



Radical Word Bible Study Podcast

1 Thessalonians

Live Streamed on August 7, 2025



Pastor Rick Lancaster

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Opening Comments

- **RECORD**
- Welcome to episode 6 of the Radical Word Bible Study Podcast Live Stream.
- I am Rick Lancaster, and we are coming to you live from our podcasting studio in Murrieta, California at Calvary Chapel French Valley.
- We have a service every Sunday @ 9:30 am.
- Come check us out, we think you will like it.
- We are streaming this Bible Study live on Rumble, Facebook, and YouTube.
- And, if you would like to help us get these teaching out, please like, share, and subscribe.
- We are working on the podcast part of the Bible Study Podcast.
- We have a couple of bugs to work out, but we are making progress.
- We will keep you updated on that.
- We solved the issue with the camera.
- It is a new camera and one of its features is gesture control.
- You can tell the camera what to do by making certain gestures with your hands.
- We have turned that off.
- Because everything we are doing here is new, there will be these kinds of challenges.
- We'll just deal with them and move on.
- If you are interested in staying up to date with what is happening at The Radical Word, here is a link that you can use to get connected.
- This link will also be in the description for this video.
- Today is Thursday, August 7, 2025.
- Today's Hebrew date is 13th of Av, 5785
- [coffee mug]
- There is only one thing on the food calendar.

- National Raspberries and Cream Day - August 7
- -
- This day in history: The country Upper Volta declared its independence from France in 1960.
- I had no idea where that is.
- Upper Volta was the former name of the West African country now known as Burkina Faso.
- It was established as a French colony in 1919 and later became a self-governing republic within the French Community in 1958.
- On August 5, 1960, it gained full independence from France.
- In 1984, it officially changed its name to Burkina Faso, which means "Land of the Upright (or incorruptible) People".
- -
- On a lighter note: In his last public stunt, American magician Harry Houdini stayed in an underwater airtight coffin for some 90 minutes; he bested rival magician Rahman Bey's time of one hour.
- -
- As a reminder, I will be responding to the chat live.
- If you have questions or comments, put them in the chat.
- If you do that, keep them brief, please.
- Okay, let's get into our study tonight.
- Let's open with a word of prayer.
- **Pray**

Teaching

- Turn to **1 Thessalonians 5**
- Last time, we took a deep dive into the doctrine of the Rapture of the church.
- In summary, the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church is:
The Rapture of the Church: Before God pours out His terrible, but just wrath upon this wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world, Jesus will come and raise all who have believed in Jesus to new life and snatch away all living true believers from the earth and take them with Him to heaven after giving them glorified bodies.
- **ASK FOR QUESTIONS!**
- Questions are an important part of this Bible Study.

- Please do not hesitate to ask questions, even if you are not sure if it applies.
- I'll let you know if we have time to talk about it, or if it would be better to handle it offline.
- Or, just say hello and let me know how you are watching this; which platform and what kind of a device.
- For those of you listening to the podcast, you can ask questions on our social media sites which you can find on the website: radicalword.com.
- Before we get into chapter five, we should remind ourselves why Paul wrote this letter.
- Often in Paul's letter he had one or two things he was trying to communicate to his readers.
- The epistles or letters were written to real people or churches.
- Understanding the context allows us to better understand what the writer, in this case Paul, was trying to accomplish.
- The Thessalonians believed the gospel when Paul and his companions shared it with them.
- One of the things they believed was that Jesus, after He died, was buried, resurrected, and ascended, would be coming back for His people.
- They believed Jesus was coming back and they believed He was coming back for them.
- They had knowledge, but their knowledge was not complete.
- Their incomplete knowledge led them to draw the wrong conclusions which led them to sorrow as those who have no hope.
- Some of the Thessalonians died and they thought that meant they missed Christ's return and therefore were lost.
- This is why we study the Bible.
- It is not enough to know something about the Bible.
- Jesus, after sharing some particularly challenging things for people to believe, had many people choose not to follow Him anymore. **John 6:67-69**

