

Prepare – Get Your House in Order!

We are preparing, not for Jesus' birth, but for His return

1. (Last week) Know the Word
2. (Today) 'Get your house in order'
 - a. Titus 2:11-14 – God's grace teaches us to say 'no' to sin and to lead uprightly as we wait for Jesus to return
 - b. 2 Peter 1:3-11 – Armed with God's promises we are to develop the qualities of God's people:
 - i. Faith
 - ii. Virtue
 - iii. Knowledge
 - iv. Self-control
 - v. Steadfastness
 - vi. Godliness
 - vii. Brotherly love
 - viii. Loyalty
 - c. We are responsible for nurturing these qualities in our lives – they don't just 'happen'
 - d. Nurturing is an inward operation
 - i. Seeds are nurtured as we care for the soil they are planted in
 - ii. Our lives are nurtured as we pay attention to the soil of our thoughts
3. We prepare for company by 'getting our house in order' – so we prepare for Jesus by getting our 'selves' in order
 - a. Our emotions – our emotions tell us how we are perceiving reality and what needs and fears and expectations are being met (joy and gratitude) or are not being met (fear, pain, anger)
 - b. Our thoughts are our way of making sense of what we experience – they set our expectations, needs and fears; and they interpret what we are experiencing
 - c. Our emotions "are" – it doesn't really help to say "I shouldn't feel this way" – emotions change as our expectations and understanding changes
 - d. Meanwhile, our body simply responds to what our emotions and our thoughts tell it to do.
 - e. To change our behavior, we must first train our minds to think right – this will help settle our emotions and lead our bodies to live 'self-controlled, godly and upright lives as we wait . . .'"
4. As we train our wills to value God's ways above our own, we then can exert our will to influence how we think, which will affect the way we feel and lead to more lasting changes in behavior.
 - a. Let's not just put effort into making our "house" look good on the outside
 - b. Let's make sure it is clean and presentable on the inside, where Jesus dwells in believers now through his Spirit
 - c. Then we will be truly ready for him to return and claim us as his
 - d. And we will be fit to rule with him – which is our destiny