

Conversation Starter

For the week of December 14-20, 2008

This week's theme: Be Blameless
Current sermon series: Watching For Jesus
Sunday's Readings: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8 & 19-28

As we continue watching for Jesus, that is watching and waiting for His 2nd coming to earth, we are not to be idle or passive about it, but focused on allowing God to make us holy, righteous and blameless. As noted in Sunday's New Testament lesson: *"May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* These words were written by the apostle Paul to a group of Christians from the city of Thessalonica – a city that became the capital city of ancient Macedonia by the Romans in 146BC and is now in present-day Greece. Being "kept blameless" until Jesus returned was certainly a huge goal not only because it would take a lot of time – perhaps the rest of their lives if Jesus didn't return in their lifetime – but also because of the wide scope of the goal. The Thessalonians were called by God to be blameless – that is, completely blameless. And how do we know this? Because Paul mentioned that both the temporal and eternal parts of us as human beings need to be kept blameless – yes, our bodies (temporal), yes, our souls (which include our mind, will and emotions), and yes also our spirits (eternal) as well. This is certainly a "tall order" for anyone to achieve. Frankly, without God's help, it's impossible. And this goal wasn't meant for the Thessalonians only. We, too, are called by God to be blameless while watching for Jesus. We, too, are called by God to be blameless while waiting for Him to return. We, too, are meant to have our whole spirit, soul, and body to be kept blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As stated in last week's Conversation Starter: "Jesus will come again and tho' we don't know when, the countdown's getting lower everyday." So when the countdown is over and He is back, will He find you desiring to be and committed to becoming blameless?

1. In being called by God to be blameless while waiting and watching for Jesus to return, what does to be "blameless" mean?
2. How do we keep our whole spirit, soul and body "blameless"?
3. In what ways does John the Baptist's mission and life-purpose help us achieve the goal of being kept blameless until Christ returns? (John the Baptist was referred to in Sunday's gospel reading.)
4. Right now, where do you find it difficult to become or remain blameless? Explain your answer.

If time permits, continue past this point for further discussion:

READ 2 Peter 3:14.

READ Philipians 1:9-11.

READ 1 Corinthians 1:7-9.

5. Describe how the above passages from 2 Peter, Philipians and 1 Corinthians add to our understanding of what it means to be "blameless".
6. What is our role in becoming blameless and what is God's role?
7. How do we "get in the way" of God helping us to become more holy, righteous and blameless?
8. How do we know when we've achieved the goal of having our spirit, soul and body kept blameless?
9. When Jesus does return, will anyone be perfectly holy, righteous and blameless? Explain your answer.