

## 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28 Blessed Hope!

Well the focus of our Study last time in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 was Holiness - Know how to possess our bodies in Sanctification and honor

A)As we conclude our study tonight in 1 Thessalonians - the theme is Hope.

B)The believers in Thessalonica were confused concerning what happened to their loved ones who had died.

C)Others were wondering if the Persecution they were encountering meant that they were in the Great Tribulation

D)Paul finishes up his letter here in 1 Thessalonians by bringing clarity to those two issues.

1)IN doing so he highlights four reasons for Hope we have as followers of Jesus

### Four reasons for our Hope

#1 Death is not the end for the believer in Jesus

#2 Jesus is Risen from the dead

#3 Jesus is coming for his bride

#4 We are not appointed unto wrath

### Pick it up in V.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. 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 have noted in our study here in 1 Thessalonians that Paul only spent 3 weeks with this group of believers.

A)He planted the church - and began to radically pour into these new believers.

B)Teaching them essential doctrines of the faith - 1)and one of the things that he spoke with them about was the coming again of Jesus

C)We pointed out in our very first study how Paul mentions Jesus is coming again

1)in every chapter in 1-2 Thessalonians

However, after Paul left them the believers began to wonder about their loved ones who knew Jesus who died before Jesus returned

A)They were troubled by the idea that these Christians might miss out on that great future event

B)And that they might miss the victory and blessing of Jesus' coming.

C)Paul deals with that concern here in the end of Ch.4

D)Hope about the death of a follower of Jesus.

### #1 Death is not the end for the believer in Jesus

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.

A)When Paul says I don't want you to be ignorant concerning those who have fallen asleep - he is talking about those who have died

Sleep was a common way to express death in the ancient world.

A) In John 11 Jesus got word that his friend Lazarus had died. Told his disciples

John 11:11 "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

B) So from that example of Jesus Christians began to call death *sleep*: they emphasized the idea of *rest*.

1) Resting with the Lord – in Heaven

C)2 Corinthians 5:8 Declares plainly that to **be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord.**

D) So for the believer – death was seen as resting – with the Lord – [death is not final]

1) See that loved one again – because they are with the Lord

E) Understand the Bible never describes the death of the unbeliever as *sleep*, for there is no rest, peace or comfort for them in death.

1) Those who die not knowing Jesus – go to Hell – place of weeping and gnashing of teeth – outer darkness

F) Paul wanted the believers to know that we have great Hope concerning those who have died in Jesus

1) Death is not the end for the believer in Jesus

G) Note: **We do sorrow: But not as those who have no hope!**

**Hope: An absolute expectation of coming Good! - Assurance - Bank on it**

A) Hope that there is life after death!

B) Our Hope is connected to the promises of God

1) Jesus promised this in John 11

C) Arriving in Bethany after the death of his friend Lazarus - Jesus was met by Lazarus sister Martha

1) Lord if you would have been here - my brother would not have died

D) Jesus responded - Your brother will Live again. - I know in the great Resurrection

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26

**Our Hope in the face of death #2 is connected to the Resurrection of Jesus**

A) Peter put it this way: **We have been born again to a living Hope through the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.** 1 Peter 1:3

B) Jesus beat death so death wouldn't beat us - There is Life after death

C) Paul added to this: 1 Corinthians 5 **To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord**

**So here in 1 Thessalonians 4 Paul is affirming that reality and Hope** 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 **since** we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep **died** in Jesus.

A) Paul proceeds to tell us what that is going to look like

15 For this we say to you **by the word of the Lord**, this is something Jesus taught is the idea - not Paul's idea that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. **died** 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.

B) It is here that Paul introduces the doctrine of the rapture of the church

1) Hope we have in the rapture of the church

C) Now those critics who don't believe in the rapture are prone to say: How can you believe in the rapture

1) The term is not even in the Bible - which is true

**D) However: Notice this Phrase Caught up in V.17 -**

**The Phrase caught up in the Greek is one word - Harpazo = snatched away**

A) When the New Testament was translated into Latin, translators used the word *raptus* for *harpazo*—from which we get our word “**rapture.**”

B) In most English versions of the Bible in V.17 instead of using the word rapture

C) the phrase caught up or snatched away is used

1) To describe what is going to happen.

