

The Hope of Heaven

1Thessalonians 4:1-6

- The book of Thessalonians is a tour guide to what is central in the Christian life, we find that as important as it is to lead someone **to Christ**, that is only the first step, we also must also help them become rooted and grounded **in Christ**, if they are to fulfill their ministry **for Christ**, and for that to happen Paul has laid down certain essentials for us to grasp. One of those essentials that we see woven throughout the letter and mentioned at the end of every chapter of the book is the return of Jesus Christ for His church.
- **Ch 1** > were to wait patiently for His Son, **Ch 2** > to take joy in one another knowing one day we'll be in His presence, **Ch 3** > as we grow and mature in Christ our hearts become separated for Christ, as we eagerly await His return, **Ch 4** > this knowledge helps us to not sorrow at loss like the world knowing we'll see each other When He returns, **Ch 5** > so we pray, give thanks, and rejoice, as the Lord preserves us blameless at His coming.

V1-6

- **V1-2** Paul's use of finally doesn't mean he's finished but that he's about to begin the closing section of the letter, and that is going to include some practical instruction on how God wants His people to live. He starts by pleading with this young church to continue to practice what has resulted in tremendous growth in their walk with God. This meant as thankful as he was for the growth that everyone saw in the Thessalonians he still expected them to practice things that would continue to increase that growth.
- This means no matter how far a Christian has come in love-humility we can still abound more and more, so Christian maturity is never finished this side of eternity. Which is why Paul wanted to see them face to face > **3:10**- to help perfect that which is lacking in their faith? Notice he says in doing this they would please God, when it comes to doing God's will many believe it's an almost impossible task but in truth we are without excuse, for we have three things to guide us > **1. His Word, 2. His Spirit, 3. His people.**
- Paul says "**you received from us how you ought to walk and please God**" also "**you know what commandments we gave you through Jesus**" in **Ch 2:10**- he said "**you are witnesses with the Lord how we behaved in leaving you an example to follow**". In this we see **His Word, His Spirit, His people**, in unison helping them to know not only what to do but how to do it, as the word "**walk denotes progress**" therefore the Apostle Paul expected continued progress from this church as > **proper understanding**= no excuses.

- **V3-4** Paul makes it plain concerning what pleases God and what is His will, at the top is remove sexual immorality from your life. There are three things I see that are constant throughout all of scripture for the believer to apply and follow if they are to be in right fellowship with the Lord and His people > **1. Repentance 2 Pet 3:9**- God desires people to repent. **2. Be thankful 1Thess 5:18**- give God praise and glory no matter how difficult the situation, **3. Abstain from all forms of sexual immorality.** We see these three themes throughout the **OT** and **NT** as it is part of the redemption story for man.
- Paul knew that this was not a popular message as just like today the moral climate in the Roman Empire was not spiritually healthy. Immorality was a way of life, it was included in the home life, work life, and leisure life, you were expected to indulge in the latest pleasures and to not do so and hold to a message of holy living was foreign to this culture. Which is why scripture says this is your sanctification or how to set yourself apart, this is a major problem for most people Christians included, you might ask why?
- Because the majority of us do not know how to say no to temptation, look at **V4** the word “**vessel**” means container or pitcher: It was used in the **OT** to describe the golden pitchers that contained the wine next to the showbread in the Tabernacle of the Lord. Bread and wine symbolize what in scripture (communion), in the **NT 2 Cor 4:7** says all believers are containers for the Holy Spirit to dwell in, so this means not only does the Lord live in us but He also is celebrating with us as we commune with Him.
- So we should understand how to control our bodies remembering that they don’t belong to us > **Rom 12:1**, in order to be set apart for God and to bring honor to God. **Jam 1:13-15, Prov 6:27-28**- this means I don’t play around with temptation I flee from it > **2 Tim 2:22**- youthful doesn’t mean it’s only for the young it means it’s introduced to us at a young age. **V5-6** to not run from temptation is to become a slave to temptation, as the lust of the flesh will consume you and instead of experiencing victory in Christ you’ll drown in the defeat that’s reserved for those who have rejected Christ.
- **Dan 5:1-5** Nebuchadnezzar grandson thought it be a good idea to take the vessels that were supposed to be used to worship the Lord and use them to celebrate the flesh. While he’s throwing a party the Medes are right outside his gates trying to get in, but he’s not worried he has **350 ft.** high walls, that’s **87ft** thick there’s no way the enemy can get in here, so let’s party. Until the hand of God appears and pronounces judgment afterward Daniel gave the interpretation and the Medes got in and overthrew the kingdom. The point is throughout scripture misused your vessel the party’s over, if you have a problem apply **V22** > **1. Run from temptation, 2. Run to the congregation.**