

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction:

- Studying the “end-times” has been a consuming passion for a lot of people in the church and in Christian circles.

- There have been...
 - Books written,
 - Movies made,
 - YouTube channels created.
 - Churches divided,
 - Over arguments of current events,
 - And how they fulfill biblical prophecy.

- And **OF ALL** the end-time events,
 - The **Rapture** of the church seems to generate the most interest and discussion.

- It's one of the most interesting,
 - And **controversial** subjects in the Bible.

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- Unfortunately,
 - Some people and churches get so caught up in the study of “end-times” events,
 - They neglect the basic principles of spiritual growth and evangelism,
 - Which the **Coming of Christ** is designed to motivate the church.
- What is clear,
 - The young Thessalonian Church,
 - Had questions about the Rapture.
- So, Paul being a good pastor,
 - Addressed their concerns in this passage.
- Paul’s concern was not just doctrinal,
 - But pastoral.
- Paul’s desire was not to give a detailed description of the Rapture,
 - But to comfort the Thessalonians with the “blessed Hope of the Rapture”.

Which we will see
this morning.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- It's important to understand,
 - The Thessalonians thought,
 - They were in the 'Day of the Lord,'
 - And had missed the Rapture.

- By the way,
 - This implies that the Rapture comes before the Tribulation.

- **IF** the Thessalonians knew that the Rapture came at the end of the Tribulation,
 - Persecution would not have caused them to think they had missed it.

- But rather,
 - Persecution would have been a cause for joy,
 - Not concern. Because the Tribulation would soon follow.

- If the '**Day of the Lord**' had arrived, In their day.
 - And the Rapture was after the Tribulation,
 - Then that **blessed** event would have been drawing near.

But NO, they thought they missed it.

Which to me, tells us things must have been pretty bad for the church in that time.

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- **Additionally,**
 - If they had been taught that they would go through the Tribulation,
 - They would **not have grieved** for those who died,
 - **But rather would have been glad** to see them spared from that horrible time.

- **I think it's clear,**
 - We see Paul taught the Rapture came **before** the Tribulation period.

Over the next few weeks.

- **We're going to look at 5 major points about the Rapture:**



- 1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)
- 2) The Hope Rapture Is the Return of Jesus Christ (16)
- 3) The Rapture Is a Reunion with Believers Who Have Died (16)
- 4) The Rapture Is the Removal of The Church (17)
- 5) The Rapture Is the Reassurance of Our Blessed Hope (18)

- **My desire** is we'll see that the Rapture is truly the "**blessed hope**" of all believers:

- **Titus 2:13 (NKJV)**
13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

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- Our blessed hope is **NOT**:
 - A better job;
 - A nicer car;
 - Or a new house....
A new president
- The Rapture of the church is our “blessed hope.”
- And I hope that you will fully understand this truth,
 - By the time ~~when~~ we finish our study of these scriptures.
- Let’s READ our text...

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Comfort of Christ's Coming

- 13** But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.
- 14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.
- 15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.
- 16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- 17** Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- 18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- We need to identify our first point!
- **1) The Hope of the Rapture Is from The Lord (15)**
- We read in verse 15,
 - **“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord”**

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- It's interesting that the Rapture is not mentioned anywhere in the OT...
 - No mention of it all.
- However, we get a glimpse of it with Enoch,
 - **Genesis 5:24 (NKJV)**
24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.
- What we do know,
 - This is a direct revelation from Jesus to the Apostle Paul,
 - And he told the Christians in Thessalonica
- Now there are several things about that...
- **1) The Hope of the Rapture is Directed to the Church**
- The Church is composed of both:
 - Jew and Gentiles who believe in Jesus as the Messiah

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- And because of that truth,

- We have the Church of Jesus Christ.

- **Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)**

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are **all one in Christ Jesus**.

- This message of the Rapture is directed to the Church

- The Church never existed in the OT
- The Church was a brand-new thing,
- And started on the Day of Pentecost,
- Recorded in Acts 2.

- Look back at Paul's introduction to this letter:

- **1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)**

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, **To the church** of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- It's not directed to any other group of people.

- This is a teaching that **ONLY** applies to us...

