

I Don't Want To Miss A Thing

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[0 : 00] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, 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. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

There's a term that the cool kids use these days that I think will help us get a decent grasp on what's happening here in the text.

[1 : 20] Perhaps you've heard it. The term is FOMO. Do you know that one? From what I understand, maybe I'm a little old for these words now, but from what I understand, it's actually an acronym.

It stands for a fear of missing out. A fear of missing out. For the young church in Thessalonica, there was a serious FOMO situation going on.

It was causing them, actually, it was very serious. It was causing them tremendous sorrow, overwhelming grief. And it all had to do with misunderstandings about the nature of Christ's return. Some of them were afraid that if they died before Jesus came back, they would miss out on the benefits of his coming.

So like Stephen Tyler, they didn't want to miss a thing. That's the context of what's happening here. That's what is in the hearts of these very young Christians in Thessalonica.

[2 : 27] The section of the letter is really flowing out of Paul's prayer in chapter 3 and verse 10. We just look at it there. Paul says, He wanted to supply for them what was lacking in their faith.

In chapters 4 and 5 in the letter, in the construction of the letter, is his attempt to do that. He's isolating some particular needs in the congregation.

And he is ahead of, hopefully, in his mind, returning to them in person, writing to supply what might be lacking.

The first 12 verses of chapter 4, he supplied what was lacking for them in some areas of practical obedience. But when we come to this verse, in verse 13, all the way through chapter 5 and verse 11, he supplies what was lacking for them in some important doctrinal issues.

It's a very doctrinal teaching at this point. Those doctrines center on the events related to Christ's return. Now, if we can just address for just a moment the necessity of understanding the purpose of faithful doctrine.

[3 : 52] Not everybody thinks appropriately about the need for doctrine. On the one hand, there are some who find it a nuisance, actually. A bit unnecessary to genuine Christian experience.

They avoid doctrinal discussions. And may even think, in some scenarios, that it's actually dangerous to engage in them offensive and divisive. That's one extreme.

That's one ditch on this side. The ditch on the other side of the road is, of course, the opposite.

There are people who think of doctrine merely as an intellectual exercise. They love to study and develop theological convictions.

But only so that they might maintain a measure of dogma. Or engage in stimulating debate about things that people wonder over.

The doctrines that they hold never really seem to touch their heart. They just kind of fill their brains. It really affects them in practical ways. And both of these extremes, both of these approaches to biblical doctrine are not only dangerous.

[5 : 01] They're frankly unbiblical. They're unchristian in their approach. Doctrinal clarity, which is what Paul is getting to here. Doctrinal clarity and precision are a means to a greater end.

They are not an end in and of themselves. The end is the application of God's truth so that we may live life to his glory.

Why do we care about the truths of the Bibles? Not just so we can enter into a debate and win. No, it's so that it may transform our lives.

So that God's truth may impact us in ways that we would have never even expected before. The fact is, is that your theological convictions really don't matter if they don't affect the way that you live in worship.

You can have the right gospel and be unsaved. Paul shows us this clearly in the text. He was concerned to inform them of right doctrine so that they would be encouraged and comforted in their grief.

[6 : 23] That's the aim. And he makes it plain. Verse 13. Brothers, we don't want you to be uninformed. So that in your misunderstandings you grieve with great sorrow.

And by the end, what does he say? Now that he has informed them. Comfort one another.

Encourage one another. That's his point, isn't it? It's not information for information's sake.

It has a goal. What is the goal? It is to understand God's truth so that we might live out the glory of God's truth for his pleasure. Now, anticipation for this discussion on Christ's return has been building through the letter, hasn't it?

He's been hinting at it because he knows when he sits down to write chapter 1, verse 1, he knows that he's going to address this as the central focus of the letter. And so we start to see it piece through.

