

Be Strong #35

Left Behind 2

Well, how was it? Where did your mind wander as you pondered the question:

**If you knew for certain that the rapture would happen next
Wednesday night at 10:00 PM, how would you live your life this week?**

If you took time to consider that reality, I'm sure your emotions were all over the chart. I know mine were. When I began to consider the question, I realized that it could happen. Not necessarily in a week! But at any moment. "In the twinkling of an eye." I think my first thoughts were, "Wow! I better get busy. There are a lot of people I need to warn." Like my friends Mike and Sue at Murphy's Deli and Rob and Kevin who have grown up in the Tallowood youth group, but renounced their faith. Like all the young people at Tallowood who have not said "yes" to Jesus. My heart rate increased and my mind flashed forward seven days – seven days to make sure I'm ready, and seven days to make sure that those I know and love are ready. But the more I considered that reality the Lord began to remind me of those that already knew seven days out that the end was near for them. Take Noah for instance! God told him to build the ark. He did. Apparently God told Noah that in seven days the rain and floods were coming. God's word does not reveal all he said and did in those seven days, but it does say that he obeyed God. **He obeyed God.**

What about Jesus? When He set His face towards Jerusalem, He knew on that Friday He would give His life as a perfect sacrifice for the world. What did He do that last week? He never panicked. He did not get in a hurry. Did He tell his Father, "There are thousands that need to be healed in hundreds of villages. I better stay up twenty-four seven so I can get to each one." No, He walked with His Father and did only what His Father said to do (John 5:19). There it is! Don't run past that. He did only what the Father told Him to do. Only what His Father did. When I realized that, I took a deep sigh of relief. I said to myself, "Jerome, just do what the Father asked you to do." I probably would not come up with my detailed seven day plan anymore. I would begin each day by saying, "What are we going to do today, Lord?" And then I would move forward with Him. I'm pretty confident He would be orchestrating divine appointments (aren't they all?). I would be spending time with those He would want to love through me, loving the lost, and encouraging the saved. To the lost, I think I would look them in the eye and ask them if they knew Jesus, and let them know what was coming. If they rejected God's grace, I would tell them to please remember Jesus when I'm gone. Maybe then they would realize that all He said and did was true.

I think the last night I would gather my family together for the greatest meal we had ever had. Spare no expense – rib eye steak, baked potatoes, a gallon of Blue Bell for everyone, the works! We won't need that bank account anymore, so let's spend it. We would just love being together

one last time before eternity begins. It would be a beautiful evening as we talk about how much we love each other and what's about to happen. I also think about 9:45 PM I would stake a sign on my front lawn saying, "We are gone! The house is open! Take what you want! But please take care of our two dogs."

Well, these are my thoughts. They may be shallow at times, but these are the thoughts God has given me as I ponder this question. I think the most important thing is that I should simply be doing what He tells me to do. Not just in anticipation of His return at a specific moment in time, but every day. Then, I think I'd be ready! No regrets! No disappointment! A little sadness for my dogs, but ecstatic elation in anticipation of being full on in the presence of God.

No more sin!

No more sadness!

No more tears!

No more back pain!

No more doubts!

No more questions!



Just Jesus, forever. What about you? What about your family? Your kids? Are you ready? My final thought, (well maybe not my final thought), is this! If I am living everyday for Jesus, there should probably not be much change in what I have already done in those seven days. I don't know about you, but that's convicting for me. The reality is that I have no guarantee of tomorrow. Today is what I've got. I'm going to live my life today with my eyes on Jesus, my ears listening for the trumpet call of God, and His light shining wherever we go. Well, until that day, let's "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power". Let's love our children into eternity. We are their parents and they are looking to us for what matters most in life.

In His Joy!

Jerome

Ephesians 6:10