

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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CHRIST WILL RETURN SOMEDAY

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

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We've just had Advent...where we revisited the anticipation of the coming of Christ. We've celebrated his first arrival to this earth as God incarnate. And today, I want us to look at the future...toward his second coming.

- Being informed is the Christian's responsibility.
- Being ready is the Christian's duty.
- Being a source of comfort is the Christian's obligation.

BEING INFORMED IS THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

SCRIPTURE: I Thessalonians 4:13

Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope.

EXPLANATION: The King James Version says, "I do not want you to be ignorant." The Greek word is "agnoeó" – which means, "I do not know, am ignorant of (a person, thing, or fact), sometimes with the idea of willful ignorance."

That's interesting because a lot of people are uninformed, or ignorant, because they choose to be. Why would someone choose to be uninformed about what the Bible says about the second coming of Christ?

The Apostle Paul did not want people to be ignorant about what? -- Those who sleep in death. Why? So people would not grieve like others who have no hope. Without Christ, there is no hope.

And here is the reason we grieve differently -

SCRIPTURE: I Thessalonians 4:14

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.

APPLICATION: All Christians need to know these scriptures! You need to have these verses clearly marked in your Bibles! You need to memorize them and be ready to share them with others. This is the hope that helps us live from day to day. I will see my dad again. I will see other loved ones again. As sure as I am standing here, it is not over.

Christian, be informed....it is your responsibility!

BEING READY IS THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

SCRIPTURE: I Thessalonians 4:15-17

By the word of the Lord, we declare to you that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will be the first to rise. ¹⁷ After that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

The image of this in my mind is mind blowing. It's more than I can comprehend.

ILLUSTRATION: There are many prophecy pundits out there who are more than ready to sell you a book of their ideas about prophecy. Last night, I read an article about several preachers – you would recognize their names – and the books they've sold, all of which had predictions that did not come true. If anything, they've done a fantastic job dumbing down the book of Revelation.

ILLUSTRATION: A friend of mine, who is a pastor, met a pastor from India who had studied the Bible completely apart from the American prophecy pundits. My friend told the pastor from India he had had always had difficulty understanding The Revelation. The Indian pastor was surprised and said he had read the book at

least one hundred times. He told the American pastor, “It is the unveiling of Christ. Read it again and watch Jesus Christ be unveiled.”

APPLICATION: My suggestion is to quit buying the books of the TV preachers who peddle their prophecy books, and read the Bible for yourself and look for the unveiling of Jesus. That’s that the Bible is...the unveiling of Jesus Christ, starting in the book of Genesis and building until the last book.

Now here’s what to do...as you quit listening to so-called experts and start reading your Bible for yourself, you’ll note the scripture is written with a sense of urgency. Matthew 24, I Thessalonians 5, and Revelation 16 all say Jesus Christ will return like a thief in the night, when no one expects it. It’s your responsibility to be ready to travel with no notice at all. Live like he’ll be returning today.

BEING A SOURCE OF COMFORT IS THE CHRISTIAN’S OBLIGATION

SCRIPTURE: I Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

APPLICATION: It goes without saying that as a church, we’ve lost a lot of people to death. Just this past week, two have left us. Both of them were here last Sunday - - Madeleine Hosea and John Lacky. Both were happy and glad to be here – as far as I know neither had an impending illness that put them on the short-timer list. Both passed in their sleep. We’ve lost others very dear to us. Some were expected but most of the deaths were unexpected.

Sometimes we comfort without words...it’s what chaplains call “ministry of presence.” Just be with someone. Don’t feel that you always have to say something. But when you do, the scripture gives us the very words of comfort.

What can we do as fellow believers? We can comfort one another with the words of I Thessalonians 4.

ILLUSTRATION: In conclusion I want to share with you what came to my mind in the last week. Twenty years ago in 1999, the big Y2K problem was in the news. For those who need a refresher, some computer systems had a dating code that only

allowed for the last two digits of the year...such as 99 instead of 1999. An oversimplification of the problem is that some proposed that zero-zero, the last two numbers in the year 2000, would be unrecognizable by those computer systems.

I was completely convinced that the severe problems predicted with the Y2K software glitch was a creation of the media. I was 100% confident it was a hoax. If you read the Wikipedia about Y2K, you'll see a section called "fringe groups" and it is about how extremists reacted to the problem. The best way to say it is basically a bunch of people cashed in by fear-mongering. Numerous famous preachers sold many, many books...predicting doom and God's judgement on the world and in some way, they worked in the second coming of Christ with this expected disaster.

Now let me change gears for a minute. For several years, I had worked on putting together a youth conference called YouthLink 2000. The conference had been in the works since 1988 way before the Y2K hoax was created.

The idea was "where will you be when the clock strikes Jan 1, 2000" and we leave they 1900s behind?

Lots of planning had gone into this conference, but the fear-mongering over Y2K almost killed it.

I took a group to Tampa, including my family. Matt was a baby.

I was so confident no planes would fall out of the sky that we flew on January 1, 2000. You see, I had listened to other news besides the extreme news. I knew nothing would happen.

What I want to point out to you is that Y2K was used by people to create fear that people should repent, and maybe buy some books, live in fear, eat stockpiled food in cold, dark homes without electricity awaiting the return of Jesus.

Well, nothing happened. Little wonder why so many people who were young when all that fear-mongering happened are not in church with us today. They've become "harder to sell", based on failed predictions. They've become hardened to the Gospel for many reasons, but that may be one of them.

CONCLUSION: FOLKS, LISTEN CLEARLY – If there is one time when Jesus was not going to return, it was the day when people predicted he would. Matthew 24 tells us no one knows when Jesus would return.

Along with that, I want us to look back at I Thessalonians 4...is there anything to be afraid of in this passage of scripture? Is there anything about fear at all? The last section says to “comfort” one another with these words. Let us look forward to the second coming of Christ instead of dreading it!

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at www.thbc.com. Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn
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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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