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal

life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

- Not only do we need to believe God’s Word, we also need to strive to understand to the best of our ability.
- You should notice that I put believing before understanding.
- Understanding is not required for faith.
- But faith without understanding is vulnerable to attacks from the enemy of our soul, to temptations to wander from the faith, and to being taken advantage of by evil people.
- The Thessalonians were sincere in their faith but were lacking understanding.
- That is understandable considering the limited amount of time Paul and his companions had been with them.
- Paul has comforted them about the death of their saved loved ones.
- They are with Him now, and when Jesus comes back, will bring them with Him.
- And at the same time, if we are still alive when Jesus comes, we will be caught up to be with them and Him forever.
- The obvious question a lot of people have is when will that happen.
- Paul addresses that in the next section.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**
- Paul had taught them a lot in the short time he was with them.
- The word ‘times’ is the Greek word ‘chronos’ and means time’
- This refers to definite amounts of time, like an hour, day, week, year.
- The word ‘seasons’ refers to indefinite amounts of time, like the church age.
- We know how long it has been but not how long it will be.
- The church age ends when Jesus comes and takes the church out of the world at the Rapture.
- The Thessalonians didn’t know what it meant for their loved ones to die before Jesus comes to get the church, but they did know something about the ‘day of the Lord’.
- This they knew ‘perfectly’ or accurately.
- The Day of the Lord is distinct from but connected to the Rapture of the Church.

- As I read some verses out of Isaiah, I would like you to compare that to what you know about the Rapture. **Isaiah 13:6-9**

⁶ Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. ⁷ Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, ⁸ and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them*; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces *will be like* flames. ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.

- Paul ended the talk the Rapture with these words... **1 Thessalonians 4:18**

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- There is nothing comforting in Isaiah's words.
- Jesus coming for His church is described in a way to bring comfort.
- The Day of the Lord is described in a way that should produce fear.
- It is so bad that God limits its time so that all life is not destroyed.

Matthew 24:21-22

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

- 'Day of the Lord' – not a 24-hour day – period of time.
- **Insert Timeline Chart.**
- Begins after the Rapture and goes all the way through the Second Coming and may continue through the Millennium.
- The Rapture of the Church is the beginning of the Day of the Lord.
- And when it comes, the unbelieving world will be surprised.
- 'thief in the night' – speaks of being surprised and unprepared.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:3**
- Hundreds of millions of believers will vanish instantly all around the world.
- Most of the world will reject the idea that Jesus came and took His church out of the world.
- Those in power in the world will convince people that there is a natural explanation for the disappearance of hundreds of millions of people instantly.
- Maybe the aliens we have been hearing about finally decided to show up.

- They can make up any story they want, and people will believe it or they will be coerced into accepting it.
- There are things about the Day of the Lord or the Last Days that we don't know because God hasn't told us.
- We don't know when Jesus is coming back for His Church.
- We also don't know how long after He does that the other events of the End Times begin to happen.
- At some point there is going to be a great war, the Gog Magog war.
- And then at some point a peace covenant is established that includes the people of Israel. **Daniel 9:27**

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

- The 'he' in that verse is the Antichrist.
- There is a lot of speculation about this person, the Antichrist, but little is actually known about him.
- He will play a part in confirming or strengthening the covenant of peace, but he will not be obvious as the Antichrist until the halfway point of the Tribulation.
- One of the results of this covenant is that the Jews are able to build the temple in Jerusalem and they will resume the Mosaic sacrificial system for atoning for their sin and worshipping God.
- Sadly, that will be meaningless and empty.
- It will not atone for their sin because God replaced that whole system with His Son on the cross. **Colossians 1:19-20**

¹⁹ **For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell,** ²⁰ **and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.**

- Jesus is now the only sacrifice that can bring atonement. **Hebrews 10:4**

⁴ **For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**

- There may be a time after the Rapture and the Gog Magog war that is relatively peaceful, but it won't last.
- 'Peace and safety!' = false – come when they least expect it.
- Destruction – not annihilation – ruin, loss, suffering = tribulation.

- From a human perspective, there is nothing peaceful, safe, good, or pleasant about the Day of the Lord.

Day of the Lord: The long-delayed expression of God's indignation over the sin of humanity through the outpouring of His righteous wrath in terrible judgments on this wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world.

- Illustration of pregnant woman – once the labor starts, no stopping it.
 - A pregnant woman is a good illustration of the coming Day of the Lord.
 - You can tell a woman is pregnant, the signs of the Lord's coming are discernable, but we don't know exactly when.
 - When Kelly was pregnant with our first child, there were signs that delivery was approaching.
 - Then a little more than two weeks before her due date, as she was getting out of bed, her water broke.
 - We were very surprised, but at that point there was no stopping what was coming.
 - There are signs that the Day of the Lord may be very near.
 - And there is a lot more that could be said about it.
 - We will get to some of that in 2 Thessalonians.
 - Then we will get into a study of Revelation.
 - There are many who struggle with Revelation because of the imagery and the things that seem hard to understand.
 - Revelation contains the last words God gave the world for two thousand years.
 - I know He wants us to understand His plan for the world.
 - Paul then tells the Thessalonians why they will not be surprised by the coming of the Lord.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5**
 - The world is divided into two realms or kingdoms – light and darkness.
 - The Kingdom of God is light. **1 John 1:5**
- This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**
- The Kingdom of God is where God is King.
 - Everything and everyone not under His authority is in the kingdom of darkness.