Look in chapter 1 and verse 10. He's speaking about their perseverance of faith. And he says part of that perseverance is that they are waiting for God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

[7 : 34] What is that a reference to? The second coming of Christ. We move to chapter 2 and we look again at verse 19. What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before the Lord Jesus at his coming?

What's in Paul's mind there? What's he hinting at even early in the letter? The coming of Christ and the reality that both he and the Christians in Thessalonica will experience that coming in its fullness. Then we move to chapter 3 and his prayer in verse 13. He prays that God would establish their hearts blameless in holiness before God and the Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all his saints.

What's he doing? Again, he's bringing the lens, the focus back to the second coming. And he's acknowledging even there in seed form what he's going to explain here in this part of the passage. And that is that those Christians in Thessalonica will be participants in the second coming. So he's begun to build this. It's anticipating through the letter.

[8 : 42] And now he finally gets to the moment of clarity that they needed so desperately in the church in Thessalonica. And he deals with the second coming directly.

And not only, as I said, is it meant to inform us of right doctrine as it relates to Christ's return, but God desires to strengthen our faith so that he might comfort our anxieties about death.

That's really at the heart of it, isn't it? And so I want to work through the passage with you today. I want us to be informed as the Thessalonians were informed so that we might be encouraged as the Thessalonians were encouraged.

First, I want you to notice something of the situation here in verse 13. Paul writes, Now it's in this opening verse that we learn something about the situation in Thessalonica that needed addressing. Three things stick out to us here. First, we discover that the situation relates to doctrine that they did not know. It's not necessarily confusion here.

[9 : 59] It is ignorance. They haven't been taught these things yet. Remember, Paul's time in the city was relatively brief. We go to Acts 17 and we look strictly at Luke's timeline that he lays out in the narrative.

It's possible that Paul's stay in Thessalonica was as little as two or three weeks. Now, I don't think we actually have to look at Acts 17 with that level of rigidity. I think actually it was probably a bit longer than that, but not much longer.

He was only there for a short time. We also know from Acts 17 that the focus of Paul's preaching and teaching as he was in the city was an explanation of the gospel of Jesus, his death and his resurrection from the Old Testament scriptures.

Now, the preaching of the gospel would have naturally included some education about the Lord's return, something that we know in the text here that the Thessalonians understood would happen and that they were greatly anticipating.

That's actually what's being understood here fundamentally. They know the Lord will return and they want him to return and they're longing for him to return. So what's the problem?

[11:13] The problem is that there were some gaps in their understanding that needed to be filled. And that's what Paul is setting out to do here. He's acknowledging something that they already believe, but he's helping refine the doctrine so that they might actually apply it appropriately to their real lives.

That's the first thing we see here. The second thing we see here in verse 13 is that we learn about the situation is that they were confused and concerned specifically about what happens to Christians who die before Christ's coming.

What happens to Christians before the Lord's return if they die? That's what Paul means here by those who are asleep.

He doesn't mean those on the back row whose eyes are beginning to glaze over even now. That's not what he's referring to. He's not talking about sleep. He's talking about death. Sleep was a common euphemism in Greek culture for death.

And the biblical authors use it to refer especially to the death of believers. The term itself in the Christian context, it actually anticipates resurrection.

[12:26] And I want to show that to you. I think these passages are actually on the screen for you to see. Matthew chapter 9, verses 24 and 25. The setting here is a family has come to Jesus.

Their daughter is very sick, and she's now dead. They don't know she's dead at first. She dies as they're away. Jesus goes with them to the house, and when they arrive at the house, the professional mourners have already gathered.

They are mourning her death because she has now died. And here's what Jesus does. He tells the professional mourners who were a nuisance to him, he said, Go away. The girl is not dead.

She's sleeping. And they laughed at him. Why'd they laugh? Because they knew what death was.

They knew that she was dead. Now, was Jesus lying when he said that she wasn't dead but sleeping?

No, he's making a point. When the crowd had been put outside, he went in and he took her by the hand, and the girl arose. Here, Jesus is using sleep as a euphemism for the girl's death.

