

[The Book of 1 Thessalonians](#)
Chapter 4
“Are you ready for the Rapture?”

Return To
All Commentary

A warning to you this morning, that the next part of our study is for mature ears only

When Tim Lahaye, the Co author of the “**Left Behind Series**”, was just a boy, he took a tour of the Henry Ford factory in Dearborn, Michigan.

He saw an electromagnetic crane that can magnetically lift huge pieces of metal, move over the top of a large railroad car filled with what looked to him, like junk steel.

As the magnets switch was turned on, everything that was in that huge boxcar left the floor and jumped up to the top of the boxcar where the magnet was.

Then to Tim’s surprise he said that he saw what he thought were pieces of steel falling back into the car.

He waited until all of the others on the tour had left and then climbed up into that box car to see why those pieces of steel had dropped to the floor, while others clung to the magnet.

Looking inside the car he saw pieces of old two-by fours, a broom handle and other pieces of broken wood laying on the floor of the boxcar.

Only the objects that were made of the right material responded to the magnet, the rest were LEFT BEHIND!

[1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#)

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—**
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed

The word that the holy Spirit uses here in 1 Corinthians 15 for Changed is “Allasso” (al-las-so), to totally transform.

There is another Greek word “Metamorphoo”, To “Transform”. When a caterpillar climbs up into a tree and attached itself to a branch, then spins a cocoon around itself, and then inside that cocoon it is “**Metamorphosed**”, or “**Re created**” into a brand new creation, a creature of the air.

This is the same process that happens to a human being when they hear what Jesus has done for them, respond by faith and accept Jesus sacrifice on the cross as payment for their sins, and then commits their life to Jesus, they are “**Metamorphosed**” into “**A brand new creation**”.

When Jesus turns on His magnet and calls all those who Love Him, to meet Him in the clouds in the air, it will only be those who have been made into the “Right material”, Metamorphosed into new creations, that will be removed from the earth.

In the Book of John, chapter 3, Jesus said that unless you are “Born Again”, you cannot see the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**

This is because “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven”.

1 Corinthians 15:50

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God

If you were to be transported into the throne room of God right now in your body of flesh, you would be consumed...

Lamentations 3:22

Through the LORD’S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.

Even as some material could not be lifted by the magnet that Tim Lahaye saw as a young man, we cannot be lifted to meet Jesus in the Clouds at the Rapture, unless we have first been Born Again.

You are not Born Again unless you have given your life to Jesus and had all of your sins removed.

But: “If anyone is in Christ they are a New Creation, the old has passed away, behold all things have become new”.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

This is the major theme of the Books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, “The Coming of Jesus for His church to meet us in the Air”.

But amazingly, in just the 3 short weeks that Paul was actually in the city of Thessalonica, He appears to have taught the church there every major Christian doctrine.

It is as if the Holy spirit is saying to us who read 1 and 2 Thessalonians, “Get your life ready for the coming of Jesus, because it is very soon!”

If Jesus were to come this afternoon to remove everyone that has called upon His name, Would you personally be ready?

1. **If you can say** “Well, I don’t know if I am ready”, then you aren’t ready.
2. **If you don’t have a clue what I am talking about**, then you are not ready.
3. **If you find that this thought scares you**, then you are not ready.
4. **If you have to say**, ‘Well first I need to do a few things..., then I will be ready...’, then you are not ready.

We are to be ready to meet Jesus in the Air RIGHT NOW, at this very moment...

We are to live our lives RIGHT NOW, in such a way that we could say at any given moment, we are ready to go, if Jesus comes.

Today is the day to do something about it if there is anything that causes you to say, “I am not ready for Jesus to come.”

Luke 12:43-46

43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find watching for Him when he comes.

44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

45 But if that servant **says in his heart**, “My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,

46 **the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him**, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

- **We express** what is in the heart through the body.
- **What is put into the heart** is what comes out of the heart.

A person who has began to believe that Jesus is delayed in his coming or is not coming at all, a person not fully convinced that Jesus is coming soon, will from this thought in their heart, will then begin to live this out in their body, and in their life.

They will begin to live like they don’t believe Jesus is coming soon.