- The literal definition of the word darkness is the lack of light.
- It can also be used to describe the evil world, or the abode of evil spirits.
- In this context darkness = moral and spiritual separation from God.
- This is an important concept for us to understand, people who do not put their faith in Christ are separated from God.
- They cannot see Him, or hear Him, or respond to Him.
- They are in darkness morally and spiritually.
- As long as they are in that state of darkness they are separated from the spiritual things of God. **1 Corinthians 2:13-14**

¹³ **These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** ¹⁴ **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.**

- Bible says that is where we all were before Christ.
- Something supernatural happens when someone puts their faith in Christ and is saved. **Colossians 1:13-14**

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

- If you are saved = son or daughter of God – in kingdom of light.
- Not physically – but spiritually.
- We must live in this world ruled by the prince of darkness. **Ephesians 6:11-12**

¹¹ **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** ¹² **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.**

- We live in this world as children of Light and as conveyors of the light of Jesus Christ. **John 8:12**

¹² **Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."**

- As Children of God we are called to carry the light of God's kingdom out into the world. **Matthew 5:14-16**

¹⁴ **"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.**

¹⁵ **Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.** ¹⁶ **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

- The day of the Lord will come suddenly upon the people of this world, but not upon us.
- Because Jesus will come and take us physically out of kingdom of darkness – live in eternal light.
- This should have an effect upon the way we live this life.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:6-7**
- In the last chapter Paul used the word ‘sleep’ to refer to believers that had died.
- Here he changes how he uses it.
- Here the word ‘sleep’ = morally and spiritually indifferent.
- It means to be unalert, not paying attention.
- If you are a son of the day or light – Jesus died for your sins – your sins are forgiven – you have the promise of eternity in heaven.
- To be indifferent to the things of God is to despise the cross of Christ.
- We are called to be alert and pay attention to what is going on around us.
- We should know and be watching for the signs of Christ’s return.
- We should be ready for His coming.
- Should be watching and sober – attentive to the things of God and watching for the return of Christ.
- The word ‘sober’ has the obvious meaning of not being drunk.
- It means a little more than that.
- It also means clear-headed and self-controlled.
- There is nothing inherently wicked or evil about alcohol.
- It is what alcohol does to people that is the problem.
- Alcohol, even in small amounts, can affect thinking.
- It has the effect of making it easier to do things that you wouldn’t do without alcohol.
- A DUI is driving under the influence because the alcohol or drug has the probability of influencing your driving in a negative way.
- Paul told the church in Ephesus: **Ephesians 5:18**
- ¹⁸ **And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...**

- The more influenced you are by drugs or alcohol, the less you are being influenced by the Holy Spirit, who lives in you to make you holy and get you ready for Christ's coming.
- If being sober means to be clear-headed and self-controlled, there are things other than alcohol and drugs that we should be careful of.
- Pornography, most music, social media, tv and movies all have the potential to cloud or crowd your mind and might lead to less self-control.
- Be wise with what you allow into your mind.
- Paul wants the Thessalonians to be ready for Christ's coming.
- He gives them two things to put on in preparation.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:8**
- Paul probably has in view the uniform of a Roman soldier.
- He picks out two pieces – the breastplate and the helmet.
- In Ephesians he names several others.
- Breastplate protects vital organs, especially the heart.
- Helmet protects the head.
- The heart is seen as the seat of our emotions.
- The head, or mind, is where reason, logic, and knowledge are found.
- Both the heart and the mind need to be protected.
- Paul told the Philippians how we could do that. **Philippians 4:6-7**
- **⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**
- Paul says faith and love are the breastplate that guards the heart.
- Faith and love guard our hearts from the darkness around us.
- Faith is knowing and depending upon God.
- Faith also is trusting God.
- Trusting God guards your heart because you believe God is in control of everything.
- On Sunday, I shared: **Romans 12:19**
- **¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord.**

