

Memorable Chapters - Part 20 – 1 Thessalonians 4

Thessalonica (Map)

- Paul wrote from Corinth near the end of his 2nd missionary journey (around 50AD)
- Paul and his companions forced to leave by opponents of the gospel
- Later, Timothy returned and his report led Paul to write this letter

vs. 1-2 → Live in a way that pleases God

- Paul compliments them, then challenges them to do so *“more and more”*
- They cannot plead ignorance regarding the commands of Jesus

vs. 3-8 → Live *“holy”* lives

- This is the will of God → your sanctification (being made holy)
- By effort and the power of the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8.29, 12.2; 1 Peter 1.14, Philipians 2.12, Colossians 1.10**) — **Matthew 5.48**
- Paul singles out sexual sins because of their destructive power (see **1 Corinthians 6.18**)
- **Vs. 7-8** give the spiritual dimension of sanctification

vs. 9-12 → Live the way of *“love”*

- Again Paul compliments them, but cautions them to continue *“more and more”*
- Examples of ways to do this: live a *“quiet”* life (restful in the LORD, balanced), mind your own business, be responsible for your own living - the goal is not to be financially dependent on others (**1 Timothy 6.18**)

vs. 13-18 → The Hope of the Resurrection

- The Thessalonians must have thought there was some advantage in being alive at the time of Jesus' return
- So were concerned about believers who have died
- Paul encourages them by a divine revelation of the sequence of events:
 1. The LORD comes down from heaven
 2. There is a lot of loud sounds (shout, archangel voice, trumpet)
 3. Dead believers rise first (addresses their current concern)
 4. Those believers who are still alive are then *“caught up”* with the LORD in the air together with them (then most likely return to earth with Him - common occurrence in Ancient times after victorious army returns)

Regarding timing see **5.1-2**

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul commends the Thessalonians for their faith and then encourages them to do even more. Why do you think he challenges them this way?
2. Paul says they cannot “plead ignorance” regarding Jesus' commands. How does this apply to us today with or access to the Bible?
3. What does it mean to “live a holy life” according to this passage? How does sanctification and the Holy Spirit play a role in this?
4. Paul praises the Thessalonians for their love for others but encourages them to “do so more and more.” Why is it essential for love and our faith to keep growing?
5. How does living responsibly and independently contribute to our ability to love others well? How can we practically apply this to our own lives?
6. How does Paul's divinely inspired description of the sequence of events surrounding the resurrection and return of Jesus bring hope?

Notes