[13:28] You say, well, I'm not so sure about that. Well, John 11 helps us, okay? John 11, the setting here is Jesus' friend Lazarus is dead. After saying these things, he said to his disciples, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep.

There again, he's using sleep as a euphemism for death. But I go to awaken him. Now, the disciples didn't get it. They said to him, Lord, if he's fallen asleep, he'll recover. Somebody will wake him up.

Why don't we got to go do it? Now, Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought he meant taking rest and sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake, I'm glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

Let us go to him. All right, so we see, represented in the scripture, sleep is routinely used as a euphemism for death. That's how Paul is using it here.

So the Thessalonians, they were concerned about their Christian friends who had died. And based on Paul's teaching that follows in the next few verses, their specific concern was that deceased Christians would miss out on Christ's return.

[14:42] That's what they're worried about. They expect Jesus is coming back soon. And they think that the events of his second coming will only be useful to those who are living at the time that he returns.

But now they're looking around, and they're starting to see, perhaps even in the midst of the persecution, their friends are dying. They're burying their friends who have trusted in Christ. And now they're mourning.

They're saying, Paul, what are we supposed to think about this? They're going to miss out. They're going to miss out on the promise. That brings us to the third thing that we recognize here in this situation.

It's that their lack of understanding produced significant grief. Isn't that what Paul says? He says, I want to inform you about those who are asleep so that you may not grieve, particularly as people grieve who have no hope, he says.

You see, the problem wasn't grief itself. Christians sometimes have this habit we do in our American culture. We do everything we can to avoid notions of death.

[15:54] We don't even like to use the term death. We talk about passing on and going on before. Why? Because we want to do everything we can to avoid the inevitable conclusion that we will all see as the Lord tarries.

It's hard to talk about death. It's hard to deal with things related to death. And sometimes we think that we have to make death some kind of celebration so that we don't have to grieve as if grieving is a problem.

That is not at all what Paul's saying here. The problem is not grief itself. If you go back to John 11, you find Jesus, knowing that he's actually about to raise Lazarus from the dead, grieved.

He wept. Why? Because death is worthy of our mourning. In fact, if we understand it rightly, Christians must mourn it.

It's a tragedy. So what is it that Paul's dealing with here? The problem is not grief. It's the depth of grief that resembles someone who has no gospel hope.

[17:08] That's what this misunderstanding, this lack of information, was leading the Thessalonian Christians to do. The world faces death without any confidence in what comes next.

And what does that produce if it's not tremendous despair? The Thessalonians' grief over death didn't look much different than that. Paul wanted to correct it, recognizing that Christian grief must be intentionally mingled with gospel hope.

So that's the situation. The young church who was confidently awaiting Christ's return didn't know what to think when some of them started to die. They needed to be taught more fully so that they might appropriately be comforted in their grief.

That's the situation. Now let's look at the explanation. That's what follows here. Much of the bulk of this paragraph is Paul's teaching. It's explanation that fills in those gaps that the Thessalonians had as it related to the second coming.

Now the essence of Paul's teaching here, basically it boils down to this. He's essentially saying, don't worry brothers. Don't worry. All who are in Christ will participate.

[18:35] You're not going to miss a thing. And your friends, they're not going to miss a thing. And he says, now let me tell you why I know that.

And then I'll give you a glimpse into how it's all going to go down. So I think we can see here a division of two parts of his teaching. First, we have the source of our hope.

The source of our hope. Paul gives two clarifying affirmations, but the emphasis here is on the sources of those affirmations. This is not religious hokum that Paul pulled out of nowhere.

He's not just making things up. It includes reasoned, rational conclusions that are based on objective sources of truth. The first one is this.

Our hope of resurrection rests in Jesus' resurrection. Our hope of resurrection rests in Jesus' resurrection.