Notice that Jesus did not say that this person has said out loud verbally, “**Jesus is delayed in His coming**”, but this is the person that has

1. In their own heart began to question whether Jesus is really going to come at all,
or
2. Has began to question whether or not Jesus will be coming in the near future.

Notice what this kind of mind set, “**Jesus is not coming soon**”, will do to the Christian.

1. **It will make them become involved more so**, in the things of this world that will have no value whatsoever when we meet Jesus in the air.

2. **The person not living in the expectation** that Jesus could come at any moment will become preoccupied with their own life and the things that are happening in this world.
3. **It will make this person begin to do things in their life**, contrary to those things that a Believer in Jesus should be doing.
4. **It will make this person unaware** when Jesus does come, it will catch them by surprise.
5. **Jesus then says**, in His own words; “**I will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers**”.

I don't like the way that this sounds, how about you?

So you tell me how important this is that we teach this doctrine of the Rapture of the Church by Jesus?

It sounds to me like Jesus said that your eternal life could depend on it.

1. **If you do not constantly keep the expectation** of Jesus soon return in your HEART, then **it can effect all of the other areas of your life** to the degree that you can fall away from Jesus and be lost.
2. **Now I didn't say you could loose your salvation, I said that you can of your own free will become so far detached from Jesus that you can forfeit your salvation.**

Remember, Jesus did not force you to believe in Him and be saved, and He will not force you to stay with him and be saved, the choice is yours.

John 15:6

If anyone **does not abide in Me, he is cast out** as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

It is with this thought in mind that we begin chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians

Before Paul tells us about the Rapture in verse 13, He is going to encourage us in the first 12 verses:

1. **To Have a walk, to have a life**, that really reflects the facts that we really do belong to Jesus and
2. **To live NOW** in such a way **THAT IT CAN BE SEEN** that we really do believe Jesus could come at any moment.

If we cannot see that we are living our life like we believe Jesus could come at any moment, we need to question ourselves as to where we are with Jesus....

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Finally then, brethren, we **urge** and **exhort** in the Lord Jesus **that you should abound more and more**, just as you received from us **how you ought to walk and to please God**;

2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality**;

4 that each of you should know **how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor**,

5 **not in passion of lust**, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 that **no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter**, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

7 For **God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness**.

8 Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit**.

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are **taught by God to love one another**;

10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. **But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more**;

11 that you also **aspire to lead a quiet life**, to **mind your own business**, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you,

12 **that you may walk properly toward those who are outside**, and that you may lack nothing.

So Paul lays out for us, how important it is that we are living for Jesus in the practical everyday things we say and do

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Finally then, brethren, we **urge** and **exhort** in the Lord Jesus **that you should abound more and more**, just as you received from us **how you ought to walk and to please God**

“We Urge”. **“EROTAO”** (er-o-tah-o) In the Greek language, to Interrogate, to request in the strongest terms. Paul is making the statement that what I am about to teach you is of the highest importance!

“We Exhort”. **“PARAKALEO”** (par-ak-al-eh-o), To call someone close, to invite you to listen. This second word then gives us the idea that this is a friend seeking to reach us with something that is life and death...

To Abound more and more, not to be satisfied with where you are at, pressing on to become more and more pleasing to Jesus.

And here is what the Word of God says “How to please the Lord.

One day the disciples came to Jesus and they asked Him:

John 6:28-29

28 Then they said to Him, **“What shall we do, that we may do the works of God?”**

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29 Jesus answered and said to them, “**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.**”

What is it that God wants for me to do?

1. **Believe that Jesus died for your sins**, and accept this fact.
2. **Live for Him.**
3. **Seek to abound more and more in your learning** about Jesus, your behavior in this world, your love for those who love Jesus and your love and compassion, patience and longsuffering with those who haven't believed in Jesus yet.

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2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality**;

I have often had Christians ask me this question, “What is the will of God for me in my life?” Here that question is answered in part.

1. **To be Sanctified**, which means you set apart yourself to belong to Jesus.
2. **To Abstain** from anything that is sexually immoral.

