Jesus Is Coming Soon!
Message 6 in “Getting Ready To Meet Jesus” Sermon Series
(A Study of I & II Thessalonians)
I Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV)

As we continue with our study of I and II Thessalonians, please turn with me in your Bibles to I Thessalonians chapter four.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV)

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.

PRAYER
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INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION

A man was seated in a restaurant one morning having his routine breakfast and coffee. As he flipped through the morning newspaper he grumbled and groaned.

His waitress came over and said, “Sir, is everything alright, you seem to be very upset about something?” He snapped back, “You bet I’m upset! Haven’t you read the morning paper? I am sick of reading nothing but bad news every day. The young waitress said cheerfully, “Well you’ve just got to have hope!” “Hope!” he said! “How can you have hope in a world like this?”

The scripture we are looking at tonight is perhaps the most familiar passage in I Thessalonians. This scripture is often read at funerals because it over-flows with HOPE and COMFORT.

This scripture is also one of the most wonderful PROPHETIC passages in the New Testament. This scripture describes for us in vivid detail the NEXT GREAT EVENT ON GOD’S PROPHETIC CALENDAR. No signs have to be given...... no other prophecies have to be fulfilled before this great event takes place.

The glorious event Paul describes for us in these verses is imminent, meaning it could happen a hundred years from now or it could happen before you and I draw our very next breath.

As we go back and take a closer look at this wonderful scripture, there are FIVE KEY POINTS I would have you to consider.

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First of all, I would have you to consider…….

I. **THE REVELATION** (v.13,14)

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.

1. What lies beyond the grave? What lies in store for us after this life is over?

2. For centuries philosophers have wrestled with the questions about immortality. Mediums and psychics have attempted to communicate with those who have crossed the threshold from life to death. And even scientists have carefully studied the experiences of those who claim to have died and returned to life.

3. In these verses Paul “pulls back the curtain” to reveal the wonderful truth of what lies beyond the grave for the Christian.

4. Notice how Paul begins verse 13, “But I do not want you to be ignorant brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep.”

That word “ignorant” can mean several things.

- **ignorant** can mean **unintelligent** and **uneducated**.

- **ignorant** can also mean to be **uninformed** or to be **clueless**.

- **and ignorant** can also mean to be **misinformed** or to be given **bad information**.
5. When Paul says to the Thessalonians “But I do not want you to be IGNORANT brethren” he means, “I do not want you to be misinformed.”

6. We must remember the Church at Thessalonica at this time was a very young Church. And we must remember they were being terribly persecuted.

   Some of their members had likely suffered martyrdom. Others had likely died of old age or natural causes.

   They had lots of questions about these deceased loved ones. What has happened to them? Where have they gone? Since they are dead will they miss the return of Christ?

7. Paul now tries to erase all their doubts and fears by revealing the truth regarding their deceased loved ones. He doesn’t want them to have the same sense of “hopelessness” that the unbelievers had regarding their deceased loved ones.

8. Paul says in VERSE 14........

   v.14 “For if we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even so GOD will bring with HIM those who sleep in JESUS.”

9. Brothers and sisters, right here is the basis of our eternal hope beyond this life! Our hope is not based on “wishful thinking!” Our hope is not based on some “delusion” or “myth” or “fairy tale.”

   Our hope is based on THE DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION of Jesus.
10. How many of you believe JESUS CHRIST died to save you from your sins? How many of you believe that Jesus was buried and that He resurrected from the grave on the third day?

11. Well if you believe those truths about JESUS CHRIST then you must also believe everything JESUS tells us about what lies beyond the grave!

v.14 “For if we believe that JESUS died and rose again then we must also believe GOD will bring with HIM those who sleep in JESUS.”

Who are “those who sleep in Jesus?” They are those who “lived in Jesus.” They are our Christian loved ones and friends who have already crossed the bridge from earthly life to eternal life.

Secondly, I would have you to consider…….

II. THE RETURN (v.15,16a)

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.

16a For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

1. Paul reveals two truths about the RETURN of CHRIST in these verses.

(A) First, Paul points out the PURPOSE of Christ’s coming.

Christ’s purpose is very clear. He’s coming to get the SAINTS who have DIED and the SAINTS who are still LIVING.
Christ is NOT coming for “good people,” “nice people” or “sincere people”…..CHRIST IS COMING FOR SAVED PEOPLE…. “souls that have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

(B) Then Paul points out the SOUNDS of His Coming.