[19:38] Look at verse 14. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Now let's start with the affirmation at the end. The event here that's in view, of course, is Christ's return. It's the second coming. It's the event, same event alluded to earlier in the letter, greatly anticipated by these believers.

The Father, God the Father will send the Son to redeem his people, to establish the kingdom, and ultimately to judge the earth. And Paul clarifies here that when Jesus comes, when he returns, he's not returning alone.

He will bring with him those who have fallen asleep, those Christians who have died. Look at the affirmation. Even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Jesus those who have died. The statement, it touches on the Christian understanding of what we call the intermediate state. You don't let the term confuse you. It just refers to the condition of the soul between our physical death and Christ's return.

[21 : 04] What happens? Where are we? Do we exist anymore? This affirmation, it touches on that, doesn't it? Our souls do not sleep.

Neither do they cease to exist. Our material person, our flesh and blood, this body that you inhabit now, goes into the ground, dust to dust, and decays.

Our immaterial person, our souls, it lives on. Believing souls go directly into the presence of God. To be absent from the body, the scripture tells us, is to be present with the Lord. Unbelieving souls immediately awaken in hell.

Jesus himself affirms it in Luke 15. Now, those who come with Jesus at his return are those living souls, believers who died in Christ.

[22 : 18] Look back again at chapter 3 and verse 13. Paul has already referred to this. He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

They're coming with him. So Paul, just right out the gate, he makes clarification. Don't worry, brothers. Don't worry. They're with the Lord. And when he comes, they're coming with him. Which immediately leads us to the next question. Why are they coming with him? Well, they're coming so that they might be reunited with their bodies in resurrection.

So that their existence in eternity is not a shadowy spirit existence. It is real. It is physical. It is physical. Glorious.

How can Paul be so sure? This seems so bizarre. Well, he tells us the first part of the verse, doesn't he? Where does his confidence in resurrection lie?

[23 : 30] Notice what he says. We believe this because we believe that Jesus died and rose again. What is going to happen with our loved ones who have died before Christ's return?

They're going to experience what Christ has experienced in his own death and resurrection.

Because he died and rose, we know that we will die and rise with him.

In the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is where Paul finds his confidence. This is our blessed hope. For Christians, everything, everything ultimately comes down to the resurrection of Jesus.

His resurrection. His resurrection. It affirms his divine identity. It vindicates his death as a true atonement for sinners.

And it is the representative first fruits of the resurrection of all his people that will be experienced when he returns.

[24 : 35] Why can't we have confidence, loved ones? Because Jesus lives. Because heroes. We will rise.

That's our hope. 1 Corinthians 15. Paul goes into much more detail about it. He says, In fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has also come the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ the first fruit.

Then at his coming, when he returns, those who belong to Christ. And then, once he comes, comes the end.

[25 : 34] When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power. For he must reign until he's put all his enemies under his feet.

And the last enemy to be destroyed. Death. What a joy this must have been for the Thessalonians. They're connecting the gospel dots now to their grief. That their hope does not only apply to the living. Their hope is even found in their death.

What comfort for their grief. This gospel. This is our only hope. Apart from it.

Death will only bring you grief and despair. But there is true hope. And it's only in Jesus. Second. Our hope of resurrection comes directly from God's word.

[26 : 42] Our hope of resurrection comes directly from God's word. Look at verse 15. For this we declare to you. By a word from the Lord.

That we who are alive. Who are left. Until the coming of the Lord. Will not precede those who have fallen asleep. So this is the next step in his explanation, isn't it?

Again, let's begin with the affirmation. That those who are alive at Christ's coming. Will not precede those who have fallen asleep. It simply means that the living will not have a greater participation.

Or greater benefit in Christ's return than the dead. That's where the confusion lies, isn't it? They're concerned that their friends who have died won't participate in the second coming.

And that's what they've all been longing for. Paul sets out and he immediately says, don't worry. They're coming with him. And then he takes that explanation a step further. And he says, look, those of us who are alive when this happens.

