

Don't Waste The Wait

We are finishing our study of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, **two letters all about the return of Jesus.**

Paul taught about the rapture (1 Thess. 4:17), the eternal judgment of unbelievers (2 Thess. 1:8-9), and the bright future that belongs to every believer in Jesus.

But now Paul addresses the most practical question this subject raises:

What are you supposed to do while you wait?

Some believers in Thessalonica were using the hope of Jesus' return as an excuse for irresponsible living. They quit their jobs, couldn't pay their bills, and became a burden to others. Paul wrote an entire chapter to correct that thinking.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST IS MEANT TO MOTIVATE YOU, NOT MAKE YOU IDLE.

How should the return of Jesus motivate you instead of making you idle? From this text, here are 3 ways the return of Jesus is meant to motivate you.

Way #1 — The Return of Christ is Meant to Motivate You to Pray for the Progress of God's Work (vv. 1–5)

Time is running out for the unsaved people of this world. John 3 says whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life, but the wrath of God remains on those who do not. Paul's first instruction is simple: Pray

"Finally, brothers, pray for us."

He makes two specific requests:

1. Pray that the **gospel spreads rapidly**, *"that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored."* Pray that God's Word bursts into hearts and changes people in your community.
2. Pray that **ministers of the gospel won't be stopped**, *"that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men."*

James said it simply, you don't have because you don't ask (James 4:2). Don't waste the wait. **Pray.**

Way #2 — The Return of Christ is Meant to Motivate You to Work Hard and Earn Your Own Living (vv. 6–12)

Some Thessalonians misapplied the truth about Jesus' return and stopped working entirely. Paul responds with a serious warning, "*we command you, keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness.*"

He is not talking about those who genuinely cannot work due to physical or medical limitations, or those who have retired responsibly.

He is talking about those who are fully capable of working but choose not to, becoming a burden on others.

Paul modeled a strong work ethic himself, "*with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.*" His principle is clear: "*If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*"

Work hard. Work quietly. Take care of your own needs.

The return of Christ is not a reason to quit. It is a reason to work faithfully until He arrives. Don't waste the wait. **Work.**

Way #3 — The Return of Christ is Meant to Motivate You to Live According to the Bible (vv. 13–18)

Paul's final words are warm and encouraging: "*do not grow weary in doing good... The Lord be with you*"

Living the Christian life can be draining. You pray and nothing seems to happen. You share the gospel and people don't respond. Paul says, don't quit. God is watching every step and not ignoring a single one.

If someone walks away from the clear teaching of the Bible, take note and distance yourself, not as an enemy, but as a warning to a brother. "*If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*"

Make the New Testament letters your instruction manual for life.

Then Paul closes with something comforting. He opened this letter with grace and peace, and he closes it the same way: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*"

If you don't have peace about where you'll spend eternity, God is offering it to you today, through grace. Grace is undeserved favor, a gift you cannot earn. Jesus left heaven, died for your sins, was buried, and rose again, paying your debt in full. God now offers you eternal life as a free gift.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

Receive the gift of grace and you will have peace with God forever.

The Return of Christ is Meant to Motivate You, Not Make You Idle. So **Pray, Work, Live.**