

Conversation Starter

For the week of November 9 to 15, 2008

This week's theme: When Time Seems Long
Current sermon series: Living For Jesus
Sunday's Readings: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Matthew 25:1-13

READ Acts 1:1-11.

And Jesus said to those gathered around Him: "...*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. (Acts 1:8-9) And did Jesus return from the clouds right away? Even though His friends would have wanted Him to come back sooner rather than later, nearly 2000 years has passed and He hasn't yet returned. Yet since that time, much has been written about the eventual return of Jesus Christ including passages found in the Bible. In fact, both of last Sunday's readings focused on His second coming. And from these readings, what do we know for certain? That Jesus will come back to earth again. And what information does God keep hidden from us? The timing of Christ's return. As was written in the gospel reading: "...*because you do not know the day or the hour.*" (Matthew 25:13b) So when time seems long for the return of Jesus, what are we suppose to do? The gospel reading also states: "*keep watch.*" (Matthew 25:13a) In other words, be ready for His return at all times ... be spiritually prepared ... don't be caught off guard ... live each day as though Jesus is coming back at any moment. If Jesus was to come back today, would you feel ready?

1. How do we prepare for Christ's return?
2. How do we know when we're ready for His return?
3. Why do you think God has allowed so much time to go by since Jesus ascended into the clouds and His eventual return?
4. Why does God keep the day and hour of Jesus' return "top secret"?
5. In what ways should living for Jesus help us use our time productively while waiting for Jesus to come back?

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

READ 2 Peter 3:8-9.

6. In the above reading, what reason does the apostle Peter provide to the question: *why is it taking so long for Jesus to come back?*
7. How should we pray for people we know who are not yet followers of Jesus?
8. In what ways can you improve how you "keep watch" for the return of Jesus?