

Connex Group Workbook - Session 6 – The Wise & Foolish Young Women continued

Session 6: The Parousia

Fill in the blanks below regarding the second coming of Christ.

Past: We entered into _____ with Christ through the gift of _____ through faith and believing in his death and resurrection.

Present: Christ has gone to prepare a _____ (just as the bridegroom prepared the family home in preparation for bringing the bride home after 1 year betrothal).

Future: There will be a new _____, the old has _____ away and the new shall come in.

When thinking of the Parousia, what 3 main themes can be drawn from the scriptures below?

1. Theme: T_____ O_____ E_____,

Colossians 2:15: 'And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross..

2. Theme: J_____

Matthew 25:31-32 says: ³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

2 Corinthians 1:12 says Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. If we are forgiven for our sins by the grace of God activated through faith, then genuine believers will pass judgement.

3. Theme: R_____

2 Peter 3:13 says 'But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.' and revelation 21:4 says ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." God comes to restore order, to bring in the new heaven and to spend eternity with us.

Discuss: What practical steps can you take to ensure you remain expectant of the 2nd coming?

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Session 6: Authentic Christianity

‘The most subtle device used by Satan to deceive people is by causing Christians to practice a sham Christianity before the world. It uses all the right terms and behaves in the proper ‘Christian’ manner, but the result is that it repels people from Christ rather than attracting them to Christ.’

1. To what extent do you agree with the statement above?
2. How do we safeguard ourselves and one another from practicing a ‘sham’ Christianity?
3. What does authentic Christianity look like to you?

Outward religion vs inward renewal

Read Matthew 6:1-4

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Jesus warns against creating an image of righteousness for the sake of display.

1. In our Connex groups, how can we overcome a culture of superficiality?
2. Using Matthew 6:1-4 as an example, what kind of safeguards can you put in place to ensure you are not acting to be honoured by others?
3. What effect could inauthentic Christianity have on the church and the world?

Session 6: Perseverance before the Parousia

Life as a Christian requires perseverance and a commitment to the long haul. The parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins teaches us that as we wait, we ought to have reserves on hand and anticipate the journey ahead.

Read the following scriptures:

1 Timothy 6:12:

¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Hebrews 12:1:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

‘Blessed are those whose lamps are faithfully kept burning as they watch and wait for his appearance.’

1. How can you help others in the faith whose endurance is running low?
2. Can you give examples of how you have personally ‘fought the good fight of faith?’