

# DEEP SIX STUDY

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## *Jesus in the Letters* – “Thessalonians: God’s Not Done!”

**MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS** (You can view the full message on Facebook or at [live.capecodchurch.com/live](https://live.capecodchurch.com/live))

**Opening:** Our “60 Days With Jesus” series continues with a look at Paul’s letters to the Thessalonian church – a brand-new gathering of believers who faced almost instant persecution and pressure for their new faith. Paul writes to remind them of their source of hope and endurance: the ultimate hope offered by Jesus, the hope of his triumphant return as King. That hope is our ultimate hope today as well.

### 1. “May I Remind You – He’s Not Done!” (1 Thessalonians 1:1-3; 5:1-2, 4-5)

- To an *ecclesia* (gathering) of new believers who were being unjustly harassed, threatened and persecuted, Paul writes with the ultimate words of hope: Jesus, their Lord, is coming back one day as King of all – the King who will fix all injustice and reward them for their faithful endurance.
- The timing of Jesus’ return has been debated for 2000 years. What *isn’t* up for debate, though, is that he will return – physically – to set all that is wrong to right and be crowned as the King of all. And when he does, he’ll gather his Kingdom – all those who have trusted him – to rule with him.

### 2. What You Hope For...

- Our eternal, ultimate hope is in Jesus’ return and the restoration of God’s creation to the way he meant it to be. That hope should drive us, daily, to live out the Story of Jesus as the Way of Jesus – in what we live for, as well as how we endure the many trials of life.

#### a. What You Hope For Is What You Live For (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

- Our natural temptation, even as followers of Jesus, is to put our hope in our circumstances – that somehow if our circumstances improve we will be able to find a full, happy life.
- Unfortunately, if we put our hope in “improved circumstances,” we’ll live for that – for more money, more pleasure, more power, more *me*. Jesus calls us to live instead as part of the ongoing Story of his Kingdom by loving and serving others, fostering mercy and justice.
- “The Story” isn’t over – we’re still living in the middle of it. And it’s a story we’re actually called to play a part in – it’s the eternal hope we’re called to *live for*.

#### b. What You Hope For Is How You Endure (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16)

- As Paul pointed out to the Thessalonian believers, death isn’t the end; like Jesus did, those who trust him will overcome death and meet him (alive!) when he returns as King.
- Paul reminds his readers – and us – that we shouldn’t let ourselves become so attached to the world (wanting comfort, or fearing discomfort) that we forget our ultimate hope.
- It’s only when we come to the end of our earthly hope – when we see first-hand the hopelessness of counting on “better circumstances” – that the promise of eternal hope in Jesus becomes real and precious to us. That hope is how we endure – through anything.

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

*These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.*

Matthew 24:37-44; John 14:1-3; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 1:2-4, 12

Video of the Week: [1 Thessalonians](#) by the Bible Project

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Is Christ's return (his "Second Coming") something you've thought or studied much about before this message? Why or why not?
2. Paul spends a good part of his first letter to the Thessalonian church encouraging them and complimenting them on their strong faith in the face of persecution. Why is it so important for followers of Jesus to encourage each other?
3. The message presented a choice between hoping and living for better circumstances in our lives, or hoping/living for the Story of Jesus (which will culminate in his return). Do you think it's possible to do both? Why or why not?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1 again. What did Paul mean when he told the Thessalonian believers to "live in a way that pleases God"?
5. After writing much about how the Thessalonians were to live, Paul switches gears suddenly in chapter 4 and ends his letter with a detailed description of Jesus' return. If they were already saved by their faith in Jesus, what difference does it make how they live while they wait for his return?
6. How does knowing that "God's Not Done" with the Story (and that we have an active part to play in it) help us endure the trials (big and small) of life?