

Sermon Title: The Picture of a Consistent Hope, Part 2

Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:15b-18

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a mindset of glorious hope and comfort.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 additional truths related to the rapture that provide comfort.

Introduction: As Christians in the world face the death of those whom they have loved, they are called not to grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. The Christian's grief should be consoled and informed by the hope they hold, based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and promise of coming by their heavenly Father.

- I. The **focus** of the rapture. Vv.13, 18
- II. The **foundations** of the rapture. Vv.14-15a
- III. The **people** of the rapture. V.15b
- IV. The **play by play** of the rapture. Vv.16-17
- V. The **purpose/profit** of the rapture. V.18

III. The **people of the rapture. V.15b**

- A. The people/Christians who are **alive**. (2 Timothy 4:6-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8)
Romans 13:11-12 And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. **12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.
1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- **52** 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.
Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.
- B. The people/Christians who have **fallen asleep**. V.15b
The point Paul is making is simply that the dead in Christ will be raised 1st. The dead in Christ will by no means be excluded from the grand procession, as a matter of fact they will be first. They will have a place of honor in the grand procession of the Lord's people. Recognition of this fact would give the living believers great comfort in their grief. (**vv.13, 18**)

IV. The **play by play of the rapture. Vv.16-17**

- A. First the Lord **Himself** will descend. V.16a
Paul refers to the "coming" of the Lord as His (Parousia) a term that is used to describe the glorious "coming" of a deity or the official visit of a sovereign to a city, who himself was often honored as divine.
- B. Second the Lord will descend from **Heaven**. V.16b
- C. Third, the Lord will descend with a shout. V.16c
The Greek word (keleusma) means command carries a military meaning to it. The idea of a commander calling his troops for fall into rank order. The dead saints in their resurrected bodies will join the alive raptured saints in the procession to heaven.
John 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

John 5:25 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

- D. Fourth the voice of the **archangel** will be heard.
Jude 9 names one of the archangels, Michael, but in Jewish literature other names are mentioned besides his. Archangels are the rulers of the angels or the principle messengers among the host of angels.
- E. Fifth the trumpet of God will be heard.
Trumpets in the Bible are used for many reasons. The purpose in this context is to assemble God's people and to verify His deliverance of them.
The trumpet very often found its use in military exercises, cultic events, and funeral processions. The main point is the dead will hear the sound and rise.
Matthew 24:31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
1 Corinthians 15:52 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.
Joel 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand:
- F. Sixth the **dead in Christ** will rise first.
The glorified bodies now being united with their glorified spirits to form them into the complete image of Christ.
1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
Romans 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
1 Corinthians 15:18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: `Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."
- G. Finally, those believers who are still alive will be **caught up** into the air. V.17a
This grand event is frequently referred to as the "rapture" (from the Latin *rapio*). It is the phrase "caught up." This is the 1st person plural, which tells us that Paul and those living at that time expected this event to possibly happen while they are alive.
Acts 1:9-11 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. **10** And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, **11** who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."
2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The verb "caught up together" means to take someone by force or violence, to snatch away, or to take someone to a heavenly, celestial place.

(**Matthew 11:12; 12:29; John 6:15; 10:12; Jude 23; Acts 8:39; 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4; Revelation 12:5**)

V. The purpose/profit of the rapture. V.18

- A. To meet the Lord in the air.
- B. To be with the Lord forever.
- C. To be comforted by these words of hope. V.18