Whatever you are **Seeing**.
Whatever you are **Hearing**
Whatever you are **Doing**

A warning to you this morning, that the next part of our study is for mature ears only. It may be offensive to some who are sensitive about the subject of Sex. If you think that you might be offended by this subject being spoken of in church, **or you have a child here in the sanctuary who you do not want to hear this subject, this is a good time to excuse yourself....**

This is one of the reasons that we provide youth and children's church, because sometimes the Bible talks about subject like this that are intended for mature audiences....

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5 **not in passion of lust**, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 that **no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter**, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

In case you have not noticed, this whole world is preoccupied with SEX,

1. **In fact Everything in this world seems to revolve around 3 things.**

Power
Money

Sex

Sex is the most often the thing that Believers are cautioned to keep in the right context.

Now I am not saying that Sex is not wonderful.

1. **In the context of one man loving one woman**, under an agreement with God, to love each other and be faithful to each other forever, **sex is awesome**.

The bible says “**That the marriage bed is undefiled.**” That means that a Married man and woman, who love the lord and love each other, anything they want to do together sexually is blessed by the Lord.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is honorable among all, and **the bed undefiled**; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge

It is the most freeing thing in the world to belong to someone who loves you and you are committed to each other, and you know that you both love the Lord and that you can enjoy your intimate life together with out any guilt or regrets.

On the other hand, outside of this commitment of marriage, where people have not made a commitment to each other to be faithful and under the promise to God to love and be intimate only with one person, sex is a disaster.

This is why the lord commanded the sexual environment should only be between two people committed to Him and committed to each other.

Because outside of this commitment, you are going to get hurt, perhaps even destroyed.

So God did not give this commandment to keep sexual activity within the constraints of a marriage of one man and one woman, to cheat you out of joy and fun, He did this because he knows that this is the only way that both people can truly be blessed and happy.

In all of the other ways that people become sexually involved with each other outside the guidelines of committed Christians committed to each other and to God, sex becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

We see the result of this in our world today:

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V WADE IS THIS MONTH

Let me say first of all to the women that have had an abortion and you have asked the Lord to forgive you, YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN AND HE DOES NOT

CONDEMN YOU. IT IS AS IF YOU NEVER HAVE HAD AN ABORTION AND YET I BELIEVE YOUR BABY IS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD AND YOU WILL SEE THEM SOME DAY!

Since 1973, 37 Million 477 thousand Babies have lost their lives.

The most common reason that woman gave for an abortion

1. **She is not ready** for the way that becoming a parent will change her life. It would be hard to keep her job, continue her education, etc.
2. **She cannot afford a baby now.**
3. **She doesn't want to be a single parent,** she doesn't want to marry her partner, or he can't or won't marry her.
4. **She is not ready for the responsibility.**
5. **She doesn't want anyone to know** she has had sex or is pregnant.
6. **She is too young or immature** to have a child.
7. **She has all the children she wants.**
8. **Her partner wants her to have an abortion.**
9. **She or the fetus has health problems.**
10. **She was a victim of Rape or Incest.**

Over 75% of Americans believe that in the cases of Rape or incest or the health or life of the mother or baby, that Abortion is OK.

Yet 95% of all abortions performed are strictly for birth control.

Only 1 % of the Abortions performed were for Fetal Abnormalities.

Only 3% were because of the Mothers health problems.

You see, this is just one point in which Sex taken outside of the plan that the Lord intended it, becomes a curse to our society.

1. It become selfish.
2. it becomes manipulative.
3. It becomes a weapon.
4. It becomes dirty.
5. It becomes perverted.
6. It is hurtful
7. It can destroy lives
8. it perverts the intention that God has for sex which is to be beautiful and an experience that gives joy and satisfaction.

But under a commitment with the Lord in Marriage, where a man is loving his wife in the same way that Jesus loves his church. Where the man is not selfish, but considers his wife's feelings and emotions, and the Wife is admiring and respecting her husband as she would do so unto Jesus, then Sex is a very wonderful experience.

