

WORK WHILE WE WAIT

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Here we go again, another lockdown. I'm sure that many of us heaved a sigh of exasperation when statistics showed an upward tick in the detection of the delta variant in the capital region and in several key cities outside the metro. Some of us pondered if we would ever see light at the end of this long, long tunnel that we are in. Some certainly made a quick dash to the mall and supermarket to get their essentials and supplies for the duration of the ECQ. While some, most likely out of emotional and mental exhaustion, may have prayed for Jesus to return soon, knowing that this would be the easiest, surest and quickest way to get out of this mess.

Now, we don't know if this pandemic will ever end, and this is just one of the numerous uncertainties that we are dealing with. But what we know for sure is that we are in the last days and Jesus will be coming soon. "When will that be," you ask? Soon! This certainty now begs the question "Are we doing what we are supposed to do while we wait for Jesus to return?" After all, He expects us to eagerly anticipate His coming and that we are to be found faithful, as seen in the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

There were five wise virgins and there were five foolish virgins. They all waited for the bridegroom to arrive but there was no information as to when that would be. They just had to wait, expecting that he would at any time.

The wise virgins were wise because they had filled their lamps with oil,

preparing even for an arrival at dead of night, whereas the foolish ones were so because theirs were running on empty. And as the parable unfolded, the latter group's waiting came to naught because of their lack of preparation, and they were rejected by the bridegroom who completely shut them out of the wedding banquet.

We know that Jesus, our bridegroom, will be coming soon. And the church, His bride, is to wait. But what are we to do as we wait?

The backbone of what we are to do is found in Matthew 28:18-20, which we know as the Great Commission of Jesus. But the Apostle Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:1-26, gives us a strategy on how we can intentionally multiply disciples and accomplish this. We are to perform the following tasks*:

- **Trainer.** We are to train and equip faithful men and women to do what we have done (vv. 1-2). We are to further qualify people in our circles of influence - our family, relatives, friends, Growth Group, neighbors, co-workers, etc. - to disciple others as we disciple them.
- **Soldier.** We are to endure hardship and stay focused on our mission (vv. 3-4). Whatever the challenges we face, we must persevere in following Jesus by taking up our cross daily, fully obedient to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
- **Athlete.** We are to be disciplined and lead others with integrity (v.5). We have to walk our talk, consistent in all our ways and decidedly committed to running the race God has set for us, whether or not someone is looking.
- **Farmer.** We are to work hard like farmers, growing the people in our care (vv. 6-7). We are called to be faithful and fruitful as we invest our lives in others. We may not know when our labor will bear fruit, but they will, by the grace of God.
- **Worker.** We are to study and labor to handle God's Word accurately (v. 15). Daily study, meditation and application of God's Word is necessary, along with the disciplines

of prayer, fasting, journaling, etc. for the purpose of being transformed into Christlikeness.

- **Vessel.** We are to stay pure so God could use us for His highest purpose (vv. 20-21). As God is holy, so are we called to be holy. He has set us apart to be salt and light unto the world, the very instruments that He will use to expand His kingdom.
- **Bondservant.** We are to submit and stay humble, being kind to all people (vv.24-26). We are to acknowledge that apart from God, we are nothing and can do nothing. Christ must increase and we must decrease. And we must be marked by love in all that we do, in all our relationships, and at all times!

As we wait for our bridegroom's return, may He find us faithful in keeping our oil lamps burning.

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25)

* By John Maxwell, "Developing the Leaders Around You" ✦

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