

## For GC Discussion

- Think through the specific instructions Paul gives to the church this week - how can we apply each one to ourselves?
- How should we respond to the truth that it is God who sanctifies us and makes us ready for His return?
- Let's ask the familiar question that rises from this book one more time - how can we fill our lives with the truth of Jesus return, living expectantly in the light of His coming?

### **Notes and Questions**

**For Worship:** Listen to *'I will rise'* by Chris Tomlin. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.



## Week 6: Final Instructions

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

#### **This Weeks Summary**

As we finish off this letter to the Thessalonians, Paul lists off a number of instructions for his young church continuing to show his desire for them to grow in grace

#### **For Study:**

This week just take the time to remind yourself of some of the main thrusts of Paul's letter to this young church:

##### **Faith, Hope & Love:**

*a proper response to the Gospel - Ch 1:1-10*

##### **Integrity & Sacrificial love:**

**the care of an Apostle - Ch 2:1-20**

##### **Affliction & Temptation:**

*the schemes of the enemy - Ch 3:1-13*

##### **Sanctification:**

*purity in an impure world - Ch 4:1-12*

##### **The Day of the Lord:**

*waiting with hope for the promised return - Ch 4:13-5:11*

As we conclude our study in the book of 1 Thessalonians, let's spend some time considering the different ways in which the Apostle Paul mentions the truth of Jesus return, and how this truth should affect our day to day lives.

### **Waiting for the King - Ch 1:10**

The first mention of Jesus second coming simply speaks about the response of the Thessalonians to the Gospel as they turned from their own life towards God, so that they might 'wait for His Son'. The idea of waiting for anything means that we are mindful and expectant of whatever it might be arriving, and this sets us up for one of the main fruits we want to see in our lives as a result of this book. So often we can go through days, weeks, or maybe even months without hardly giving a thought to Jesus return. It's so easy to get caught up in the here and now so much that we don't lift our eyes and look ahead. How can this not negatively affect our lives as we get drawn more and more into the ways of this world, forgetting the goal that lies ahead of us. Just as in any part of life, losing sight of our goal leads to complete confusion, and in our case a complete lack of fruitfulness. Let's allow this book to spur us on to truly live 'waiting for the King'.

### **Worthy of the Glory Awaiting - Ch 2:12**

In Chapter 2, Paul urges the church to model their walks here and now on the future glory that awaits them. God is calling them into His own kingdom and glory, and how glorious this coming kingdom will be! We would do well to meditate often on what we know of our heavenly home which awaits us - no more crying, pain or death, and all of the wickedness of this world replaced by purity and righteousness, peace and joy. This in turn should inform how we live our lives as we ready ourselves to live in this glory - why would we live differently now than we will then? Heaven is our eternal home, and this world is only temporary - we should do all we can to live as a worthy citizen of our eternal home now as we ready ourselves to be there for all eternity.

### **Receiving a Crown - Ch 2:19**

At the end of chapter 2 Paul links his ministry amongst the Thessalonians with the crown of reward he will one day receive as he enters the glory of heaven. Paul sees his reward stemming not just from the way he has lived his own life, but from the way in which he serves others who are on their own way towards glory. This is a completely counter-cultural way of thinking - so far removed from the individualistic culture that we live in,

but it is a perfect reflection on the way God is - Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life away for His people and we should do the same. What a thrill it will be to be gathered before the throne of God on that great day, knowing that we have been able to help and encourage others along the journey so that they too might stand with us in that great gathering of God's people from every nation, tribe and tongue. This all leads us straight on to our next point:

### **Love making us ready - Ch 3:11-13**

In chapter 3 Paul makes one of those statements that indicates just how important love truly is to us as God's people. The Bible tells us that love is the fulfilment of the law (Rom 13:10, Gal 5:14), and Jesus Himself tells us that the greatest commandments are love, both for God and for those around us. Paul here tells us that as we love each other - as we sacrificially give ourselves away for the good of those we live life with, this is establishing us blameless for the time when Jesus comes back. Where does Jesus want to find us when He returns to take us home? He doesn't really care where we are - but He does care that wherever that is, we are loving those we are with, and using our life not for selfish ends, but to serve the needs of those God has given to us to serve.

### **Courage to face the world - Ch 4:13-5:11**

Twice in our text last week Paul speaks of the church encouraging each other with the truth of Jesus return. In this world discouragement is present round every corner, and Paul is well aware of that - especially for those who's desire is to follow Jesus and live a life that honours Him. The truth is though that we should have the greatest source of courage of anyone in the world. Just as students look ahead to the job at the end of their studies, and athletes look ahead to the prize at the end of their training, so we too should take heart as we remember that whatever we face in this life, the goal is greater than we can even imagine right now. What's more, we don't just hope for it with uncertainty, but we know without a shadow of doubt that Jesus will return, and He will take us to be with Him in glory.

### **Made ready by the Spirit - Ch 5:23-24**

In our text this week, Paul - having encouraged the church in their response to the truth of Jesus return - now finishes with the ultimate encouragement. God is the one who is making His people ready for that day - and where we could so easily mess it up, He never fails. We can rest so securely in these powerful words - "He will surely do it".