

Ice Breaker

- In a sentence or two, tell the group what you are most thankful for.

The signs of hope direct us to anticipate the return of the King. Seeing these signs and knowing where we are on the journey changes everything.

Let's look at three things in which we need to be prepared:

➤ **Be prepared for His arrival.**

1. When did you make Jesus Lord of your life? Name one aspect of your life that has most changed because of your decision.

➤ **Guard your heart – this means your soul (mind, will, and emotions).**

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

²³ Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

2. We have to be intentional to make sure we do not give ourselves over to our emotions. How have you learned self-control? What has been a challenge, and what has been a victory?

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (NIV)

¹ When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The cross was the ultimate victory. When we have conflict within us, we have to know there is a power to help us. The reason the cross is the center of our story is because Satan was totally, irreversibly, and eternally defeated. It is vital that we never lose sight of the victory of the cross. Our security is grounded in the power of the cross.

3. Paul simplified his message to the Corinthian church. What was it?
4. Discuss a few of the trials you know Paul endured for the sake of spreading the message of Jesus.
5. How do we apply the same principle to our lives?

➤ **Know what is ahead.**

Anticipating Jesus' return makes the trauma of the season worthwhile.

Revelation 1:10-18 (NIV)

¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹² **I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me.** ... And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷ **When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.** Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

6. What was John's response to seeing Jesus?
7. What did the Lord tell His friend?
8. Discuss the significance of Jesus' statements to John and the significance of His instructions to John. How would this knowledge prepare you to overcome?

Our Responses:

- Look for God's involvement. This will take vigilance on our part. Look for people, circumstances, and opportunities that have a God-component.
 9. Where do you see God at work today?
- Attach value to Godly things: tools for His purposes, people with Godly character, and leaders the Lord raises up.
 10. Who or what do you value because of the God-momentum they bring to your life?
 11. What opportunities do you value because they bring you closer to God?
- Practice gratitude.
 12. Let's make a commitment as a group this week to not grumble, but to find ways to turn it into thankfulness. Pray for one another.

Prayer

I rejoice in the majesty of my God. Your strength is on display in all the earth. Today I offer myself as a living sacrifice for Your purposes. May the thoughts of my heart and words of my mouth be pleasing in Your sight. Let righteousness break forth in this generation. May humility and the fear of the Lord fill the hearts of Your people. Let the name of Jesus be lifted up before all the nations, in Jesus' name, amen.

