



Spiritual Hope – Message 4

Warm-up

What are some changes concerning technology that have taken place in your lifetime?

Today we will discuss the fourth message in the series entitled “Unshaken”. Together we will learn what it is to live with confident faith no matter what’s happening around us.

Word and Application

Read Matthew 24:36, Matthew 24:15 & Ezekiel 36:24.

Paul taught the Thessalonians they should be ready for the Lord’s return at any time. But human nature being what it is, they worried themselves sick as to the fate of their friends who died. Paul had to clear up the confusion and that’s how the first letter to the believers at Thessalonica came to be written. He wanted them to understand what the Rapture and Second Coming of Jesus was all about. When was the first time you heard about the return of Christ? How did it make you feel?



Three Questions Paul Answers About End Times:

1. What happens to believers at the Rapture?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

First, we need to know that death does not have the final say over us. When Jesus returns to earth to receive His Church there will be Christians who had already passed away, and there will be Christians who are alive. Both those living and those who have passed will receive new, glorified bodies that will never decay and never die! We will receive new bodies meant for us when we live in the visible presence of God. Jesus will bring the faithful back with Him to reunite them with their resurrected bodies at the Rapture. Share with the emotion you feel, as a believer, when you think about being in heaven forever.

2. How does the promise of the return of Christ affect us today?

Read I Thessalonians 4:14-15 & Luke 23:43.

Paul teaches us about hope and how it is contrasted with those who have no hope, who believe that there is no life after death and consequently have no hope of ever seeing loved ones again. It is important that we see that Paul does not forbid grief. Grief is normal, natural and healthy for anyone who has experienced loss. But our grief has a limit when a Christian brother or sister dies. Christianity is rooted in a living hope. Who can you share this incredible hope with, that death on earth is not the end but the beginning?

3. What is important to know about the coming of Christ at the Rapture?

Read I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

The Lord Jesus will Himself come down from Heaven to Earth's sky at the Rapture. It will be a personal visit. Those who are alive at the time of the Rapture will be "caught up" to join, along with the dead in Christ, and meet the Lord in the clouds. That term "caught up" comes from the Greek word *harpazo* (*har-pód-zo*), and it means 'to seize or to take quickly.' The word 'Rapture' is derived from this term and means to be caught up or snatched away. How does this discussion give you hope and encouragement in uncertain times?

Prayer

Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit to comfort us and give us hope in uncertain times. Ask God to show you areas in your life where you need the Holy Spirit to encourage us in our faith. Pray for specific needs of the group.