

LIVING GENEROUSLY

a stewardship narrative series presented by TENS

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Isaiah describes God's heavenly world, which sounds lovely! But for many of us, it is not the world we experience now. There is still much weeping in the world (v.19), whether we think of Central America, the Middle East, much of Africa, or even closer to home where there are many who are refugees or poor; many are excluded from society. True, people are living longer (v.20) but it is not my experience that the wolves and lambs (v.25) are feeding together just yet. There is much to do to forge heaven in this world.

In Thessalonians, we are called as Christians to respond by setting an example. We are to contribute to the community where we live. We are to get to work to bring the heaven Isaiah describes to fruition (v.7). Paul calls us not to associate with those who are living in idleness (v.6). His example of working for his supper (v.8), contributing to the welfare of the community, means we're not to wait for others to do the work. No; participation is required by everyone (v.12) in whatever way — he values all members of



reflection questions

- In your discipleship, how can your faith community encourage and support your response to God's call?
- How will you endure the difficult times ahead so that you can rejoice in the world Isaiah describes?

the community — as we work quietly, earning a living and struggling, though weary, to do what is right (v.13).

This is not going to be easy. Luke's Gospel describes a very un-heavenly world filled with wars between nations, family betrayals, persecutions, earthquakes, famines and plagues, deaths and hatreds. It sounds terrifying; yet, we are counseled to refuse to be terrified (v.9) and trust in our faith, knowing that God is with us. Indeed, we'll receive even the words to say (v.15) framed in the irrefutable wisdom of God.

What does this mean for you? To me, it describes Christian discipleship — we are to be good stewards as we work to build the glorious new creation. It is all laid out for us: Isaiah provides God's vision of the heaven we need to build with God's help;

Paul sets our action plan in place; and Luke shows us how much endurance we will need to gain our souls as we forge the Kingdom knowing that we live into this heaven through the Grace of God.

Bless you as you begin or continue God's work.



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