- The natural human response to someone harming, betraying, offending, or persecuting me is a desire for justice in the form of vengeance.
- If I trust God and obey this verse, I don't take vengeance into my own hands.
- Simply not taking vengeance will not guard my heart.
- By faith I must let go of the hurt and forgive that person.
- If I don't, I may be restraining myself from taking vengeance, but the desire for vengeance is still in my heart.
- The only way to guard my heart is by faith forgiving. **Luke 23:34a**
³⁴ **Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."**
- It is by faith that I trust God is in control and I rest in His sovereign authority over everything, including my life and everything in it.
- Like faith love guards our heart.
- The love Paul is referring to is agape love.
- This is the kind of love that puts the interests of others before my own.
- Again, this comes down to trusting God.
- We all have a flesh nature that sees our needs, wants, dreams, desires, hopes, and wishes as essential to our happiness and fulfillment.
- Agape love says something different. **Matthew 22:35-40**
³⁵ **Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,**
³⁶ **"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"** ³⁷ **Jesus said to him,**
" 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' " ³⁸ **This is the first and great commandment.** ³⁹ **And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** ⁴⁰ **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**
- If I love God with my whole being, I am more inclined to love others in ways that are according to what is in their best interest even when it is not in my best interest – even if it costs something – even if it means I must sacrifice something of my needs, wants, dreams, desires, hopes, and wishes.
- My faith tells me that God loves me with an eternal, infinite love and that He will provide for my needs, wants, dreams, desires, hopes, and wishes as seems good to Him.
- My faith in God's love for me and my growing love for Him guards my heart when life seems unfair.

- Paul also says the hope of salvation is a helmet to protect our mind.
 - As Paul is speaking to believers, we understand that he is not saying they are hoping to be saved in a spiritual sense.
 - Salvation must be viewed based on three realities.
 - We were saved in the past, we will be saved today, and we will be saved in the future.
 - Let's break that down.
 - If you are a Christ-follower, then there was a moment in the past when you once were lost, but now you are found, you were blind, but now you see.
 - That was a one-time event, never to be repeated.
 - It is that salvation that assures us of heaven.
 - We should have confidence in that. **Acts 16:31**
- So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..."**
- If someone asks you if you are going to heaven, you should be able to say simply yes.
 - If you say something like, I hope so, or I think so, you need to let the Spirit grow your faith.
 - Not only did Jesus save me in the past but He also saves me in the here and now.
 - There is never a moment when we are out of touch with Christ Jesus, Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
 - We often limit our idea of Jesus saving us today to the times we are sinking in the storm like Peter walking on water.
 - Jesus doesn't want to save us just when we are desperate.
 - He wants to save us when we are trying to make a decision.
 - He wants to save us when we are struggling in a relationship.
 - He wants to save us when we make a mistake, big or small.
 - He wants to save for the big things and the little things.
 - He wants to save us in the important things and the seemingly unimportant things.
 - One of the things I am still trying to learn is to be utterly dependent upon God for everything.
 - Too often I trust in myself and in my own abilities, knowledge, or wisdom.

- Instead, God wants me to trust in Him fully, seeking His help and direction, and then use what He gives me in ability, knowledge, and wisdom, and then sometimes God throws His supernatural ability, knowledge, and wisdom into the situation.
- Jesus is busy in heaven talking to the Father about us and what we need. **Hebrews 7:25**

²⁵ **Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

- Jesus saved us in the past, He is busy saving us in the present, and He is preparing to save us in the future. **John 14:1-3**

¹**“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In 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. ³And 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.**

- Jesus was talking to His disciples but this promise applies to all who have put their faith in Christ.
 - Jesus is going to come and get you.
 - Last week we talked about the Rapture.
 - That is when Jesus comes and snatches every believer on earth to save them from the wrath to come.
 - For two thousand years, Jesus has also been coming to get believers one at a time.
 - We might not like to think about this but at the moment of death Jesus saves us from continued life in a fallen and cursed world.
 - He saves us from this world and saves us to eternal life in heaven with Him.
 - We can also view this hope in relation to our sin.
 - Past – Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior – saved us from penalty and guilt of sin.
 - Sin had separated us from God, but through faith in Christ everything that separated us has been taken away. **Colossians 2:13-14**
- ¹³ **And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,**
- ¹⁴ **having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**
- We are even invited to come into God’s presence whenever we need grace or mercy, and He gives it freely and abundantly.

- Present – being saved from the power and pollution of sin by the Spirit of God. **Romans 6:22**

²² **But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.**

- We are no longer slaves to sin, forced to obey sin to our own hurt.
- Now, through the power of God the Holy Spirit we have the ability to say no to sin.
- Future – will be saved from the very presence of sin when God the Father welcomes me into His holy presence.
- In heaven there is no sin, and even the memory of sin will eventually go from us.
- That is the hope of salvation that we have as Christians.
- When we embrace these truths, it guards our mind like a helmet.
- It is our mind where many of the battles of life take place.
- If we can change the way we think, it changes the way we behave.

