**THE LORD HIMSELF WILL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Key Verse 4:16

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

**Introduction**



 There is a saying that humans live by hope. When we have hope we have the strength to overcome any hardship. All glories on earth disappear with death. But thank God for His eternal hope and living hope through His kingdom and Christ’s second coming. The Christians in Thessalonica were under severe suffering. Paul makes them aware of the eternal hope and teaches them how to live in this world. The people or nation who do not have a dream will perish, but those who have a dream will prosper. When we have God’s true hope he could change ourselves, our children, and our nation America and the whole world for God’s glory and be ready for Jesus’ second coming! Through today’s passage we want to hold fast the eternal hope and to live the life that pleases God.

1. Read verses 4:13-18. What does Paul say about those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and faithful believers who are alive? (13-15) What will happen to both groups of people when Jesus comes again? (16-17) What should we do with this hope? (18)

 1-1, Read verses 4:13-18.

 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 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. 15 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. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1-2, What does Paul say about those who have fallen asleep and faithful believers who are alive? (13-15)

***Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 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. 15 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.***

* Paul teaches Christians about Jesus’ glorious second coming, which is our final goal. Paul helped Thessalonian believers to keep their faith despite trials, for we are not worldly people having no hope at the end of their earthly lives.
* Some in Thessalonians might have been sad about the Christians who died before Jesus’ second coming. They probably were martyred while living for Jesus.
* So Paul wanted them to be informed about those who sleep in death. Paul describes Christians’ death as sleep. Those who sleep will wake up surely.

Philippians 1:23-25 reads,

 “I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith”

* When Christians die, their souls enter the Kingdom of God immediately. They live there with Christ Jesus. And Jesus will take them with Him when He comes again.
* Paul repeated, “we believe” and “according to the Lord’s word”. Paul did not inform them of this not based on his own idea, but on Jesus’ absolute words and his personal faith.
* “We who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.” - This verse may remind us of Revelation 20 about how advantageous those who died for Jesus will participate in Jesus’ rule.

 I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

1-3, What will happen to both groups of people when Jesus comes again? (16-17)

***16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.***

* When Jesus comes again there will be a loud command. Then there will be the voice of the archangel. Then there will be the trumpet call of God by numerous angels. It will be glorious and can not be hidden.
* Every human on planet earth will see Jesus. Revelation 1:7 says, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.”
* There will not be a person on earth who is unaware of Jesus’ return. Jesus Himself describes the manner of His coming in Matthew 24:27, “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”
* Jesus will come with power and great glory and with the sound of a great trumpet, which awakens the righteous dead who are then gathered from the ends of the earth.
* Our Lord, Jesus Christ, will come in the clouds with power and glory. The Souls of Christians, who have fallen asleep in Christ, will be clothed with resurrection bodies. Then those who are still alive and are left will also be clothed with resurrection bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53 says,

 “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”

* We are called righteous by believing Jesus in this present time. However, at that time we will be completely righteous like Jesus.
* Our status will rise up dramatically. This cannot be compared to the best status change in the world.
* All faithful Christians, will be caught up in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air. We will see Abraham and David. We will see all saints who died in Jesus. We will see our friends, shepherds, and missionaries who died in Jesus.
* “And so we will be with the Lord forever.” We will live with Jesus in heaven forever. God himself will be with us and be our God. He will wipe every tear from our eyes.

Revelation. 21:3-4 reads,

“There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away.”

* Our resurrection body is divine body that has no sinful nature at all. There is no more marrying or being given in marriage. There is no struggle or suffering like we have in this world. There is no death, sickness, and no pain. It is marvelous! Our eternal life with God in God’s kingdom is our ultimate and living hope.

1-4, What should we do with this hope? (18)

 ***Therefore encourage one another with these words.***

* We don’t know when Jesus will come. He will come like a thief. We have to encourage each other with resurrection hope, eternal life in God’s kingdom, and so holy life in this world.
* Only the promise of our eternal and living hope can encourage us. Jesus is patiently waiting to come back because God wants as many people as possible to repent and return to heaven with Him.

