

The End Series  
“The Return of Christ”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.<sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.<sup>15</sup> We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died.<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves.<sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.<sup>18</sup> So encourage each other with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT)

## **The Hope we have as Christians:**

### **The Return: Christ is coming again.**

*When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.*

John 14:3 (NLT)

*For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.*

1 Thessalonians 4:14 (NLT)

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NLT)

**Born once and die twice, or**  
**Born twice and die once.**

*Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power,*

Revelation 20:6a (NLT)

## **The Rapture: Living Christians are taken away.**

*Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17a (NLT)

*People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.*

<sup>40</sup> *“Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left.”<sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left.*

Matthew 24:39-41 (NLT)

*You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.*

Matthew 24:44 (NLT)

### **Be ready.**

*“Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed.”*

Revelation 16:15 (NLT)

## **The Reunion: Christians will be with God forever.**

*Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

*Then we will be with the Lord forever.<sup>18</sup> So encourage each other with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 (NLT)

*But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! <sup>52</sup> It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. <sup>53</sup> For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.*

*<sup>54</sup> Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:*

*"Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*<sup>55</sup> O death, where is your victory?*

*O death, where is your sting?"*

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 (NLT)

## **SO WHAT?**

*But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>58</sup> So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.*

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 (NLT)

## **We live for God NOW.**

## **Growth Group Questions**

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. How do you think the world will end?

Have you done anything to prepare?

2. When you think about the second coming of Christ how does it make you feel? Why do you feel that way?

3. Re-read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16. How do you think Jesus will return?

Why is Jesus return so important to our faith now?

4. Re-read 1 Thessalonians 4:17. What feelings or questions arise for you when you think about the rapture?

5. Re-read 1 Corinthians 15:51-55. How does the Idea of being with God forever make you feel?

How does this Idea give you hope?

6. If you knew that Jesus would return this week, How would you live differently?

7. If someone you care about would face eternity without Christ, How does that impact you today?