believers needs met? By faith, as the Holy Spirit directs us to “seek first the Kingdom of Heaven…” Matthew 6:33
* Where is the believers value/significance? In Christ alone, living a holy life that we know pleases Him.

Jesus keep our hearts from looking back and valuing the temporary world you saved us from… more than obedience to God.

**Remember Lot’s wife…**

**Luke 9:57-59**

**Luke 9:60-62**

Jesus summed it all up by saying “whoever puts their hand to the plow and “looks back”… is not fit for the kingdom of God.

If church is just a Sunday morning “cultural/social” thing for you,

where you hear God’s Word, but you keep “looking back”…

Caring more about lunch or the fun things you have planned **that I’m keeping you from…**

* Seeing the beauty of the earth.
* Playing with your possessions.
* Getting the recognition/validation that you receive somewhere or from someone else… Then what is your heart is set on?

**It’s important to get this right…** Because Jesus is coming back… and Judgement isn’t far behind… It’s important that followers of Jesus move forward in their thinking…

Remember from my last message? Live like the world is temporary…

1. **Look Forward – 2 Peter 3:12**

**Pray daily for the Kings arrival.**

Could that be why, when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He said pray like this: Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name, **Thy Kingdom come…**

The only way to be ready for an hour that we don’t expect **is to live ready… Expecting God to answer our prayer**

If we pray for it and serve Him faithfully everyday, the way we view life and the decisions we make while we’re here will have a positive impact on our life and the lives of others…

Especially concerning the temptations we face…

If you’re actively looking for the return of your **“groom to be”**, you’re not likely going to be “flirting” with others…

1. **Reach your eternal destination – V13**

Living eternally in Heaven, with God the Father, Jesus the Son who died for us and the Holy Spirit who has guided our lives here.

The New Heaven and New Earth where only righteousness dwells… no lies, no hidden motives/agendas…

**V14 –** Are you ready to “move forward”?