

## Pray Always

By Mary Kane

We recently attended the wedding of a dear friend of our family. Dani and Ryan had known each other for a couple of years and by God's design had decided to get married. After a beautiful wedding on the shores of Lake Michigan we drove into town to attend the reception. As we waited for the happy couple to arrive at the hall we snacked on hors d'ouvres and chatted with friends. The sudden hustle and bustle at the entry way announced that the bride and groom had finally arrived! The father of the bride made his way to the front of the room to toast his daughter and new son-in-law. I had been looking forward to this toast for many weeks knowing that it would be a special moment. (Dani's father is a very godly man who loves his children with all his heart.) As he took up his glass of sparkling grape juice, Matt said, "it was amazing to realize several months ago, that we had finally met the man that we've been praying for since the day our daughter was born." Matt and his wife had been "watching and praying always" for the man God had chosen for their precious daughter to marry. (They still have a lot more "watching and praying" left to do for their three other children!) They remained faithful to the task for twenty years. Like Matt and Carrie, we too are to be "watching and praying always" for the right Man so we will recognize Him and be ready for the wedding feast of the Lamb.

*"Then He said to me,  
"Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage  
supper of the Lamb!"  
Revelation 19:9*

Please pray for insight from the Holy Spirit and read Luke 21:34-38.

**What important event was Jesus teaching His disciples about in this passage of Scripture?**

Jesus was teaching his disciples about the events and times surrounding the Day of His return to earth. The original word for *day* is *hemera* which means "any definite time, point of time, moment... a certain definite time or season" (BLB). Jesus is coming back to earth again and we are waiting with great expectation for that day to arrive! And the day and time of that arrival is certain and definite—nothing can delay His return!

### **What are we to avoid while we are waiting for His glorious return?**

As Christians waiting for the Second Coming of our Savior the first thing we are to avoid according to verse 34 is *carousing*. Prior to this study I always thought that *carousing* meant partying, drunkenness and chasing women. The meaning behind this word is different from what I expected. The original word from the Greek is *kraipalei* which means "the giddiness and headache caused by drinking wine to excess" it also means "to seize or carry off by force" (BLB).

### **Why might we want to be thinking clearly during the End Times?**

Matthew 24:5 says that "...many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." We need to know intimately the character of our Lord and Savior so we will be able to distinguish Him from false Christs. I can remember watching a newscast that featured an incarcerated man, who proclaimed that he was Jesus. Chills went up and down my spine as I recognized the falseness of his claim.

We do not need to look up the meaning behind the word *drunkenness*, it means exactly what you think it means. The dangers involved in drunkenness are obvious. In reference to Christ's second coming, the very second Jesus returns for His church I want to be "caught up" in the air with Him in the midst of serving Him, not in drunkenness or carousing.

The third item we are warned against in verse 34 is very different from the other two items on the "Avoid List"; we are to steer clear of the "cares of this life."

**What are some of the "cares of this life" you are struggling with right now?**

The word *cares* in the original Greek is *merimna* which means, "Care, anxiety, distraction." *Merimna* is derived from *merizo* which means "To divide, be split into factions, to separate into parts, to cut into pieces" (*BLB*). Have you ever felt that your mind was going to pieces and that you couldn't think straight? You had a good case of "merizo-itis". It's interesting that "the cares of this life" can cause as much scattered thinking as drunkenness. The danger is that we can become so focused on the here and now instead of trusting God with our cares that we will be ill prepared for the coming of the Lord.

**What are some things we should be doing in order to prepare for the coming of the Lord?**

**Please look up the following verses for a few other ideas on preparing for the Lord's return:**

**2 Timothy 1:6**

**Luke 18:1**

**Psalms 119:11**

**Matthew 24:14**

Please go back and circle the activity that you'd like to become more proficient in. Perhaps you need to receive some kind of training to stir up the "gift" that God has given you. Maybe you'd like to memorize a book of the Bible. Think about what you'd like to work on in order to prepare for the coming of Christ and then write a step you will take to accomplish your goal.

Now let's return to our text and consider another facet of our text. In verse 34, the NKJV says that we are to "take heed to yourselves" against these three things; carousing, drunkenness and cares. The idea behind the words "take heed to yourselves" is that we must pay attention to ourselves and the choices that we are making in our daily lives. We need to make sure that our choices don't lead us away from Christ. "Take heed" also means "to devote thought or effort to" (*BLB*). What a great reminder! As I have learned over the past few years, many of the battles of this life are fought in the mind. Therefore, we must be diligent about what we allow our minds to be "devoted to."

**Please read verse 36 and list two other things we are supposed to do while waiting for Jesus to return:**

God's Word tells us we are to *watch* and *pray always*. The original word for *watch* is *agrupneo* which means "to keep awake, to be sleepless...circumspect, attentive and ready" (*BLB*). We can apply these concepts to our spiritual lives as well. At this time on the kingdom calendar, we have been given a command to completely avoid spiritual sleep and to be "intent on" following Jesus.

**How does it look for you to be "intent" on following Jesus?**

For *me*, "being intent" on following Jesus means to avoid ungodly music, movies, books and magazines and to spend my time studying His Word, memorizing scripture and writing. (I also spend time gardening, exercising and doing fun things with family and friends.)

Now let's turn our attention to another important concept in our text—prayer. The word used in this passage for *prayer* is very interesting. The original word in the Greek is *deomai* which means "to desire, to want, or to lack, to long for, to ask for a particular thing" (*BLB*). While we are watching and waiting for Jesus to return we, are to pray for what we lack so we will not be hindered in our pursuit of following Jesus.

**How do you need to be strengthened in order to keep the faith while you are waiting for Christ to return?**

When Christ returns for His Bride, the Church, I want to have completed all the work He set out for me to do before He formed me in my mother's womb. I need to continually pray for Him to supply His grace, power and skills through His Holy Spirit so I can accomplish these tasks. Like the Apostle Paul, I want my life to have been "poured out like a drink offering." I need strength to "fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith." If I fulfill the hope of my calling, then I will have a crown to throw at the feet of my Savior when I finally see Him face to face in heaven. Hopefully and prayerfully I will hear the words that my heart is yearning to hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant."

Pray always.

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