Romans 12:2

² **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

- One last thing before we move on to the next verse.
- Notice that Paul says ‘putting on...’
- That is calling believers to take responsibility for their faith.
- The hope we have is not something that is automatic in the life of a Christ-follower.
- Hope grows as our faith grows.
- When we practice the spiritual disciplines of our faith, doing things praying, reading and studying the Bible, serving God, being generous, fellowship with other believers, and many other things, our faith is stretched and exercised.
- The more you believe, trust, and obey God, the more our hope with grow.
- Paul started this chapter reminding the Thessalonians that they knew about what was coming in the future.
- Jesus is coming back.
- The Thessalonians knew Jesus was coming to get them.

- They also knew Jesus was coming back to deal with the problem of sin.

- The world, much like in the days of Noah, was determined to rebel against God. **Genesis 6:5**

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

- God's response was to flood the earth and destroy all life except for those on the ark.
- After the flood, God promised to never punish the world with a worldwide flood again.
- He didn't promise never to punish the earth again.
- It is difficult to imagine the world is not at least as wicked today as it was in the time of Noah.
- Even in Paul's time, they felt the world was lost enough that God would send Jesus to judge it.
- It hasn't gotten better in the last two thousand years.
- Every day this world deserves God's judgment a little bit more.
- There will come a day when the cup God's wrath and indignation over sin is full, and it will be time to pour in out in terrible judgment. **Mark 13:19-20**

¹⁹ For *in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

²⁰ And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

- God will judge this world for its sin and rebellion against Him.
- Paul continues the thought of the hope of salvation into the next verses.

• **1 Thessalonians 5:9-10**

- Another name for the 'Day of the Lord' is the 'Day of God's Wrath.'
- God's wrath is reserved for those who reject His love and grace found in the Person of Jesus.

- There is a consequence for rejecting Christ. **Isaiah 59:2**

² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden *His face from you, so that He will not hear.*

- To be separated from God makes you vulnerable to the wrath of God.
- Jesus referred to that right after He told us He was sent to the world because of God's love for humanity. **John 3:17-19**

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- God’s wrath is for the condemned, not for the saints.
- As Christians, we are not ‘appointed to wrath.’

Wrath: (punishment) n. — the punitive outworking of God’s righteous indignation at sin; perhaps describing an anger long-building.

- This is one of the verses I look to for my belief in a Pre-tribulation rapture of the church.
- Christians will not experience the wrath of God because Jesus took our punishment on the cross.
- That doesn’t mean we won’t experience difficult times. **John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.
- We shouldn’t confuse the tribulation that comes from being in a fallen and wicked world with the seven-year period we refer to as the Tribulation.
- As long as we are in this world – there will be good times and bad times.
- But before God’s Wrath comes, Jesus will come for us.
- That is an aspect of our hope of salvation.
- We will be saved from the wrath of God being poured out on the world.
- As believers we should have no fear of future judgment.
- After we have endured whatever tribulations this world throws at us and we go to be with the Lord, there will only be goodness in the presence of the Lord. **Psalms 16:11**

¹¹ You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- Paul also reminds us of the price that was paid for us so that we could experience that hope of salvation from the wrath of God, Jesus ‘died for us.’
- Whether ‘we wake or sleep’ we have the same hope of salvation from the wrath of God.
- Paul has used the idiom sleep in two different ways in chapters four and five.

- In chapter four sleep refers to believers who have died.
- And then in this chapter it refers to those who are morally and spiritually indifferent or unaware.
- In context, it is the second one.
- While we are exhorted to wake up spiritually and be aware of what is going on around us, it won't change the fact that Jesus is going to come get us to live together with Him.
- You may have heard me make a distinction between believers and Christ-followers.
- There are people who have trusted in Jesus for salvation and have the hope of salvation who do very little to grow their faith.
- Others, like all of you, because you are watching or listening to this podcast, who have made a conscious decision to follow Christ.
- You are cooperating with the Holy Spirit and He is growing your faith.
- You are not perfect, but you are being perfected.
- Both believers and Christ-followers have the same hope of salvation.
- There are some who believe only Christ-followers will be caught up when Jesus comes and the those with marginal faith have to endure the Tribulation until they are worthy to be raptured.
- These verses seem to suggest otherwise.
- Paul told them in verse 6 to watch and be sober.
- We should take the return of Christ seriously, and we should be watching for it.
- We shouldn't be sleeping – not morally and spiritually indifferent or unaware of what is going on.
- Jesus said there would be signs.
- We should be familiar with those signs, and we ought to be actively watching for them.
- We should be fully prepared for Christ's coming and we ought to be busy helping others get prepared.
- Christians can be divided into two groups.
- Those who are living this life watching and waiting for Christ to return and actively seeking God's will.

