



What To Do Between 1 and 2?

1st Thess 4:13-18 (Topical Message)

As Christians, we are **LIVING** in a time between Christ's 1 coming, and His 2nd coming, waiting for the Christ to come and rapture the Church. We are living in a time called **(1) the dispensation of Grace, (2) the Church Age, or the (3) Age of Grace.**

So, living today in 2021 as a Christian, what should Christians be doing while we wait for Christ to return and rapture the Church?

This is what I want to preach on today. As I was praying on this message, the Lord brought to my spirit 3 critical activities believers should be **"Spirit Led"** in doing while we wait. Thus, the title of my message –

What To Do Between 1 & 2?

Spirit Led Activities

1. Reach

1. Preach

2. Teach

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Spirit Led Criteria

After 31 years of being a Christian, Deacon, Elder and Pastor, I have probably heard 1000's of messages of Evangelism (Reach & Preach) & Discipleship (Teach). This is what the church and believers are supposed to do.? That is never in question.

What is a more important question is the source from which these activities are derived from? Are they from man, or are they from God?

If they originate with Man – Activities are Fruitless!

If they originate with God – Activities are Fruitful!

In Ministry – This is the most important question to ask about any activity involving Reaching, Preaching & Teaching! It's who is the source of the **ACTIVITY!**

Brothers & Sisters – God is still at work. Amen. He is still working in the current Global Pandemic, and will continue to work in the future.

The Key is for Christians is – Are you be guided by Him in your life & activities?

How does God guide? He does so by Spirit-to-spirit communication (because we are one spirit with the lord).

John 16:13 (NASB)

¹³ "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Are we as Christians seeking guidance, and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit?

I have sat in 100's of church leadership meetings over the years (Not this Church), where decisions were made, not that they are bad, or theologically incorrect, but originated from man. How do I know this? Because God didn't guide, provide and produce fruit in that decision. I can give countless examples of this.

One Example – In my 1st Church a woman decided to start a Day Care Center in the church building with a 2-fold purpose. ***(1) Women would drop their kids off for day care, and (2) they could attend a daily woman's bible study.*** Monies collected from the day care would pay for staff salaries was the way to fund the ministry. Hey, what a great idea, except that it never got more than a few children to participate at one time, cash flow was always negative, and the church lost a substantial amount of money fixing the building, and paying salaries. I know, because I was the treasurer. It was started by a woman's decision, but never bore any lasting fruit (lasted less than a year). This great idea flopped. God didn't provide for it, so He must have not guided it. Was the woman (Good Intentions) who started it led by God to do so, or was it her idea to do so. Do you see the difference?

My point here to start this message is that "If you're NOT Spirit led to do something", DON'T do it. ALWAYS - Wait to be Spirit Led – Amen!

Thessalonians Issue:

They thought the Church had already been raptured, and they missed the rapture:

Paul explains that this isn't the case, and clarifies this in 1st Thess 4:13-18.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Paul says he wants them to be informed about those who are asleep (Already had died).

Paul wants to inform them about those believers who have died.

Paul says that they shouldn't grieve as do the rest who have no hope:

Brothers & Sisters – If you don't know Christ, you have no hope. If a person has died without Christ, they have no hope, because they are eternally separated from Christ. In addition, man without Christ while living, also have no hope.

Paul says by believing Jesus died & rose again (Gospel Message), God will bring with Him (Jesus) those who have fallen asleep (died).

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the **dead in Christ** will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Paul says in verse 15 – We who are alive (remain) will not precede those who have fallen asleep (Died).

Verse 16 – Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

Dead in Christ – Will Rise First!

Verse 17 – Those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with the dead who are rising. To meet the Lord in the air.

Together with Him, and together with Them (Our Brothers & Sisters in Christ)!

We will always be with the Lord! Amen!

Transliterated Word: *harpazô* - Definition: *to seize, catch up, snatch away:*

Spirit Led Activity

1. Reach

When I say reach, I mean to reach people with the Gospel message.

You might say that's not my role as a Christian, that's up to the Pastor or church leaders, or Evangelists like Billy Graham.

Well, 1st off as a believer Jesus Commanded all believers to do so:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB)

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ **"Go therefore** and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus says to Go therefore – One has to go and reach people with the Gospel Message, before they can be discipled, and baptized.

Brothers & Sisters in Christ – Jesus tells us to Go. This means to reach people with the Gospel message. But how as an individual believer? Being led by the Spirit (As I already Mentioned) !

Philemon 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ and I pray that the **sharing of your faith may become effective** for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

Brothers & Sisters – Between Christ's 1st coming and 2nd coming believers should be sharing their faith in a Spirit led way. Amen!

Hint

You can always tell a person how Christ changed your life: Amen! And that He can offer Hope and Salvation to whoever you are speaking with (Not Forced, but Spirit led).

Spirit Led Activity

2. Preach

1 Corinthians 1:23 (NASB)

²³ but we **preach** Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

Paul says in this verse we preach Christ crucified (Gospel) a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.

Romans 10:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a **preacher**?

Paul in Romans says how will an unbeliever hear without a preacher. **Preach – Means to Proclaim!**

Who is the Preacher?

Brothers & Sisters – You are the preacher. Again, you don't need any formal seminary training to proclaim the Gospel message. Just to preach (proclaim) in a Spirit-led way. Amen!

Spirit Led Activity

3. Teach

Brothers & Sisters – Teaching is discipleship. All believers should be in the process of being taught by God (Directly & Thru Others), and all believers should be used by God to teach others. In other words, a believer is being taught, and a believer is also teaching at some level. Who is the ultimate Teacher to teach the Believer? Of course, that is Jesus Christ who is described by Paul in Titus 2:11 as the “Grace of God”.

Titus 2:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

The word instructing also implies to train like a child. Jesus instructs the believer (His Children) to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, live sensibly, and expressing righteousness in the present age. Amen. Jesus can also instruct us by reading His word, and thru others. All believers are being instructed during their lifetimes.

But, what about Jesus using the believer to teach others? Believers should be Spirit led in how they teach (Disciple) and not be driven by their own personal agendas (My Disciple, not Jesus’s disciple), flesh patterns (Being Wanted), and manipulation.

In Ministry – The most important question to ask about any activity involving Reaching, Preaching & Teaching - Is who is the source of the activity?

If the Source is Man – Activities are Fruitless!

If the Source is God – Activities are Fruitful!

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