Paul tells us there will be three sounds that will announce the coming of Christ.

(1) First will be a loud SHOUT. (v.16)

When Jesus stood at the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus, John 11:43 tells us, “He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’”

Remember the “dead in Christ” will rise first! Christ will “shout” a command for all the saved dead to “come forth” from their graves.

(2) Second, there will be the VOICE of the ARCHANGEL. (v.16)

The scriptures do not tell us what the archangel will say, but generally speaking when the archangel of God spoke in the scriptures it was a SHOUT of VICTORY for God’s people!

The archangel will shout the Christian’s victory over death and the grave! “O death where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”

(3) And the third sound will be the TRUMPET of GOD.

Is there anything more majestic than the sound of a trumpet? Trumpets were used on a number of occasions in the scriptures. The Israelites sounded trumpets when they went into battle. Trumpets were sounded to begin the sacred feasts in the Old Testament. And trumpets were sounded to call the people to assemble together.
When Christ comes, the TRUMPET OF GOD will sound to assemble the Lord’s Church together in the sky with JESUS!

**PROPHETICALLY SPEAKING, THE LAST SOUNDS WE WILL HEAR ON EARTH WILL BE THE SHOUT OF THE LORD ........THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL....and THE TRUMPET CALL OF GOD!**

Thirdly, I would have you to consider......

**III. THE RESURRECTION (v.16b)**

v.16b  And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1. The physical remains of every deceased person since Adam are still here on earth. From small family cemeteries to large municipal mausoleums .........from those whose ashes have been scattered to those whose remains have been mummified, the physical remains of every person who ever died, except Jesus Christ Himself, are still here on earth.

2. When Christ comes again only those who died in Christ during the Church age will resurrect from the dead. The saints of the Old Testament will arise at the Second Coming of Christ, when He sets foot on the Mount of Olives. (Zechariah 14:4; Revelation 20:5,6)

3. In I Corinthians 15:35-49, Paul describes the resurrected bodies we will have when we come forth from the grave. It won’t be these old, earthly bodies that were prone to sickness, disease and pain. But rather we will resurrect with new, glorified, heavenly bodies that will never experience sickness, disease, pain or death ever again.

4. Perhaps some of you saw your loved one suffer terribly
in the final months or years of their life. Isn’t it comforting to know they will never suffer like that again!

Fourthly, I would have you to consider......

IV. THE RAPTURE (v.17a)

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.

1. Jesus first spoke of this glorious event just before His crucifixion.

   JOHN 14:2-4  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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, (listen carefully!!!) I WILL COME AGAIN AND RECEIVE YOU TO MYSELF that where I am, there you may be also.

2. Jesus was pointing to this glorious event that Paul writes about here in I Thessalonians 4:17.

3. When Paul says the living saints “shall be caught up” he is saying, “those who are alive will be “snatched away” or “carried away speedily.”

   *Enoch was “caught up” “carried away speedily!”
   *Elijah was “caught up”.....”he was snatched away!”
   *Jesus was “caught up” into the clouds at His ascension.
   *Philip was “caught up” or “carried away” to Azotus after baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch.”
If you and I are living at the time CHRIST COMES AGAIN we will be “caught up”.....”snatched away”......”carried away speedily” from this earth “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye!”

And finally, I would have to consider........

V. THE REUNION (v.17,18)

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.

1. Paul says “we shall be caught up together with them.” Who is “them?” Them refers to our Christians loved ones who have died.

2. On the day Christ returns we will have a great reunion with every Christian loved one and every Christian friend who has left us.

   *We will never say goodbye to them again!
   *We will never be separated from them again!

3. As great as it will be to see our loved ones and friends again, I believe it will be far greater to see JESUS, the one who gave His life to make our glad reunion possible.

CONCLUSION

One Sunday after Church a little girl was telling her mother that she had learned in Sunday School that Jesus is coming again. She said, “Mommy, do you believe Jesus is coming again?” Her mother
said, “Yes, I do!” Mommy, do you believe Jesus could come back this year?” “Yes, I do!” said the mother. The little girl asked, “Mommy, do you believe Jesus could come back today?” “Yes, I do!” said her mother. The little girl said, “Mommy, could you brush my hair. I want to be ready when Jesus comes.”

Church, JESUS IS COMING AGAIN! May be morning, may be noon, may be evening and may be soon. ARE YOU READY?