- The other group are those believers who are sleepwalking through this life.
 - They have confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior and received forgiveness for their sins and have the hope of salvation.
 - They have the Holy Spirit living inside them.
 - But there is little or no evidence of that in their life.
 - Someday, maybe very soon, Jesus is coming back.
 - What will your response be to His coming **1 John 2:28**
- And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.**
- Will you be ashamed of the life you are living when Jesus comes back?
 - Are you spiritually sleepwalking through this life?
 - Is there any evidence in your life that you care about the things of God?
 - Well, I am here. Isn't that enough? No, not really!
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:11**
 - Church life is all about giving and taking – comfort and edification.
 - Comfort = coming alongside to help or encourage.
 - Edify = to build up – to make stronger.
 - Back in verse 8 there are three areas that we should focus on; faith, love, and hope.
 - Paul says we need to put these three things on.
 - We can't do that in isolation – we are to help each other.
 - Someone who is sleepwalking is not going anywhere, and is a danger spiritually to themselves and others.
 - Turn to **Ephesians 4 [Logos]**.
 - If you want your life to matter, if you want it to be better, you need to wake up.
 - It begins by accepting this as truth, confessing it to God.
 - Then you must choose to do something.
 - The church's purpose is described in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.
 - **Ephesians 4:11-16**
 - Get involved – Bible Study, Service, activities & fellowships.
 - Church life is about giving and taking – both are important.

- As we grow in our faith, we tend to give more than we take. **Acts 20:35**

³⁵ **I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**

- If Jesus died for your sins, which He did, shouldn't you get yourself ready for His coming.
- One of the best ways to do that is by being engaged in the life of a local church.
- Nowhere in my study of Scripture have I found God calling anyone to a solo walk with God.
- God created us to be in community.
- When we gather together in fellowship and communion with other believers doing the normal things of church life the Holy Spirit adds to that gathering things that cannot be experienced apart for it.
- It almost doesn't matter what you are doing, as long as you are doing it together and in the name of Christ and for God's glory.
- One of the things COVID taught me is that we need each other.
- When is Jesus coming? Soon! Are you ready?
- If not, wake up, put on faith, love, and hope.
- Get connected to others to both give and receive comfort and edification.
- Let none of us be ashamed when Jesus gets here.
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- Paul is speaking to the young church that he started
- Was only able to stay there about three weeks
- As he comes to the end of this letter he gives them a series of short instructions on how they ought to behave toward each other
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12a
- 'brethren' – uses this word 27 times in 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- The church is not an organization, even though it is organized
- It is not a business, it is not a club, it is not an association

- The word that best describes what the church is supposed to be is ‘family’
- When we were saved, we were made part of the family of God
Ephesians 1:3-6
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
- That means we are all brothers and sisters in Christ
- Turn to a couple of people around you and tell them they are your brother or sister in Christ
- When Paul says ‘brethren’ referring to the whole church
- The church is a family made up of families
- God created the family, and established how it should function
- Created man to be the leader, woman, as his equal to stand beside him and help him, and children are to obey their father and mother
- The church also is God’s creation, established how it should function
- The elders are assigned to lead, the deacons and other ministers help them lead, and the people are to obey
- Paul gives us three functions of the leaders and two responses of the people
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- First function of the leader – Labor among you
- ‘labor’ = toil to the point of exhaustion – ministry is hard work
- Someone called to be a minister to the people of God works hard
- Second function – Are over you in the Lord
- Literally = ‘to take the lead’ – lead by example of life
- This does speak of authority, but a very special kind Mark 10:42-45
- Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so

among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

- A true Christ-like leader is a servant before he is a leader
- ‘in the Lord’ is key – in His name and in His way
- Third function = Admonish you
- ‘admonish’ = ‘put in mind’ – warning and instruction
- A true Christian leader will warn of danger and sin, and instruct in the things of God
- Paul tells the church how they should respond to those leaders
- First response – Recognition
- ‘recognize’ = ‘know the worth of’ – it is a call to respect the men that are fulfilling the three functions of leaders in the church
- It implies that the church should accept them as leaders – which then implies that the leaders should be followed
- Second response – Esteem them very highly
- = ‘hold them in the highest regard’ value them, appreciate them
- With the main motivation being love – knowing you love me is worth a lot to me – causes me to feel appreciated
- The church is not just about the leaders giving to the congregation
- It goes both ways – that is life in the church
- And one of the fruit of this two-way church life = peace
- Paul now turn from the leaders to the whole church
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14a
- ‘brethren’ – who is he talking to? The whole church! That means you
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15
- Six quick things that the congregation is to do for one another
- First – Warn the unruly
- Unruly = disorderly = soldier who has stepped out of ranks
- These are the troublemakers
- Who should warn the troublemakers? The pastor? Nope! The church!
- Second – Comfort the Fainthearted
- ‘fainthearted’ = easily discouraged or frightened, the quitters

