

1st & 2nd

THESSALONIANS

Knowing Jesus is coming back, live a life filled with purpose.

THIS MONTH'S THEME:

Knowing Jesus is coming back, live a life filled with purpose.

FEBRUARY MEMORY VERSE

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

• 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

FEBRUARY 16 - LIFE APPLICATION

We can please God by encouraging others with our words.

NOTE TO PARENTS

From January to Easter, we are studying **1st and 2nd Thessalonians**, Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica. In the last two weeks, we learned that Paul wrote to the believers about how they could live a life that pleases God. The believers in the early church knew that Jesus would come back one day, and that those who loved Jesus would be raptured and taken to heaven before the End Times.

But, Paul received a message from Timothy that the Thessalonians were worried about those in their personal lives and the larger church life who had already died and would not experience the rapture. This caused great grief in the hearts of Thessalonian Christians. They thought their loved ones and friends had missed out on this great moment and they did not know what would happen to them. In these verses, Paul answers their questions.

Parents, it's hard to talk with children about death. However, instead of fearing death and grieving over those we have lost as if they are lost forever, **Paul assures us that we who believe in Jesus can have hope in Him.**

Discuss 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. Read **verse 13**. Paul says he doesn't want those whose loved ones have died before the rapture to "be uninformed" about what will happen to them. **Why?** *(Because he doesn't want them to grieve like those who don't know Jesus, who have no hope.)*
2. **Why can we have hope?** *(Verse 14 - we have hope because if we believe that Jesus died and rose again from the dead, we who believe in Him will also be raised from the dead when we die.)*
3. In **verse 15**, Paul says that what he's about to give is "a word from the Lord." **What does he say about those who died before us?** *(They will go before us to be with the Lord.)* The Bible tells us that when we die, we will go directly to be with the Lord. In **Luke 23:42-43**, the thief who was being crucified next to Jesus spoke to him: "**42** And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' **43** And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

Also, in **2 Corinthians 5:8**, it is clear that to be away from the body is to be with the Lord. Even though our bodies die, our souls are alive - they are eternal - and we will be with the Lord until Jesus returns and we receive our resurrection bodies! In this verse, Paul says that those who have died will receive their resurrections first, then those who are left here will then be lifted into the air and receive theirs.

4. Ask your family to listen to you read **verses 16-17**, then say: **What will it be like when Jesus returns? How do you feel hearing this?** (*Discuss together the joy we will feel when Jesus returns and we can all be together with those we love in eternity.*)
5. **Finally, in verse 18, what does Paul tell us to do after hearing this truth?** (*Encourage one another.*) The idea of Jesus's return should encourage our hearts so we can encourage one another with great hope.

A word from our pastor, David Chadwick:

What a blessed hope we have with the rapture. We will receive perfect resurrection bodies. We will not face the pain of this earth anymore. And we will be with Jesus and our loved ones forever. It will be a glorious reunion with our loved ones and friends who have returned from heaven with Jesus!

Please use your words to encourage one another. Life and death truly is in the tongue. And one of the ways we can encourage one another is reminding people that Jesus is in control over everything. One day he will return and make all things new. We live in that blessed hope every day. Let's all be ready for the rapture as if it could happen right now!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Ask: How can we encourage each other with our words? Together, list ways we can do this with family, friends, teachers, siblings, etc.

What are other ways we can encourage each other? (*Send cards, write notes to leave on a pillow or in a lunchbox or even on a teacher's desk, etc.*) Have your family make and decorate cards for others to encourage them.

Examples: a neighbor who is sick, a family member who is lonely, a person who has been kind to us, a special teacher, a friend who has lost a family member or pet, etc. Talk together about who each of them would like to send a card to, and then work side by side as you do this. Make sure the cards get sent - it will be an encouragement to those who need one!

PRAYER

Lord, Thank You for Paul's words that encourage us and give us hope. As believers, we are told to use our words to encourage others. Help us to see those around us who need a kind word, and a reminder that we have hope because of Jesus. In Jesus' Name, Amen