D) Paul is saying: There is a day coming when Jesus is going to come not to planet earth but to the clouds

1) There is going to be a reunion that is going to take place -

2)believers who are alive on the earth - caught up to meet Jesus - joined with those who have already died

#### **D)Paul spoke of this glorious event in 1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, die but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

#### **E)We shall be changed in a moment in the blinking of an eye -**

1)changed is Metamorphosis - Caterpillar becomes a butterfly

F)Instant - Mortal bodies our changed into our heavenly bodies

1)Some transformed at death - others at the rapture – Caught up

#### **You know where this idea of Jesus coming to take his followers to heaven first originated?**

A)With Jesus himself - Another Promise

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

A)Notice a few things here: Jesus says – I am going to my Ffather's house to prepare a place = Heaven

B)We know that is where Jesus ascended to and remains at this moment at the right hand of the father - Preparing for us

C) But then Jesus says – I will come again to receive you to myself that where I am, there you may be also.

#### **D)When Jesus says I will come again to receive you to myself - the word receive is paralambano = to take to ones self.**

1)Jesus is clearly talking about coming to take them to Heaven

E)Not talking 2<sup>nd</sup> coming - where he comes to set up his kingdom here - No this is the rapture

#### **The Bible talks about 3 comings of Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> to the earth Incarnation - as a lamb – give His life.**

A)What is commonly known as his 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming – comes to the earth – as a lion – set up a Kingdom.

B)In between the two is this event – Rapture – comes not to the earth but to the clouds – meets his Church in the air – takes them to heaven.

C)That is what Jesus is referring to here. John 14 1)I am going now fathers house - but I will come again - not to the earth - but to take you there!

#### **THE CONFUSION IN THESSALONICA**

A)The confusion here was not about whether the rapture existed – they fully believed that it was coming. –

B)Their question had to do with – What happens to those who die before the rapture takes place – are they going to miss out on this glorious event

C)Paul's answer is absolutely not - V.16 again 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.

#### **The question is what does it mean that the dead and Christ will rise first? V14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.**

B)Note this – Paul says – Those who died those who are asleep – God is going to bring with Him – WITH JESUS

C)THEY ARE WITH HIM - means they are already with JESUS!

1)They have already risen first -

#### **Now this should forever dispel the teaching of soul sleep {Explain**

A)Some falsely teach that when believers die, they remain in the casket until the Rapture.

B)But what did Jesus say to the thief on the cross next to Him?

C)He didn't say, 'You will sleep for a couple thousand years and then you'll be resurrected again.' No, He said, '**Today you'll be with Me in Paradise** (Luke 23:43).

**D)Those who have died – they are with Jesus now – to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. 2 Cor 5:8**

**They are with Jesus now in Heaven. They have already risen first AND when the rapture happens**

A)They are going to **come with JESUS** to meet those who are caught up in the air

B)So Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that **those who are asleep** - Christians who have died before Jesus returns - **will by no means** be at a disadvantage.

C)They will share in this glorious reunion!

I love how Paul ends Chapter 4 Jesus is coming for us - we will be with him 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**Now despite everything that I just shared - there are still those today who want to even deny the idea that the rapture is a biblical concept at all.**

A)They say this whole idea started with a guy Named John Darby in 1830

B)But I think it is clear that Jesus was speaking about this in John 14 -

1)Paul refers to it clearly in 1 Corinthians 15

**C)But on top of that - An early church father Ephraim the Syrian wrote these words in AD 373**

**“For all the saints and elect of God are gathered prior to the tribulation that is to come and taken up to be with the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to be overwhelming in the world because of sin. Most dearly beloved believe the Holy Spirit who speaks in us – now we have spoken before because the end of the world is near, we ought to understand brothers what is imminent – that is, all saints and the elect of the Lord will be gathered together in the clouds before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord in the sky in order that they may not see at any time the confusion in the world which overwhelms this world because of sin.” - Ephraim the Syrian - AD**

**373 – take from “The Book of the Cave Treasure” – Translated by Cameron Rodes of Tydale Theological Seminary**

And please understand precious church, Ephraim the Syrian was a powerful pastor in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, not some obscure church figure – **his hymns are still used by the Eastern Orthodox church to this day**

**And Ephraim the Syrian is not alone  
150 AD – the shepherd of Hermes  
270 – Victorenous – the Bishop of Gatow  
350 – Ephraim the Syrian  
400 – Jerome in the Latin Vulgate**

Now during the middle ages the rapture wasn't taught but nothing was really taught, the church was in a dark place – But then the reformation came

**Other church leaders who wrote about the rapture**

**1600 – Reverend Dolacento**

**1627 – Joseph Matty**

**1627 – Increase Matther**

**1687 – Peter Jarue**

**1700 – John AsGil**

**1748 – John Gil**

**1763 – James McKnight**

**1744 – Morgan Edwards**

**1792 – Thomas Scott**

**1830 – John Darby**

**Now If you want to study further about the rapture and why we here at Calvary Vista believe the Bible clearly teaches it will happen before the tribulation**