- Called to ‘comfort’ them = ‘speak tender words to’
- Who? Pastor? Nope! You!
- Third – Uphold the Weak
- While this may refer to the physically weak, probably referring to moral and spiritual weakness
- ‘uphold’ = to hold before – face-to-face – FIND VOLUNTEER
- Help him to walk a few steps – then can find his own way
- Fourth – Be patient with all
- ‘patient’ = put up with the weaknesses of others
- Who does ‘all’ include? Pretty much everyone
- Fifth – Do not retaliate
- When someone does something to us, we want to retaliate, get even, get justice, make things right
- After all, the Bible teaches, ‘An eye for an eye’, right? Yep
- If punishment is given – should fit the crime – to limit punishment
- But Jesus taught something radically different Matthew 5:38-39
- You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.
- Jesus would call us to forgive
- Who should do this, the pastor? You!
- Sixth – Pursue what is good
- Definition of Agape Love – unconditionally doing what is in the best interest of others
- Church life is not supposed to be a spectator sport – supposed to be interactive – dynamic
- We should do good for others not just when it is convenient
- It was inconvenient for that young man to interrupt our Bible Study
- But it was good for him to meet his Savior
- And it was good for us to be used by God in the miracle of his spiritual birth
- Most churches are not what they ought to be because the people don’t know what their role is
- Your role in this church is just as important as mine, maybe more

- The next three verses are usually taught from the perspective of an individual believer
- But in context they are given as part of the life of the church
- Next week I will share their individual applications
- We get three very quick statements, written in the imperative – commands = not optional in church life
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- When the church gathers, should be a time of rejoicing
- We should lift our voices in joyous praise
- That is why most of our songs are upbeat
- We have a lot to rejoice in – we are the children of Almighty God
- He saved us from sin and spiritual death
- He lives in us, helps us, guides us, protects us, teaches us
- Whether we come in burdened by life or overjoyed with life, we all can add our voices to the joy of the church
- Been said, not willing to join in the praises of the church, not ready for heaven, because that is the main occupation of heaven
- As a quick aside – who knows what the shortest verse of the Bible is? John 11:35
- Jesus wept.
- In the Greek, it is this verse – ‘Rejoice always’
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- When we gather as the church, prayer ought to be peppered throughout it
- Someone once described worship singing as ‘prayers set to music’
- We will talk about next week how on a personal level this is speaking of the attitude of the heart
- Paul is not saying that the whole service should be non-stop prayer
- What he is saying is that we ought to be aware of God’s presence throughout the whole service
- When we are praying, we are speaking to God
- When we are singing we are singing about and to God
- When we are giving, we are giving to God
- When we are listening to the teaching we are hearing from God

- All of this is because of Jesus, and for God
- Next Paul says our gatherings should reflect an attitude of gratitude
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- There are things that come into our lives that it is exceedingly difficult to be thankful for
- And in many cases we shouldn't be – like wickedness in the world
- But when we gather together, we have much to be thankful for
- We have a church family that loves us
- We have Christ who saves us – Spirit who comforts us – God who loves and adopted us
- These are commands, 'this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.'
- If you are going to go to a church, you should want it to be a good church – but is good, good enough?
- I don't want this to be a good church, I want it to be a great church
- Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do to make this a great church
- For a church to be truly great, not about the preacher, not about the building, not about how many people are coming, not about the events, ministries, or programs
- It is about the people – all of the people – it's about you
- Jesus died to create this church
- He sent the Holy Spirit to give it the power it needs to be great
- He gave it leaders to work hard, lead it, and teach in it
- But the only way any church can be truly great is when the 'brethren' respond
- This little church can be a great church
- What's in it for you – great churches help people to be great people enjoying great lives, to have great marriages and families
- We serve a great God, we are His sons and daughters and our destiny is greatness
- All you need to do to help this church become a great church is find out what the church is doing and start showing up
- And if we all do that, great things will happen – wouldn't that be great?
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- Paul has been telling this young church things they should keep in mind as they relate to God and to each other
- Just told them three things they ought to do
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**
- Now focuses on two they shouldn't do – first one
- **1 Thessalonians 5:19**
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- God the Father is seated on His throne in heaven
- Jesus is seated next to Him and intercedes for us before the throne of God night and day
- The Holy Spirit is in the world - Jesus told us about Him **John 16:7-8**
It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.
- In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised
- Came upon the disciples – tongues of fire
- All of Jerusalem came to see what was going on – guys were on fire for Jesus
- When we receive Christ as our Savior, Spirit comes into our lives, lights a fire in our heart
- Supernatural things start happening
- But it often doesn't last. Why?
- Paul says here, 'Do not quench the Spirit'
- 'quench' = to put out a fire
- Paul doesn't say what they were doing that might be quenching the Spirit, but the next verse, might be a clue
- **1 Thessalonians 5:20**
- One of the ways you 'quench the Spirit' is to 'despise prophesy'
- A 'prophesy' is an inspired utterance
- When God wanted to speak to humans, He usually did it through another human
- God would inspire them, put His words into their minds