[27 : 46] We don't receive a greater benefit. We're not going to have a greater participation than them. Don't worry. Don't worry. But on what basis does Paul make this claim?

Simply? He didn't just give his best guess. He didn't just make something up to try to get them to stop crying. No. No. He taught them what Jesus said.

The word of the Lord was the grounds of his teaching. And we can see it for ourselves. If you were to turn to Matthew 24. Don't do it now. Do it this afternoon in your study. If you were to turn to Matthew 24 on the Olivet Discourse.

As Jesus himself teaches the details of this. You will find 13. At least 13 direct parallels between what Jesus says in Matthew 24.

And what Paul says right here in these two sections. What's Paul telling him? He's not telling him some kind of mysterious knowledge that he had and nobody else had.

[28 : 50] And he's not making it up. He's teaching what Jesus taught. He's preaching the word. Our hope. It does not rest in the thoughts of men.

It does not rest in the opinions of those who are wise. No. It rests solely on the eternal word of God that will never fail.

That's what he rested on. Well that's the source of his hope. Then we find the next step of the explanation. He gives us a bit of a sequence of events.

A progression of events we might say. Now the affirmations rooted in the gospel and in the Bible are wonderfully helpful. But the next question is.

Well we're just a little curious. How exactly is this going to unfold in real time? And the text doesn't tell us everything that there is to know about it of course.

[29 : 50] It wasn't what Paul was trying to do. But he does give us a general progression of events. So that we might be encouraged in our grief. He does not give us these things so that we might engage in endless debate over exactly how it will unfold.

But he tells us these things so that we might be informed and comforted. Here's how it's going to go. First, Jesus will descend from heaven.

Jesus will descend from heaven. Verse 16. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven. With a cry of command.

With a voice of an archangel. And with the sound of the trumpet of God. Now there's a lot of mystery in this, isn't there? And there's a lot of this that will be a mystery until the day that it happens.

But Jesus will come. And he's going to come with a commanding descent from heaven. We don't know where.

[30 : 59] We don't know how. We don't know when. But he is coming. And when he does, it will be unmistakably clear to everyone.

Now I don't know whether we are to understand the cry and the voice and the trumpet literally or figuratively. What I do know is that when Jesus comes back, everyone will know it's him.

And for those who are in Christ, it will come as a wonderful, joyful blessing. And for those that are not in Christ, it will be a terrifying day of reckoning.

As they finally meet their judge. Jesus will return with a commanding descent from heaven. What happens next? The dead in Christ, those Christians who have died, will be raised.

They'll be raised from the dead physically. Again, verse 16, it's the last phrase. And the dead in Christ will rise first. First, that's the central focus of what Paul's getting at with the problem in Thessalonica, isn't it?

[32 : 19] They're worried that their friends won't participate. And if they happen to die before Christ comes back, they're grieving that they won't participate. And Paul's saying, no, no, Christ is going to come back.

And the first thing that's going to happen when he does is those who are dead in Christ will be raised. They'll be raised. The souls of dead believers who return with Christ will be reunited with their bodies before anything else happens.

It will be visible and it will be dramatic. And the best part is that it will not be an ordinary body. They will be glorified. Eternal bodies. Like that of Jesus' own resurrected physical body on that day when he appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem.

Now let me give you some scripture for this. Again, 1 Corinthians 15 is a wonderful help. Paul says, so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown perishable, that is our physical body that dies, will be raised imperishable.

[33 : 32] That is a physical body that will not die again. It is sown in dishonor. Subject to disease.

Subject to failure. Subject to aging. It will be raised in glory. Never to be sick again. Never to be broken again.

Never to be aged again. It's sown in weakness. It's raised in power. What kind of power? I don't know.

But it will be different than what it is now. It's sown in natural body. It will be raised in spiritual body. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, that is Adam. Just as we bear Adam's image, the natural man and his sin.

