

Rapture – Second Coming

1 Thessalonians 4

Background and Setting:

The Apostle Paul writes this epistle to a church he had planted on his second missionary journey. He was only there for a short time when he had to leave due to being falsely accused of trying to start a riot and treason.

- What he actually did was teach that the real Lord and King was Jesus and not Caesar

Those must have been some dynamic few weeks before he had to leave.

- The people turned from their idols (1:9)
- They were grounded and assured in the faith and salvation (1:4-5)

Have you ever really felt passionate about something but could not see it through? Did you ever wonder how things turned out?

- Especially if you poured yourself into the thing you had to not see fully develop. There may be details that you know that keep you up at night wondering how it is going.
- Paul wanted with all his heart to return to Thessalonica but couldn't (2:18 Satan hindered us).
 - 3:1-2 When he could no longer endure it, he sends Timothy to check on them and to encourage them.

Paul was very excited to hear that the church was flourishing. This was his motivation for writing this epistle to express his gratitude for their faithfulness.

- He also dealt with some issues that are very relevant subjects for our society and culture. Remember these people were not very old in the Lord at all.

Paul challenged them to walk in sexual purity, brotherly love, with respect for their spiritual leaders and the one thing no one likes to learn – patience

Now these people were dealing with some real life issues that Paul needed to help them with.

- Even though these people were young in the faith dealing with some perplexing issues for example apparently some of the believers in Thessalonica had died. They were working through what would become of them.
- These people expected to see the return or second coming of Jesus during their lifetime.

One of the interesting things to me is the heart that Paul writes this epistle with.

- **2:4-12** But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as **a nursing mother** cherishes her own children.
⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.
¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, **as a father** does his own children,
¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

One of the overarching themes of this epistle is hope

- 1:2-3 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,
 - Biblical hope is not just a positive attitude or an enthusiastic outlook that doesn't have a foundation.
 - Hope is instead a confident expectation based on something that is a solid certainty. Biblical hope rests on a foundation of God's promises. Here in particular, dealing with Christ's return.

The subject for tonight's study is what the Apostle Paul says we are to comfort one another with.

1 Thessalonians 4 – beginning in 3:11-13

- Holiness – hagionune (hag-ee-ah-soo-nay) many people think holiness is a hard rigid set of beliefs or behaviors. Holiness is actually more about spiritual power and becoming the person God has called you to be. This will always reflect (or glorify) God.

- . . . be holy for I am holy (Lev.11:45)

It is the dynamic, life changing principle that separates the believer from the belief and activities of the world that will drain from them the power of the Holy Spirit's operation in their life.

It is interesting to me that the subject at the end of chapter four that we are going to be getting into is the second coming and the rapture. But before Paul deals with that he deals with the believer's call to holiness and purity.

- Holy and blameless hearts: When We dedicated our life to Christ and come under the covenant that Christ died to put in force God places His very presence inside of us.
 - Lord **AND** Savior – everyone wants Christ to be their savior it is the Lord thing we chock on.

When God places His Spirit inside us there is a two purpose meaning in this

1. The stamp of His ownership and down payment of what is to come when He reconciles everything to Himself.
 - a. **2Corinthians 1:22** who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
 - i. Guarantee – security or down payment
2. Point out what is sin and what is righteous
 - a. **John 16:8** "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment
 - b. **Romans 6:13** And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
 - c. **Romans 6:18-19** And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4

VS1-8

- It is God's desire that every believer be completely sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that Jesus Christ has total control over your inner personality and that

you allow the Lord to make you pure and holy at the deepest dimensions of your life. All sexual immorality, such as sex outside of marriage, pornography, secrete fantasies, impure thoughts, homosexual practices and desires, sexual perversion, and lust pollute the inner person. God's Holy Spirit is available to all believers to deliver, purify, and set them totally free from these bondages in their lives

CHUCK SMITH

- **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

Vs 9-12

Vs13

- There was some real life issues these new believers were wrestling with such as what happens to believers if they die before the Lord returns.
 - Remember they were new to the faith and there is a good possibility they were still processing some things through what they used to believe before they came to Christ.
 - Couple that with rumors that were being passed around by people who quite frankly did not know what they were talking about.
 1. For example some rumors that Jesus had already returned etc.

VS 14

- Those believers that die go immediately to heaven. They will come back with Him at His second coming.
- This is something the Thessalonian church was struggling with. Were their loved ones that passes away going to miss out at the Second Coming?

VS 15-18

- **The Rapture** – Paul described what is called the Rapture. The exact word “rapture” does not occur in the Scripture. It is formed from a phrase in the Latin translation of the Bible –*simul rapiemur cum illis*.
- The Rapture is when the Lord will come take His Church away from the earth for a special seven year period of time
- *There are those who contend that the trump of God mentioned here refers to the seventh trumpet of Revelation, which signals the Rapture (Rev 11:15) Thus they reason the church will be here on earth during the Tribulation.*
This is just not true, The Trumpets of Revelation 8-11 are blown by angels. The trump here in 1 Thessalonians 4 is The Trump of God. The trump Paul refers to in as the last trump in 1 Corinthians 15:52.
 - **God** sounded the first trump when He gathered the Jews at Mt. Sinai (**Ex 19:16**)
 - **He** will sound the last trump before He gathers those who become believers during the Great Tribulation.

- *Jon Courson's Application Commentary p.1342-1343*

- The Feasts of Jehovah by John Richie
- During this time on earth there will be trouble like has never happened before. This period of time is known as the Great Tribulation or Jacobs trouble.

1. Great Tribulation because God will pour out his wrath and judgment on the Christ rejecting sinful world (**Rev. 6-19**).

2. Jacobs Trouble because the anti-Christ will have his focus on the Jews and Israel.

- This is when the last week of the Prophet Daniels prophesy in Daniel 9 is played out. As God's attention is turned to Israel to fulfill Daniel 9:24 now that the church age is passed.

Daniel 9:24-25 READ

Matthew 24: 15-28 picks up after the Rapture of the church.

Matthew 24:29-31 The Second Coming.