- The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah was a young man when God called him to be a prophet
- He was a little concerned about how he was going to do it **Jeremiah 1:9**

Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth."

- It shouldn't surprise us that God still wants to talk to humans
- God talks to humans in several ways
- The main way is through His Word **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 'given by inspiration of God' = compound Greek word – God+breathed
- 'breathed' – same root as 'spirit'
- If you don't esteem, value, take seriously, read, and obey Bible = despising prophecy = quenching the Spirit
- Another way God speaks is through people – especially preachers and teachers
- A preacher/teacher can despise prophecy by teaching man's opinion, rather than God's truths
- A person can despise prophecy by wanting to hear man's opinions
- It is one of the signs that we are to be watching for of the end-times **2 Timothy 4:3-4**

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- The truth is sometimes hard to hear, but when presented by a Spirit-filled teacher, it brings life
- You should pray that the person that stands up here is speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- But they are not the only ones that God speaks through
- God can and does speak through anyone who has the Holy Spirit
- We despise prophecy when we refuse to listen to what God is saying through our brothers and sisters

- We can also despise prophecy when we refuse to share the things God inspires us to tell others
- There is rarely a day that goes by that I don't hear something from God through one of the people He has placed in my life
- I don't hear those things because I am super-spiritual
- I hear them because I believe God wants to speak to me, and I am listening
- We despise prophecy and quench the Spirit when we are not listening
- But we can't accept everything we hear
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22**
- Not everything that Christians say is inspired by the Spirit of God
- not even the most faithful Christian preacher/teachers should be trusted absolutely
- When someone speaks, as I do every Sunday as a representative of God
- I pray for God's inspiration, I try allow the Spirit to put these messages together
- I have people pray for me that the Holy Spirit does the speaking through me
- That doesn't mean that it always happens
- Paul says, 'Test all things' = 'inspired utterances'
- Judge what is being said as either good or evil, based on what?
- Not on your opinions or how it makes you feel – but with God's Word
- For my words to be considered inspired utterances – must line up with what God has already said in His Word
- If it is good – cling to it, hold fast, grab it and don't let it go
- If it is not good, it is evil - stay away from it, reject it
- Paul closes his letter with a blessing
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28**
- God's goal for your life is to make you whole
- For you to be totally whole, all parts of your life need to be aligned with God
- It is the Holy Spirit that does the work to accomplish this wholeness
- **Philippians 1:6**

He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.

- You can't do it yourself, the Holy Spirit must do it
 - But you must let Him – and you can't quench Him
 - You can't do the work of becoming whole, but you can block the work
 - Jesus told the disciples that they were the light of the world
 - All those that follow in their footsteps are also the light of the world
 - We are light because the Spirit of God is burning within us
 - It is up to us to keep that fire burning hot
 - We do that by getting to know the Holy Spirit
 - The Bible has a lot to say about Him and the things He does in the world and in the lives of God's people – read it
 - Listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit – teachers, preachers, other Christians
 - And then respond – this is where discipleship and small groups come in – can help us learn how to 'test all things'
 - This world is cold and dark – and if you don't do something to keep the fire burning, you will end up at the same spiritual temperature as this world
 - We have an enemy that wants us to be room-temperature **John 10:10a**
- The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.**
- If your life is just like the world, empty, pointless
 - If we quench the Spirit – open the door for the thief
 - He will take all he can, and kill or destroy everything else
 - But that is not the kind of life that Jesus came to give you **John 10:10b**

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

- The abundant life is lived in Christ and through the Spirit
- Impossible without the Holy Spirit
- Which life would you rather live?
- Ask your spouse which life they want to live? Ask your kids?
- And the cool thing is that we can all live that abundant life
- The same Holy Spirit that is in me is in you

- He can take the weakest ember in the heart of a willing person, and fan to flames to life that brings light and heat to everyone around you
- It all begins when we choose to say yes to the Spirit
- Let's pray and do that right now
- **Pray**