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Blog

What's your most helpful verse or phrase from 1 Thessalonians 1.

The Dead In Christ Shall Rise First

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Thessalonians, that when the Lord descends from heaven, "the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

Apparently, Paul had reason to be concerned that some of the Christians in Thessalonica, were uninformed regarding the status of fellow-believers who had died. He wrote to them so that they would not grieve. He states, that when the Lord descends from heaven the dead saints will not be forgotten, nor left behind. They will rise before the living are caught up to meet the Lord in the air! "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep" (v. 15).

The apostle is not affirming any of the

doctrinally erroneous presuppositions of the premillennial heresy. His point is not that the dead saints will rise and be caught up in "the rapture," a contrived theory of premillennialists. Instead, he implicitly indicates that the dead saints will not be abandoned, but they will rise to meet the Lord together with those who remain. The following verbal phrases constitute the immediate context of Paul's words, in which actions are ascribed to the Lord and his saints: "The Lord himself ... will descend (katabesetai) from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise (anastesontai) first. Then we who are alive, who are left (perileipomenoi), will be caught up (harpagesometha) in the clouds to-

gether with them to meet (apantesin) the Lord in the air, and so we will be (esometha) with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage (parakaleite) one another with these words" (vv. 16-17). Notice the word "then" in verse 17. It translates epeita which in the present context is emphatic, and the term means "after that, in the next place." The Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Bauer, Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, 284, indicates that epeita is used "to denote succession in enumerations, together with indications of chronological sequence." Paul's point seems to be, immediately after the dead saints rise the living saints will join them to meet the Lord in the air.

The text does not

Practical Chapters in the Bible

1 Thessalonians 5

Points to Consider

1. Be Ready
2. Do Right By Others
3. Quench not the Spirit

Be Ready

1 Thess 5:4-11 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*

Christians are to _____ be watching and waiting for the Lord's return. When we wake up in the morning we should think that today the Lord could return.

Matt 24:42-44 *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

We are to always be prepared for that day. Expect it when you least expect it.

We _____ by putting on the breastplate of faith and love. We are also to have hope of salvation.

1 Cor 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

Eph 6:14-17 *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

We put on the Lord's armor so we are prepared for battle with Satan.
Christians are prepared people!

1 Cor 16:13-14 *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done with love.*

The battle should never catch the Christian off guard.

Do Right By Others

1 Thess 5:11 *Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

We should be a source of _____ and encouragement to one another! We should provide one another with a sense of belonging and peace. Our brothers and sisters are the ones we go to in order to find rest.

1 Thess 5:12-18 *And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

We are to _____ those who are unruly.

Rom 15:14-16 *Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God.*

Christians should feel comfortable _____ one another. Sometimes I think we are too afraid of offending others.

We are to _____ the fainthearted.

The word comfort means to relate near. This carries with it the idea of consoling or giving comfort by being close to someone in their time of need.

The word fainthearted means _____ spirited.

1 Sam 17:8-11 *Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." 10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.*

These men were of little spirit. David comforted them with his words and his _____.

1 Sam 17:31-37 *31 Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. 32 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard,*

and struck and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Moreover David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

I'm sure David was frustrated with his countrymen who were so scared of the Philistine. David said, "Don't let your heart _____ because of him."

1 Sam 17:51-54 *And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52 Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. 54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.*

Nothing comforts the fainthearted more than _____.

We are to _____ the weak.

Acts 4:8-11 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.*

Weak people cannot stand on their own. They need _____.

Do Not Quench the Spirit

1 Thess 5:19-22 *Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.*

The word quench means to _____ or put out like you would a fire. We are not to, in any way, limit the power of the Spirit in our lives. We are to bear His fruit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

2 Tim 1:6-7 *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Timothy was told to _____ up the gift of God which was in him.

teach a partial resurrection, i.e., that some of the dead, those who are in Christ will be raised at the Lord's coming, but the wicked dead will remain in the graves for several more years. In the 1 Thessalonians' text Paul's primary focus is on "we who are alive" in Christ and "the dead in Christ." He is not denying a general resurrection of all the dead, he simply discusses one class of dead persons who will rise. This seems to be the category about which the Thessalonians had inquired, or at least were concerned.

Please consider that Paul does not say, "Only the dead in Christ shall rise," but he says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." Let us ask, first in relation to what? The word "first" is a translation of *proton*, an adverb which in this text means "first of all, first in order." Before the living ascend to meet the Lord, the dead in Christ will be raised and both groups shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

According to numerous New Testament texts when Jesus comes to judge the world, all the dead will be raised. "Do not be astonished at this: for the hour is coming when all who are in their

graves will hear his voice and will come out — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29). Peter and John caused much annoyance to the priest, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees "because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:1-2).

Paul affirmed that he was "on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6). Paul made his defense to Felix the governor, proclaiming "that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous," and he declared that he was on trial "about the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 24:15, 21). The apostle said to the people of Athens that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed . . . they heard of the resurrection of the dead..." (Acts 17:31-32). "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised..." (1 Cor. 15:52).

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 1:7-9, Paul states that

when the Lord is "revealed from heaven" (the equivalent to "the Lord himself will descend from heaven" in the first letter, 4:16) vengeance will be inflicted on the wicked, but he will be glorified in the saints. Therefore in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul is not teaching a partial resurrection of some of the dead, neither is he indicating that there will be multiple resurrections of all the dead. There will be only one literal resurrection of all the dead.

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