A)I would encourage you to go back and listen to our Prophecy update from Jan 2022 - Great detail

B)But for the sake of time we need to move on into chapter 5

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

**But concerning the times and the seasons,**

A)What Times and seasons is he talking about – context – Ch.4 – Rapture – that time -

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

**V.2 He calls it The Day of the Lord – time period that begins with the rapture and culminates with**

## the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

### Like a Thief in the night:

A) Unexpected time – surprise – to those who are not expecting it

B) **Thieves don't call ahead** – MR. Salvato – Courtesy call neighborhood burglar – Friday between 9pm -11pm rob your house

C) Two break ins - They come at an unexpected time – resting – off guard –

3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. After the rapture comes the tribulation a time when God will pour out his wrath on a world that has rejected Jesus 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. Remember The day of the Lord starts with the rapture. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

A) When it comes to the rapture and Jesus coming for his church - **no one knows the day or the hour**

B) But we can know the times of the seasons - Like a weather reporter - we can see the storm brewing

1) If we are paying attention -

C) You are not in the dark - you belong to the light - Watch be ready - be on guard.

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

D) Those who don't know the Lord - they are in the dark - **they are sleeping - not paying attention** - they will be caught off guard

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

### You be watching and you be ready:

A) YOU make sure you realize the battle we are in - clothe yourself in the full armor of God

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching Hebrews 10:24

B) Knowing this: God did not appoint us to wrath - the Tribulation - but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

C) #4 Hope in the reality that we are not appointed unto wrath

BTW that statement that Paul makes about us not being appointed the Wrath - is one of the reasons why I believe the rapture is before the tribulation

A) Can't even be mid tribulation

B) The Tribulation time begins in Revelation 6 - Seal Judgments

1) During Tribulation - everything is originating from heaven - **Because it is God's wrath**

C) 3 sets of judgements Seal, Bowl and Trumpet Judgments

D) Starts in Ch. 6 Seal judgments - the First one - the Anti-Christ comes on the Scene - 2 Thess. 2

E) By the time we get to the 6<sup>th</sup> seal judgment - things are so bad on the earth that we read this:

<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” **Revelation 6:15-17**

### You be watching and you be ready:

A) YOU make sure you realize the battle we are in - clothe yourself in the full armor of God

B) Knowing this: God did not appoint us to wrath - the Tribulation -

1) but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

C) Take comfort - We are going to miss the Tribulation

Now one of the Criticism that people have in the church today about those who believe in the Pre-Trib rapture is this:

A) They say: You guys have an escapist mentality - see what is happening in the world - think -

B) Only answer is Jesus come quickly and get us out of here - Escapist mentality -

1) rather than being active about the Lord's business

C) I will admit there are Christians who have that mentality - WRONG

The admonition we have from the Lord is we need to be about his Business before he comes.

A) The goal of prophecy updates is Activism - not escapism

B) Paul would agree whole heartedly with that sentiment - we see that clearly in the way he ends 1 Thessalonians

C) After all this discussion on the rapture and the Tribulation -

D) Paul ends the book with what could seem like random thoughts

E) But I don't think this is random at all -

1) he is telling us Jesus is coming and this is what we should be doing as we watch and wait

Paul gives some ideas of how we can stir up one another to love and good works

12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. **Love and esteem your Pastors** - Best way is to pray for us.

**Be at peace among yourselves.** - No Division - no room for it - We are on the same side.

Live by this principle:

**In Essentials - Unity; Non-Essentials - Liberty; All things - LOVE**

14 Now we exhort you, brethren,

**warn those who are unruly,** - WARN THE REBELLIOUS - wake up those who are in Sin

**comfort the fainthearted,** - those who are weary - comfort them - battle is hard - Don't grow weary in..... lose heart

**uphold the weak,** others are weak - they need us to come along side of them

**be patient with all.** - Patience is essential for being a peace maker - comforting the fainthearted and upholding weak

15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. - Pursuing being peacemakers

16 Rejoice always, - Be people of Joy and gratitude - stand out from all the complainers around us

17 pray without ceasing, Live in constant communion with Jesus

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Look for the reasons to be thankful in every situation

19 Do not quench the Spirit. We can do things that quench or stifle the spirit of God in our lives - The best way to not quench the spirit is to follow God's word - and respond to the promptings of the HS

20 Do not despise OR scoff at prophecies.

21 Test all things; test every word - BEREANS hold fast what is good. Take the wheat - throw away the chaff

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Final prayer

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.