- The Church

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• 2) The Rapture is Developed as a Purpose for the Believer

- And it's developed in a special way in every chapter...
- We are going to build upon that "Purpose" this morning.

• 1) This "Purpose" Speaks of the Evidence Salvation.:

○ 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV)

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait **for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Is

• Now the first thing I notice ~~that~~ in relation to salvation,

- The coming of Christ/Rapture,
- Is a purpose for the believer.
 - To repent,
 - Serve God,
 - Wait for Jesus.

• The Bible says,

- "We're going to be delivered from the wrath to come."

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- Now some say that wrath is referring to hell,
 - But I don't think so,
 - And here's the reason...
- First of all,
 - It's true that hell is the wrath of God for every unbeliever.
- So, there's no point of making these statements.
 - It's already true that every believer is saved from the wrath of hell.
- So, I don't believe that's the wrath he's talking about.
- The wrath of God that he's talking about,
 - Is the wrath the OT prophets talked about
- Often referred to as, **"the Day of the Lord"**
- A special period of time,
 - That has NOTHING to do with blessings.

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- The “wrath of God,”

- Is a special period of time,
- When there is gloom and darkness;
- Of wrath and judgment

- We get a glimpse of it in...

- **Zephaniah 1:14–18 (NKJV)**

14 The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.

15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.

17 “I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.” 18 Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD’s wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

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- It's God's wrath against this entire unbelieving world.
 - It's a terror such as the world has never seen.
- There will be more people killed during that period of time,
 - Than in any other period.
- It's called The Tribulation Period
- As we saw in Chapter 1,
 - The Rapture is presented as a purpose **to** the believer
“...we'll be delivered from THE wrath to come...”
- That means,
 - Before the 'day of the Lord' ever starts,
 - We're going to be out of here.

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- That “Purpose” should.



2) Should Affect Every Area of Our Life

- **1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV)**

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

- One of the saddest things about our culture is,

- We are so self-oriented.

- What your life should mean as a believer is,

- Constant ministry to other people:



- Other people are your joy...
 - Other people are your glory...
 - Other people are your crown of rejoicing.

- Pour your life into reaching people for Christ,

- And ministering to them

- Can you imagine the joy that will be in your heart,

- When see the ones you ministered at the time of the Rapture of the Church

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- This “purpose” ...



3) Should Bring Stability to the Believer

- **1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV)**

13 so that He may ***establish*** (strengthen, to make more firm) your hearts ***blameless*** (without guilt) in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

- It goes without saying but I'll say it anyway,
 - We live in a very unstable world.
- One of the things that brings stability,
 - It's going to be worth it when we all see Jesus.

- **Romans 8:18 (NKJV)**

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be **compared** with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

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- This “purpose” ...



- 4) Should Change How We Sorrow.

- Look at verse 13:

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

- The Rapture of the church,
 - Changes the way we sorrow for those who have died.
- For the believer,
 - Our believing loved ones who have died,
 - Will also experience the Rapture of the church.

- In fact, they get a head start:

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

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- Remember,
 - We are talking about how the Rapture is one of the Purposes of the church,
 - And how this “Purpose” should affect our daily lives.

- The “purpose” ...
 - 5) Should affect our Sanctification:
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV)**
23 Now may the God of peace Himself ***sanctify*** (make sacred) you ***completely*** (in every way complete); and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- What motivates us to separate ourselves,
 - From sinful practices,
 - And bad sinful relationships?

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- The answer really is the Coming of Jesus Christ.

- **1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV)**

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him ***purifies*** (cleanse from defilement) himself, just as He is pure.

- The understanding that Jesus can come at any moment,
 - Should be a huge motivation and purpose to sanctify ourselves.

- So you can see,

- This purpose of the Rapture changes everything:

- 1) Should Show the Evidence Salvation.
 - 2) Should Affect Every Area of Our Life.
 - 3) Should Bring Stability to the Believer.
 - 4) Should Change How We Sorrow.
 - 5) Should affect our Sanctification.

- What are you looking forward to in this life?

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- At any moment,
 - Jesus can come,
 - And get His church to be with Him.

- If Jesus came back today, Are you READY?
 - Are you confident in your salvation?

- If the Lord doesn't come back by next Sunday,
 - We'll continue our study.