

The Blessed Hope

I Thessalonians 4:13–18

1. Confident Trust - 4:13–14

- Paul begins by confronting an area of spiritual ignorance among the Thessalonians in vv. 13-14.

- The Christians in Thessalonica lived expecting Christ to return within their lifetime.

- Paul goes back to basics that the core of the Christian faith is that Jesus died and rose from the grave.
- If you take away the cross and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ, the Christian faith crumbles.
- We can confidently trust our loved ones to Christ.

2. Confident Acceptance - 4:15–17

- So Paul's not giving new information here, but he's appealing to something Jesus himself taught.
- The word Paul uses here is the Greek word parousia, which is the same word Jesus used to describe his coming in Matthew 24.

- This word brings together the idea of someone's personal presence and of someone's arrival.
- The corresponding Latin word for **parousia** is the word *adventus*, from which we get our word advent.
- That verb "caught up" in v. 17 is a Greek word that means "to grab or seize by force."

- The most popular and widespread view in our culture today is the *pre-tribulation* view of the rapture.
- One such alternative view is the *mid-tribulation* view of the rapture.
- This view emphasizes the fact that it appears to be the first half of the tribulation period that's marked by *persecution* of God's people, while the second half is marked by God's *wrath*.

- Another view is the post-tribulation view of the rapture.
- This view believes that God protects Christians from His wrath during the tribulation, not by taking the church out of the world, but by protecting the church in the midst of the world.

- “Three Views of the Rapture: Pre; Mid; or PostTribulational”, edited by Richard Reiter.
- We can confidently face our own mortality.

3. Confidently Helping - 4:18

- This teaching is meant to be practical, to give us a basis to comfort each other.

- God didn't reveal these things to satisfy our curiosity to solve puzzles, but to help us follow Jesus confidently.
- We can confidently help each other during times of grief.