

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Let's Not Get Distracted

Dear Pastor,

Distraction can result in serious unwanted consequences. Driving while distracted results in numerous and sometimes fatal accidents. So wise drivers avoid distractions when they are behind the wheel. Even so, in our daily lives, we need to avoid those things that distract us from following Jesus.

Recently I (Dave Lingle) had some discussions with my youngest son who is pastoring in Nashville and is currently preaching through Matthew. He was wrestling with the interpretation and application of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25).

In light of the cultural darkness sweeping our land, and in light of war in the Middle East and wars and rumors of wars in other parts of the world, I encouraged him to focus on themes and what is universally true and applicable for all believers in all ages.



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He assembled a list of 6 observations that I share with you here, again giving him credit:

NT Commands explicitly linked to the second coming:

1. Take Communion (I Corinthians 11:26): *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
2. Go to Church. Hebrews 10:25: *Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*
3. Set Your Hope on Seeing Him (I Peter 1:13-16): *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, to not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.*⁴
4. Pursue Purity (I John 3:1-3): *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*
5. Make Disciples (Matthew 28:19-20): *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
6. Encourage One Another (I Thessalonians 5:2, 11): *For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night... Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

With so many things going wrong in our country and in the world, it would be easy to get distracted and discouraged, and, for some, it might be easy to get caught up with "rapture fever." But Jesus said "Occupy 'til I come." I understand His words to mean: Stay engaged. Stay faithful. Keep your hands on the plow. Don't look back. Keep looking up. Don't get distracted!

In Christ,



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PS: This week please pray for Representatives Todd Novak (Dodgeville) and Jerry O'Connor (Fond du Lac), and Senator Romaine Quinn (Cameron).