

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

CHRIST WILL RETURN SOMEDAY

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

December 26, 2021

For public use: See non-copyright comments at the end of the message.

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: I want to be really clear here. If you are to be informed, your source of information must be accurate. If you are to be informed about Jesus, heaven, the Second Coming, and a host of other topics, it is your responsibility to read and study the Bible. Yes, study helps are great and expand our knowledge and understanding, but really, I do believe that God will reveal himself through his word.

ILLUSTRATION: A long time ago, I was at a conference for college students. The person leading the conference asked a question about the Bible. A college student raised his hands and said, “My grandmother always said...” The guest speaker stopped and said, “Your faith needs to become yours, not your grandmother’s.” At the time, I felt bad for the guy who quoted his grandmother, but I see it now. So many people are relying on quips and quotes from others.

Misinformation is around every corner. In the last two years, we have been inundated with more misinformation than I ever remember.

When TV first came out, there was a national phenomenon. People tended to believe whatever was on TV. “Well, I saw it on TV.” Today we are experiencing the same thing with the internet.

ILLUSTRATION: Part of my role as a chaplain is to take requests for religious accommodation. That can mean a variety of things. When a military person goes through that process, they waive their right to confidentiality on the matter. There are some who have requested religious exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine. For everyone who’s spoken with me, I’ve taken them seriously. I’ve done due diligence in gathering their information and passing it along. Out of some 30 more requests, I have had maybe two that had true, bona fide, legitimate requests.

APPLICATION: Overall, what the process has shown me is the sad state of religious beliefs in America. And to think, we are in the Bible belt. I’ve spoken with

other chaplains around the country who have said the same thing. A few Sundays ago, I mentioned confirmation bias. You can find documentation for anything you believe, whether it's true or not.

When you die and stand before the Lord, he is not going to care what anyone's relative said, or what you've seen on tv or read on the internet. What matters is that a person has repented of sin and followed Jesus.

All Christians need to know the scriptures I am sharing! 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.

EXPLANATION: Today, we have book after book of people who have dumbed down the book of Revelation. They've turned it into science fiction novels. The Revelation is the revealing of Christ.

If you've read Revelation trying to determine what day or night Jesus will return, stop doing that and read it again to see Christ revealed. That's what "revelation" means: a revealing.

APPLICATION: You'll note that much of the Bible, especially Revelation, was 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.

ILLUSTRATION: Only a couple of weeks ago, Ray Moore was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Hospice told Sue he might have six months.

A few days ago, Sue was making chili for Ray. When she went back to where he was, he was gone. Ray was ready to go. We must be ready.

BEING A SOURCE OF COMFORT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION

SCRIPTURE: I Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

APPLICATION: Sometimes we comfort without words. It's what can be called "a 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. *And so we will always be with the Lord.*

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

Failed predictions of Christ's return only result in making people hardened to the Gospel.

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!

To preachers, teachers, students, and anyone else reading or using this message: I have posted this for all to use as you see fit. There is no need to cite me as the source. You are free to delete sections, add your own, or do whatever you want. There is no copyright. My request is that you do not copyright or sell my work. I am sharing my preaching notes in good faith with you because I know the challenges of putting together a lesson, especially when your week gets consumed with other things. Use it and enjoy!

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
Thanks to Jennifer Anderson for her editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee
USA