

FIRST AND SECOND

THESSALONIANS

Living in Light of Christ's Return

FAITH AND HOPE

BIG IDEA: In light of Christ's return, we are to live in purity and love, fueled by our faith and hope.

DATE: Wednesday, October 21 and Sunday, October 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 (CSB)

OPENING QUESTION

Twice in today's passage Paul points out something the Thessalonians are already doing and says, "Do this even more." What things would Paul say that about in our church? In our LifeGroup? In your life?

SETTING THE STAGE

The moral climate in the Roman Empire was not healthy. Immorality was a way of life; and because of slavery, people had leisure time to indulge in the latest pleasures. The Christian message of holy living was new to that culture, and it was not easy for these young believers to fight the temptations around them.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 (CSB)

Additionally then, brothers and sisters, we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received instruction from us on how you should live and please God — as you are doing — do this even more. ²For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

³For this is God's will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality, ⁴that each of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not with lustful passions, like the Gentiles, who don't know God. ⁶This means one must not transgress against and take advantage of a brother or sister in this manner, because the Lord is an avenger of all these offenses, as we also previously told and warned you. ⁷For God has not called us to impurity but to live in holiness. ⁸Consequently, anyone who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

⁹About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more, ¹¹to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹²so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those

who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are still 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. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

DISCUSSION

THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY

READ: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

How do we live a holy life in an unholy world?

Why do you think Paul devotes so much space to the theme of sexual purity? How is this message equally appropriate today - for both genders?

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE

READ: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

[God causes our love for one another to increase more and more. How important is emotion in God's kind of love? In what ways are feelings of love important? In what ways is Christian love more than just a feeling?]

Paul lists 3 ways we can love one another:

1. Live a quiet life
2. Mind our own business
3. Work hard

Are these surprising? How do each of these show love to others? How are these three things counter cultural?

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING READY

READ: 1 Thessalonians 13-18

GROUP DISCUSSION: Gather with 3-4 people and discuss these questions together.

- How does looking forward with hope and faith help us stay strong in our love and purity?
- How can we best prepare ourselves to face God and give an account for how we spent our lives?
- What are some of the good things about this life and world that God gave us that makes us sometimes want to cling too tightly to it? How do those good things point us to what awaits us in Heaven?

GOING FORWARD

As we await the second coming of Christ, we are to walk out our Christian faith with purity and love. If someone were to watch you for a week, would they be able to tell you are a Christian? Would they see a life lived counter-culturally? Where is the Holy Spirit calling you to adjust your focus? Remember, we do not passively wait – but actively prepare and witness to others.