Here, Paul points out to us that the Christian, the person who claims to know Jesus and be living for Him, **sex outside of marriage and this commitment, is not for you.**

You and your body are very precious to the Lord Jesus, **Jesus said that He is living with you inside of your body.** **Would I take my body and commit sexual sin while Jesus is living inside of this body, no way!**

So save yourself for that person that you can make a lifelong commitment to and the Lord will greatly bless you when you do.

Paul also makes it crystal clear that any person who say they follow Jesus and then takes advantage of another believer sexually, notice how Paul puts it:

“The Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified”

If you take advantage of another believer and use them sexually, the Lord takes this very seriously, He will judge it....”

Now if you have done this, then know also, that Jesus will forgive this sin, just as he will every other sin if you confess it to him this morning and turn away from it..

If you have done this and want to be forgiven and turn from this pray with me right now...

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7 For **God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.**

8 Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.**

Jesus allowed himself to be beaten beyond recognition as a human being so that you could be cleansed of every filthy thing that you have done in your life

He has now called you into a brand new life of purity for Him.

If you have given your life to Jesus then your life, your body, your spirit no longer belong to you, you have no claim to it, it is his...

Verse 8, if you have a problem with this Paul says, If you reject this thought about living a life that is sexually pure, then Paul says, **“You are not rejecting man, you are rejecting the Lord.”** It is not mans command but the one who made man an all else that exists.

Sexual purity for the believer is a must, a non negotiable. I think that is so important to the Lord because of the fact that He has come to live in your body and He is greatly offended when we use the same body that He dwells in to commit sexual sin. I think in this context we can understand why this is so important to Jesus.

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9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are **taught by God to love one another**;

10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. **But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more**;

We should be seeking to grow in our love for each other everyday. Looking for new and creative way to bless each other and pour out our love for each other. To Abound in our love more and more.

In our last study of 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, we read:

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord **make you increase and abound in love to one another** and to all, just as we do to you,

“Abound” The Greek word: “**PERISSEUO**”, (per-is-syoo-o) **To super abound in quality and quantity**, to be in excess, to be superfluous in this to everything else.

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11 that you also **aspire to lead a quiet life**, to **mind your own business**, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you,

12 **that you may walk properly toward those who are outside**, and that you may lack nothing.

I love these 2 verses....Aspire to lead a quiet life, mind your own business, work with your own hands. Walk properly towards those who are outside...

Apparently, in the church at Thessalonica, because they did believe that Jesus was coming soon, they developed the idea of “Hey what’s the point, why should I work hard, go to school, plan for the future if Jesus is going to come at any moment”.

I remember when Rob and Mike were beginning High school and they were getting lazy in their studies and starting to get bad grades as a result of not doing their homework and not paying attention in class.

When Elsie and I confronted them on this problem, they told us: “**What’s the point dad, Jesus is coming soon, I’m never going to get to finish school or get married anyway...**”

We took them to the scriptures and told them that Jesus wanted us to “occupy until He comes”.

1. **Jesus wants those who believe in Him** to live in constant expectation of his return.
2. **This is the reason that He told us that** “No one knows the day or hour of His return”.

3. **If we knew that Jesus was coming 15 years from now** on a specific date, we would most likely live anyway we wanted to for 14 years and 6 months, and then suddenly the last six months just before the date of Jesus return, we would start living for Him. Jesus knows how we are...
4. **Every generation** that has lived on the earth and believed in Jesus, has been expecting His soon return.
5. **When I was saved in 1975**, I really with all of my heart thought that Jesus was coming for me at any moment.
6. **When my kids were born 23 years ago**, I never believed that they would start kindergarten before Jesus came.
7. **That was really good for me, it kept me living for Him**, trying to purify my life and keep the junk out of my life.
8. **The reason is that if we live with this constant expectation**, it will cause us to live in a way that is more pure, less in the world, so that we will be ready for Him when He comes for us.
9. **When Jesus said that we are to “Occupy till He Comes”**. This means that we are to go on and live our lives, finishing school, planning for a future where we are preparing ourselves to work for and serve Jesus in our life.
10. **All the while though**, knowing that He can come at any moment for me, so I want to be ready when He comes.
11. **We want to be watching for His return**, keeping the thought that He can come right now at the front of our mind because it will positively effect the way we live our life.
12. **Today I am very thankful** that Jesus didn't come in 1975, because many of your would not saved and on your way to heaven, if he came 23 years ago.

