

## OUR HOPE – OUR COMFORT – PART 2

--1<sup>st</sup> THESSALONIANS 4:13-18—

### INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday we got through the first two points of five points. We began by looking at the background to this passage, the purpose behind Paul choosing to add this passage to this letter. Paul responds to their fears, and he does not just give them the doctrinal facts of the rapture, but like a good pastor he uses the facts to encourage the believers and to give them comfort and hope for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church.

The second point that we looked at was the three building blocks that make up the foundation of hope that we have for the Lord's return for the church. Those three building blocks are the death of the Lord Jesus, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the revelation of the Lord Jesus. This morning we will examine the last three points of this passage: the beneficiaries of the rapture, the blueprint of the rapture, and the benefit of the rapture for us today.

### III. THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE RAPTURE (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:15b)

- a. As Paul launches into the beneficiaries of the rapture, we must remember that these are not his \_\_\_\_\_ but what the Lord has revealed to him.
- b. The first thing that we learn from the Lord Jesus is that there are two \_\_\_\_\_ that will benefit from the rapture.
- c. The fact that Paul uses the plural “\_\_\_\_\_” to refer to those who were still alive shows us that he believed the rapture could happen in his lifetime. Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7; Matthew 25:1-13)
- d. This is not the only place in Scripture where Paul expresses his eager hope and \_\_\_\_\_ that he himself might be among those still be alive at the Lord's coming. (Romans 13:11-12; 1 Cor.10:11; 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonian 1:10; 3:13)
- e. Paul also understood that he might be with those who had fallen asleep before the Rapture. (1 Corinthians 6:14; Philippians 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:6-7)

f. Paul lived in constant \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ's return.

### IV. THE BLUEPRINT OF THE RAPTURE (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:16-17)

- a. Paul, beginning in verse 16 gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Rapture.
- b. First, Paul writes that the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. (Hebrews 9:28; John 14:3)
- c. Not only will the Lord Himself descend from heaven, but that descent will be accompanied by a \_\_\_\_\_, by the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. (John 11:43)
- d. Next, we are told that we will hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of the archangel. (Daniel 10:13; Matthew 25:1-13)
- e. Thirdly, we are told that there will be the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (1 Corinthians 15:52; Revelation 8-11)
- f. I believe the church will hear the commanding \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus, we will hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of the archangel and we will hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- g. The result of the Lord Jesus descending with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God will be that the dead in Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ first. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-38)
- h. Verse 17 tell us what happens to those who are still \_\_\_\_\_ when the Lord Jesus returns for the church. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:50-58)
- i. This phrase “\_\_\_\_\_” is a single word in Greek that has several meanings that all pertain to the Rapture of the living believers. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:9-10)
- j. “...and so shall we \_\_\_\_\_ be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17b, NASB95) (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2-3)

### V. THE BENEFIT OF THE RAPTURE (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:18)

- a. The benefit of understanding the doctrine of the \_\_\_\_\_ is not to fill in the gaps in your eschatological timeline.
- b. Remember that Paul's goal in teaching the Thessalonians about the Rapture was not simply doctrinal, but also pastoral, his ultimate goal was to \_\_\_\_\_ them. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:3; Titus 2:13)

## CONCLUSION:

The apostle John said, “*We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*” (1 John 3:2b, NASB95) This agrees with what Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 that we will all be changed, we will receive our new resurrection bodies that are both imperishable and immortal, and in this way, we will be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

John says in 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:3, “*And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” (1 John 3:3, NASB95) If we have our hope fixed on Jesus Christ, then we are called to live pure lives so that we are always ready for His return. We are to seek to obey God’s Word and to live in honesty, integrity, and righteousness before God and man, and this can only be accomplished as we rely on the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Paul ended our Scripture reading in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58 by saying that we need to be “*always abounding in the work of the Lord...*” (1 Corinthians 15:58b, NASB95) In other words, we are to be ready for the Lord’s return at any time, but we are to be working at the same time. We are to be making disciples of all nations and teaching them to observe all that Jesus Christ has commanded us. We have our orders until Christ returns.

Maybe you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ; you have never experienced His forgiveness and salvation. Then this message should be a warning to you that the time is running out and the return of the Lord could be at any time. If you are not sure that you will be ready when the Lord returns, then now is the time to make sure. You can in the quietness of your own heart by agreeing with God that you are a sinner, and you are helpless to change that fact on your own. Then believe that Jesus Christ died for you, paying the penalty for sin, believe that He was buried and on the third day rose from the dead triumphing over sin and death forever. When you believe this then you are ready for the surest thing in this world, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His bride, the church to which you now belong.