[34 : 31] We shall also bear the image of the man of heaven, that is Jesus. What will we be like? We will be like him. John tells us that plainly in 1 John 3 and verse 2.

Beloved, we are God's children now. What we will be, that is what our existence will be like in the future, it has not yet appeared. We don't know all that yet.

It hasn't happened yet. But here's what we do know. That when Jesus appears, when he comes back, we're going to be like him. Whatever his resurrected body is, loved ones, that's what yours will be.

I told Ashlyn and Harper at dinner on Friday night, I was basically preaching my sermon to them. I said, I hope I can fly. I don't know if we can do that. What I do know is that Jesus had a physical body after his resurrection that could eat food.

But that he also had a physical body that could just appear in a room without walking through a door. I don't know what that means for us. But what John says is that whatever it is that we'll be like, we're going to be like Jesus.

[35 : 36] We're going to be like him. How wonderful. So what's the sequence? Well, first Jesus comes and he's going to come not alone.

He's coming with all the souls of these Christians who have died between up until that point. And then the first thing that's going to happen is he is going to raise them from the dead.

He's going to transform them. And then they will be on earth with those who are living. Okay.

What's the problem in Thessalonica? Where are they going to miss out?

Now Paul's caught them up. No, you're going to come. You're going to raise. And then we're going to be together again. All of us together. That's a lot of people. Here's the third thing. All believers, all Christians will be caught up to Christ.

Caught up to Christ. Verse 17. Then we who are alive, who are left living, we will be caught up together with them.

[36 : 40] Who's the them? Those who have fallen asleep. Those who were dead. We will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The resurrected and the living will fully participate in Christ's return.

Caught up here. This is where some Christians have gotten the idea of a rapture. That term rapture. It means to seize or to snatch up.

And the idea here that Paul is conveying is that we will all be caught up, snatched up together to meet Jesus in the sky.

And of course, Christians disagree on exactly when that's going to happen. Here's what all of us agree about. And that's the fourth step in the progression.

All believers will be with the Lord forever. All of us. Verse 17. And so, we will always be with the Lord.

[37 : 51] Do you see the progression? Paul says, let me tell you how it's going to go down. Jesus is going to come. It's going to be commanding. It's going to be reality altering probably.

There's going to be something crazy that we can't imagine. And he's going to have all the souls of Christians with him. He's going to raise them. And then together, all of those Christians who are living, he's going to transform them too. And we're all going to be snatched up with him.

And I think the implication, especially in this word meet, is that as soon as we're snatched up, we're coming the rest of the way. Here's the kingdom. It's here. No one misses out.

No one who is in Christ at least. No one fails to fulfill the promise. Oh, what a relief.

What a comfort. Christ's resurrection leads to the Christian's resurrection, which results in forever being with the Lord in his kingdom.

[38 : 58] John 14. Jesus tells his disciples, don't let your hearts be troubled. Isn't that what Paul's saying?

Hey, we don't want you to be grieving in an inappropriate way. Don't let your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms, he says.

There's room for you there, he means. And if it were not so, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you?

I will come again, and I will take you to myself. Why? So that wherever I am, you will be with me.

You will be with me. What's Paul teaching here? He's teaching what Jesus taught. That's the explanation.

[39 : 59] Finally, we see the application. Verse 18. Therefore, encourage one another with these words. Why is Paul saying all this?

He probably introduced a lot of questions to their minds, didn't he? Do you have any questions about this text? I got a few. That's not why he tells them.

Verse 18 is why he tells them this. Now comfort one another. Therefore, the word, it issues an inference based on his teaching.

Because this is true, brothers, encourage one another with it. And we can't miss this. He didn't go over all this teaching merely to fill their heads and equip them for theological debate.

He intended the doctrine to make a difference in their lives. For them and for you. The paragraph, it begins with hopeless grief.