So we are to go one Paul says, with our lives, but doing so in this way:

aspire to lead a quiet life, to **mind your own business**, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you,

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12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

There is a wonderful thing that happens if you believe in Jesus and are dedicated to Him, and you live a quiet life, minding your own business, working with your own hands...

- **Your life becomes a Bible** that everyone who knows you reads everyday.
 - **They see by the way that you talk**, your attitudes, the things you do with your life, whether Jesus is real or not.
 - **You may not say a word about Jesus**, but your life speaks volumes about whether you really believe or it was all just talk.
1. **Back when I was first saved** in the middle 70's, I tried to witness to my family about Jesus.

2. **I never could get through to them.** Jesus said that it would be hard for us to reach our family's for Jesus because we are so close to them, they know us, and it is hard for a parent to receive counsel from their child.
3. **I discovered** though that if I will just live what I claim to believe. Really live for Jesus, that they will notice.
4. **All of the things** that my parents have experienced in their life, nothing has really satisfied them.
5. **But they have seen for 23 years** how Jesus had been so fulfilling and satisfying to me.
6. **How Jesus had blessed my life** in so many ways.
7. **How I have peace,** how He has been changing me into His image.
8. **This is what** has really spoken to my parents.
9. **They have told me** that they see what Elsie and I have and they know that it is real, and they want that in their life!

Isn't that Cool!

On the other side...

1. **If you say,** "Well, I don't think my life is a very good witness, because even though I know Jesus I still make a lot of mistakes".
2. **Making mistakes as a Christian** is a perfect teaching opportunity.
3. **Think about it.** You can go to your parents or your kids, or someone at work, or even a friend who knows that you are a Christian. Right after you have really blown it you can go to them and say "You know I want to apologize for the way that I just acted. That is not the way that Jesus would have acted, and I am really trying to be like Him, but I still struggle so many times. I am so thankful that Jesus is so patient with me and that He always forgives me when I ask, I would like you to forgive me to for the way I behaved".
4. **Do you know** what a positive witness that is to people that see you do that?

Every one makes mistakes, everyone struggles, but when they see you who claim to be a Christian, also struggling, and that you don't try to excuse it, or ignore it, but that you confess it and that you are just trying to be like Jesus. They hear that even Christians aren't perfect, but we are just trying like every one else, what a difference that makes.

Then they understand "Hey maybe I can be a Christian, if Christians struggle too, but they have the forgiveness I don't have"

They see that Jesus is patient and will love them even through their struggles.

This makes Jesus real, it is attractive to those watching us. Then they realize that this Christian thing is about RELATIONSHIP with God,, not a bunch of religious rules that no one can keep, but they all just keep pretending they keep them.

So, don't think that because you have blown it in front of family or friends, that you have been a bad witness.

Use that opportunity to go to them and tell them there is no excuse for the way you acted, that you are sorry and that you are just trying to be like Jesus...

If you will do that, people will also give their lives to the Lord....

Verses 13-18 are the Rapture verses of the Bible. This morning we are not going to get into the Rapture. Because this subject is so important, **next Sunday we will do an in depth topical study just on the subject of the Rapture of the Church**, so you will want to be here for that one, it is one of the most important studies we will ever teach you...

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13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul then begins to tell the believers in Thessalonica the Doctrine that Jesus told Paul, that He is going to come and remove every person that has given their life to Jesus, just before the most horrific event in the history of mankind begins, THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD.

We are going to devote the entire study next Sunday to the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church.

1. What it means.
2. How to know for sure you are going to be included in it.
3. When will it happen.
4. What will be happening just before the Rapture comes.
5. What will happen Right after the Rapture.
6. What will be happening here on earth.
7. What you will be doing while the Great Tribulation is happening.
8. The alternative views to the Rapture happening before the Tribulation, so you can make up your own mind about when Jesus is coming.

You will not want to miss this study because it is one of the most important ones we will ever do...and it is about to happen!

Bring an unsaved friend or family member. Many people give their hearts to Jesus as a result of hearing the study on the return of Jesus.