

This Week's Message: **Unshakeable Hope**

Summary

How is it possible that, for the followers of Jesus, judgement day is the greatest day ever? We live in expectancy that Jesus will return and make all things new, and in the meantime, we root our hope in the sentiment of C.S. Lewis, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

Getting to Know Each Other

1. What do you think it'll be like when Jesus returns? How would you describe heaven to a friend?

Read 1 Thess. 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Read 2 Thess. 2:1-17

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. ¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ

himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

Getting into the Bible

1. In our first reading, Paul mentions the “Day of the Lord” (vs. 2). This day is prophesied in Joel 2:28-32, a prophecy which is referenced by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:17-21. What does Paul have to say about the purpose of the timing of this day?
 - a. Immediate return
 - b. Imminent return
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 mentions “a man of lawlessness.” Pastor Chris teaches about this man as the enemy of the church, and how Paul says we should identify him. What do you think of the “man of lawlessness” being the spirit of the Anti-Christ? How would you identify the spirit of the Anti-Christ in works against the church today?
3. The early church clearly waited expectantly for the Day of the Lord and the return of Jesus Christ. In our second reading, Paul reminds the church of his teaching on how the Day of the Lord will come about. Pastor Chris teaches about “immediate” versus “imminent” return of Christ, and the many, many benefits of heaven. What are the pre-conditions that must first be met for Christ’s imminent return?

Application

1. What do you think happens when we die? What do you think happens to our bodies? What do you think we’ll look like in heaven? What will we do? Describe the time in your life when you’ve been in the best shape.
2. Why was it important for the Thessalonica churches to be reminded of the details of the coming Day of the Lord Paul gave in 2 Thess. 2:1-17? How might our faith in hope of the good to come be an encouragement to others? How might you tell a friend why the return of Jesus will be the greatest day of all time?