
IN THE WAITING

A Hope to Endure

Have you ever felt like you are in a season of waiting? Like you are not quite where you should be in life or in a moment and you are waiting for that to change or waiting for the Lord to do something.

Jesus is coming back so that we may be restored and raised to life with Him as His own resurrection points to.

What is Paul writing about in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?

In 1 Thessalonians 4, hope is what Paul is trying to build in the face of what was going on for the church at the time. The church was being persecuted and members were dying.

So, Paul is writing to them to restore hope to them in the context of Jesus' resurrection and return so that they may continue the work of the Lord with hope for what is to come.

To do this, he points to Jesus' death and resurrection as the example of what will happen to those who have died.

Verse 14-15: For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1. Live with a Hope of Jesus' Return

If you were to stop and take a moment to think about it we are all in a season of waiting. Everyone is waiting whether we realise it or not, and we are all waiting for the return of Jesus.

Romans 8 gives us this incredible picture of all of creation being in eager expectation for the return of Jesus, and it has been subject to the frustration of waiting for His return.

Whether we realise it or not and whether we feel it or not, we are in the same place waiting for the return of the Lord in expectation of that day.

We have a hope for more, we have a hope for eternity and we have a mission on this earth to do. What would happen if we started to live like Jesus was coming back soon?

2. How we Live with this Hope Matters

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 then starts to look at what it is to live with a hope of Jesus' return while we are waiting. Paul contrasts what it means to be children of the light with living in the darkness. He does this to highlight the values needed to endure this time of waiting.

- + Faith
- + Hope
- + Love

Paul describes this as armour to clothe ourselves with endure a time of waiting before Jesus' return. He highlights it's not important for us to know when Jesus is returning but to live life out of the hope that He is returning.

God wants us to live and display a love like Jesus who died and rose again. A faith to see His kingdom come and to be an active part of seeing that outworked as we wait for His return. And to live with a hope that protects our thoughts and our feelings and allows to endure anything that comes.

3. There is Value in the Waiting

Waiting is so against human nature today as we want things instantly. When life becomes a place where you feel as if you're not where you want to be, we often feel like we just want to get there quickly.

However, so much of what the Lord does comes in times where we feel like we are waiting on Him. It breeds endurance, character and reliance on Him.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you feel like you have hope that endures?
2. Do you feel like you're in a season of waiting?
3. Do you see what God is doing in this season?

4. How is He drawing you closer to Him?

5. How would your lifestyle change if you knew Jesus was returning in your lifetime?

6. Would you work with greater urgency to see His kingdom come through faith, hope and love?