 2 Peter 3:8-9 says,

 “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

* But when we have the living hope of Jesus’ second coming, our own resurrections, and eternal life in God’s kingdom, we can love suffering to live by faith and to follow Jesus.
* We can love our brothers and sisters, denying ourselves. We can throw away sinful life or earthly value. Let’s encourage each other with the hope of Jesus’ second coming. We want to take our God given mission with the hope of glorious resurrection

Galatians 6:7-10 reads,

 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

2. Read verses 5:1-3. How will the day of the Lord come? (1-2) What will happen to those who have put their hope in this world at Jesus’ second coming? (3)

2-1, Read verses 5:1-3.

 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

2-2, How will the day of the Lord come? (1-2)

***Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.***

* The day of the Lord will come like a thief. A thief never informs us about his coming. All we have to do is to be ready anytime. Jesus’ coming is like a thief!

2-3, What will happen to those who have put their hope in this world at Jesus’ second coming? (3)

***3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.***

* In chapter 4 Paul says that when Jesus comes again, Christians will be clothed with a resurrection body and live forever with the LORD and with God in God’s kingdom. That day our salvation is complete.
* In chapter 5, Paul says that on the contrary to the children of God, the day of the Lord, the day of Jesus’ second coming, is the day of dreadful judgement for those who are not in Jesus.
* That day is the day to end human history. That day is the end of earthly life. Those who are not in Jesus, will be thrown into hell burning with fire and sulfur.

3. Read verses 5:4-11. Why shouldn’t we believers be surprised? (4-5) How is life different for those who belong to the darkness and those who are children of light? (6-8) What is the purpose for which God appoints Christians? (9-10) What should we do? (11)

3-1, Read verses 5:4-11.

 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

3-2, Why shouldn’t we believers be surprised? (4-5)

 ***But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.***

* Paul simply told the Thessalonian Christians that they should be who they are. God has made us sons of the light and sons of the day.
* The time when we were of the night or of the darkness is in the past. So now we simply have to live up to what God has made us.

3-3, How is life different for those who belong to the darkness and those who are children of light? (6-8)

 ***So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.***

* Others are all people who do not believe in Jesus. They are all who follow worldly value and culture. They are asleep according to verse 6.
* When we live like worldly people we are also asleep. We have to control our sleeping, eating, drinking, lustful thoughts, idleness, and selfish desire and so on.
* “Those who sleep” means those who pursue the desires of the flesh. They are ignorant of the spirit.
* They don’t want to believe God’s judgment. But in fact they have fear because of their sinful life. So they are wandering and drinking more and more.
* It is important to protect our heart and mind. We can protect our heart and mind by wearing the breastplate of faith and love.
* We have to wear the helmet of the hope of salvation. We have to fill our thought with the hope of salvation.
* We observe that hope is the hope of salvation, not the hope of wealth or fame. When faith, love, and hope are connected with one another for one purpose.
* When we have the hope of salvation, we have faith and love to to reveal God’s glory.
* Without the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation, we cannot defend against Satan’s arrows.
* When we are awake, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet, we can win the victory over Satan’s attack and temptation. We can also save our children, family, and many others. We can reveal the glory of God.

3-4, What is the purpose for which God appoints Christians? (9-10)

***9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.***

* God appointed us not to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

3-5, What should we do? (11)

***11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.***

* Again we have to encourage and build up each other. When we understand the times we live in, we understand why we must do so.

 2 Timothy 3:1-4 say,

 “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.“

* It is quite certain that we are living in the end time. We Christians are influenced by this generation. So our heart shrinks. We often become self-centered. We may follow the list in 2 Timothy 3:1-4.
* But instead, we Christians, should try hard to encourage one another and to build each other up.
* Encouraging is not to give human pity to a person in trouble but to share the living hope with that person. It is to encourage with the word of God. Building up is like building a house.

**Conclusion**

 The day of the Lord is the day of salvation for the Christians. However it is the day of God’s judgment for unbelievers. At this end time people pursue their lustful desires and material wealth. Satan continually attacks and tempts us to fall down. We have to put on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. We have to win the victory against Satan’s temptation and attack. We have to encourage one another and build each other up. In this way we can complete God’s will for us.

**One word: Encourage one another!**