[41 : 04] It ends with amazing comfort. And what is the vehicle that Paul uses to get us from point A, the hopeless grief, to point B, the amazing comfort?

The gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection through the preaching of the word. That's how he does it. How are we to encourage one another?

How are we to be encouraged? The same way. It's the same vehicle. It's the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection through the proclamation of the Bible.

Where can we find comfort in the face of death? Only in the gospel of Jesus. How do we encourage one another in grief over death? Only with, quote, these words.

God's word. That's the application. Now, two considerations as we close. First, are you ready for this?

[42 : 09] This is happening. It's happening. It might be today. Are you ready?

Hope for resurrection and life at Christ's return, it belongs only to those who trust in Christ by faith. I mentioned Matthew 24 earlier.

Jesus does all this teaching on his second coming and on the events related to it. The very next thing he does in Matthew 25 is tells a parable. We know it as the parable of the ten virgins.

You can read it later, but here's the basic idea. There's ten virgins. Half of them are waiting to be summoned by the bridegroom for the feast, the marriage feast. Half of them are prepared for the bridegroom to come.

Half of them are not. And when he comes, the ones who are prepared are joyfully taken to the feast by the bridegroom. The ones who are not prepared are locked out.

[43 : 17] And he says, I don't even know who you are. Now, why does Jesus tell that parable immediately after all of this teaching that Paul is conveying here?

He's turning to those he's teaching and he's basically asking the question, are you ready? Because you better be ready. Those who are prepared will enter the joy of the Lord.

Those who are not prepared will suffer his eternal judgment, which is what comes next in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. All of us belong to one of these two groups.

Which one do you belong to? Are you prepared? I read a passage a moment ago, John 14. Jesus says, in my Father's house there are many rooms. Why does he say that? What does he mean by that? He means there's plenty of space there. There's plenty of space there. [44 : 33] You say, I'm not ready. Well, why? You can be ready now. In fact, he invites you to be. He says, come. Come to me. All who are weary and heavy laden. All who are weary and heavy laden. Burdened with grief. Over the prospect of what is to come. And he says, I will give you rest. Rest for your soul. Here's the second consideration. And this is for those of you who are ready. I said at the beginning that the Thessalonians had a FOMO problem. They were afraid they were going to miss out. Now, why were they so afraid of this? Because they longed for this moment. Their hearts, their minds, they were focused on the promise of Christ's return. [45 : 37] Just zoom out a little bit in your understanding of the New Testament. And what you'll find is this is the driving force of everything in the gospel. It's all going somewhere. The Thessalonians knew that much. And as they look back to the death and resurrection of Christ. Trusting in that for their salvation. They looked ahead to his return. Anticipating. Expecting. Longing for. It was controlling their lives. The thought of it. Was always on their mind. Now, I don't think we have quite the same problem as they did. For most of us, the fear is not of missing out. I just don't think we ever think about this. We aren't really living with Christ's return in mind at all. Much less being afraid to miss it. They expected and anticipated Christ's return at any moment. As did Paul. And they longed for that moment to take place. [46 : 43] And that the Lord has tarried his coming this long. Doesn't make his return any less imminent today than what it was then. Yet many Christians give little thought to the matter. You know what we end up doing? We live for this life. All our thoughts are focused on. What can I enjoy now? What can I get out of this life? The whole you only live once thing. That is not a biblical idea. We all live for this life. Do you long for his return? Do you love his return? Are you praying that he will return? This is what our lives should be consumed with. The promise of the gospel. Of Christ's return. And our resurrection. The fact is that we are far more blessed than the Thessalonian church. [47 : 52] As far as information is concerned. They didn't have a Bible. We have the whole Bible. And we have a lot of information about this that they didn't have. At least as far as we can tell. We really don't have an excuse to be less expectant of Christ's return. Than they were. So let's long for his coming. Let's pray for it. And let's make sure we're prepared for it.