

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a coastal town, likely Thessalonika, with a prominent white domed church on the left. The town is built on a hillside overlooking a body of water, with mountains in the distance under a hazy sky.

WEEK VI

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

DAY 1 - MONDAY

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, John 14:1-3, John 11:25, 1 Peter 1:6-9

REFLECTION: Why is it so hard for us to wait? How can waiting grow our faith?

How can you find hope in Paul's reminder to the Thessalonians that even those believers who have already died were welcomed home to Jesus?

WE'RE ALL GOING HOME

In verses 13-18 of 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, Paul attempts to answer some challenging questions that the new believers in Thessalonica have. Death brings many questions, and the believers in Thessalonica had some serious questions regarding some in their community who had recently died and how to reconcile that with the truth of Jesus' return. Paul taught the Thessalonians that Jesus would come back to take His people home to Himself. Because of this message the Thessalonians were expecting that Jesus would return very soon. Some had given up their jobs and radically removed themselves from society to await His coming return. Even more of the Thessalonians were struggling over how to respond when relatives or friends died and had many questions. "Would those who had already died get to be with Jesus when He returned?" "Were those believers who died already with Jesus now?"

Amid their many emotions and questions, Paul wanted them to find hope and truth. He shared the truth that the believers who had died would be part of His glorious return. Paul wanted to ensure there was no question about Jesus' saving power. Not even death- especially not death- can stop His glorious salvation and grace from reaching our souls and bringing us into communion with Him.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY

I I Thessalonians 4:13, Matthew 5:4, Ecclesiastes 3:1-15, John 16:20 & 33

REFLECTION: How should our hope affect the way we grieve? How do we live faithfully in the tension of all that's mentioned in Ecclesiastes 3:1-15?

WE HAVE HOPE

Charles Swindoll says, "Don't let people tell you that strong Christians don't weep when death claims a loved one." It is a mark of spiritual maturity to be able to feel more than one thing at a time. God has given us the capacity to simultaneously feel the depths of sorrow over the loss of a loved one and a swell of gratitude to God for the gift of that person's life. This isn't easy. In fact, it may even be something of a learned skill. But God has given us an incredible ability to feel things deeply in their time—even conflicting emotions at the same time. Made in the image of our Creator, we can both grieve the wrongs of this world, and celebrate the sweetness of this life. Scripture has much to say about our deepest pains and brightest hopes, and as we read, we are invited to grow in our emotional, spiritual health. It's okay to feel. In fact, it is vital.

There is a time to mourn and a time to dance (Ecclesiastes 3:4)—and those seasons may come joined to each other. Now may be the time for you to weep. Now may be the time for you to celebrate. Now may be the time for you to do both. Remember, we do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

By Russ Ramsey - *He Reads Truth Mourning and Dancing Reading Plan*

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY

1 Thessalonians 4:17, Psalm 16:11, John 17:3, John 10:7-10, 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

REFLECTION: What does it mean to you that death is destroyed in Jesus?

How can we begin to live as people who know we have an eternal life with Jesus?

ABUNDANT LIFE

The Bible tells us that death will be the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26)—and death is indeed our enemy. A foreign invader in this world, death is out of place and unwelcome. This is why we mourn at a funeral—because funerals were never meant to be. In the Old Testament, King David trusted the Lord to rescue his soul from the grave, resting in the hope that in the life after death, he would find himself in the presence of God, where there is “abundant joy” (Psalm 16:11).

But the hope of the Christian life is not only life after death; it’s much more than that. Yes, Jesus promised His followers eternal life, but He also spoke of a new life that starts right here and now. It is life with God, and it is eternal because God is eternal. Praying to the Father, Jesus said, “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).

This promised life is abundant life (John 10:10). And how could it not be? David was right when he wrote that there is joy in the presence of God. Through the Holy Spirit, we carry that presence with us wherever we go. Life is not easy, but we can be joyful no matter what happens, because God is with us. Whether we die before the Lord returns or are caught up to meet Him in the air when He does (1 Thessalonians 4:17), the life we have in Christ will continue. “Where, death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

From the He Reads Truth Promises of God Reading Plan

DAY 4 - THURSDAY

I Acts 1:7-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 19:6-16

REFLECTION: What does it mean for us to live awaiting Jesus' return? Spend some time in prayer today asking the Lord how you can faithfully wait in this season.

HE WILL RETURN

When Jesus completed His mission on earth, Acts tells us that "he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Jesus physically ascended. Then the text tells us "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven" (v.11). Did you see that? This same Jesus will come back in the same way. "The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God" (1Thessalonians 4:16). The first advent celebrated the humble arrival of an infant King. The second advent anticipates the glorious, overwhelming return of that King in all His splendor and power.

Revelation 19 paints a magnificent dual picture of what we have to anticipate. John describes a massive, rejoicing wedding party for the King as he arrives to wed His bride, the church, in all the glory he has given her. Then the passage describes the royal groom differently, riding a white horse, wearing a crown, adorned in blood-dipped robes and wielding a sword from His mouth. He leads an army and "with justice he judges and makes war...He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty" (Revelation 19:11,15). The second advent is one of deep joy and deep justice. Our King Jesus will return to make us His and make us whole, and He will wipe out all that opposes Him and oppresses. He will bring true and final peace on earth and good will toward men.

We wait eagerly for Christ's return, but we do not wait passively. We've been told how we're to live as we await this second advent: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). We have the presence of our King in us now, by His Spirit. That is the seal and proof of His promise to come back. And we live for Him as we await His return.

By Barnabus Piper - *He Reads Truth Everlasting Light Reading Plan*

DAY 5 - FRIDAY

I 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Matthew 28:18-19, 1 Thessalonians 5:11

REFLECTION: What is a truth someone has shared with you that encouraged you? Why?

How can you comfort someone with a truth of God today?

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

Have you ever known something that someone else didn't? Not necessarily a secret you weren't supposed to tell, but maybe the information you knew made you feel like you had an advantage. Perhaps that information gave you power over another person; maybe it elevated your value and worth, or it made you feel more intelligent than those who didn't know it. We've all been in this situation probably, but Paul makes clear in chapter four of 1 Thessalonians that what he is sharing with the Thessalonians isn't a secret for them to keep but a comfort for them to share.

Verses 13-17 of 1 Thessalonians 4 are some of the heavier verses in Paul's letter. They deal with the mysteries of Christ's return, the questions and pains of death, the order of resurrection, and the glory of our eternity with Christ. Paul answers some serious concerns the Thessalonian believers had in these short verses. However, he doesn't answer these questions for them to take comfort, but to give it. There are no secrets in the Christian life. We are called to share the truth, love, beauty, hope, peace, joy, and comfort of God's Word with all.

Secrets don't make friends, and they don't make disciples either. Paul is calling the Thessalonians not only to be comforted by his words but to also give comfort to others. As we should also be reminded, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that the words we read in God's message to us are meant for everyone. Let's allow the comfort Christ brings us through His Word to be the comfort we bring to those around us.

DAY 6 - SATURDAY

Reflection Day

I 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

REFLECTION QUESTIONS & NOTES:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is one truth you learned this week that you want to share?
- What is something you're waiting for right now? How can you grow nearer to God in your waiting?
- How can you begin to internalize and live out what you read and learned in this week's study?



DAY 7 - SUNDAY

Rest Day

*Use today to rest, pray, and catch up on any of this week's reading that you missed.
Use the extra space on this page to journal, write down questions, thoughts, or ideas.*