

Intro: Remember what its like to watch a horror movie where the bad guy/killer is chasing the good guy/woman through the house? Huge fight, through every room in the house, struggle, get knife or weapon, drop it, pushing shoving, chasing through the house, finally end up top of stairs, good guy pushes the bad guy over the railing or down the stairs...lying in a heap on the floor OUT. So what does the good guy do...creeps down stairs...tries to slip past them. Now...we all KNOW what is going to happen...but when it takes place...scares us to death anyway! NOT READY!

THAT is what Paul is describing to us in 1 Thess. 4-5 about the return of Christ. People know it's coming...still not going to be ready! Today continue series Not My Home by looking at what the bible calls the Rapture of the Church!

Two item's for you to remember as we look at these passages today:

1. A LOT of controversy with some of these passages. I'm sharing my personal convictions, mainstream, but there are many people who view this topic and some of the passages differently. That's OK, be wrong if want!
2. Double fulfillment is a well known method of interpretation of prophecy! Comes into play some verses
Illus: Double fulfillment

When you talk about the Rapture of Church, Or Jesus Returning for the Church 2 Key Ideas and 3 Main Passages

2 Key Ideas

Illus: Diagram

Rapture: Jesus returns for the CHURCH Different From
2 Advent, 2nd Coming Jesus returns to establish the Messianic Kingdom

3 Passages

- John 14:1-3 "come again" Lit = *to come and/or appear again, to return*
- 1 Thess 4:13-18 vs 17 "caught up" *to catch up, pluck or pull up, to take away or take up*
- 1 Cor 15:50-52 Vs 52 *Dead in Christ Raised, Living in Christ Changed, All Clothed immortality*
- Matt 24 *Second Coming AND Rapture!

1. The Timing And Date Of The Rapture.

Rapture: The return of Jesus for His Church: (Diagram)

- Imminent: Lit = Ready to take place, about to happen, happening soon
- Unexpected: It will happen when no one is expecting it! 1 Thess 5:1-3 *"like a thief in night, peace safety"*
- Unknown: Mark 13:32 *"no one knows the day or hour"* BOTH Rapture and 2nd Coming

Applic: At an unexpected and unknown time, Jesus returns for the Church, for YOU...and "catch you up" to meet Him

2. The Components of the Rapture.

There are a LOT of things that take place at the Rapture that I want to make you aware of so that you get a good understanding of what is going on. Take a look with me at them.

- A Return: Jesus returns for the church....Jn 14: to take us to be with Him. (In the AIR, not touch earth)
1Thess tells us He is physically present, command and trumpet call of God
- A Resurrection: Dead in Christ will be raised first and caught up to be with Jesus
- A Rapture: Vs 17 Then, those who are alive will be changed:
Both of those take place *"in the twinkling of an eye"* Indivisible moment of time
Rapture: Lit = *"Caught up"* Seized, plucked, pulled away by force
- A Reform: We will be CHANGED! Both those Resurrected from the dead, and those living!
1Cor 15:50-52
~Changed: Lit = to be made different: Not mortal, but immortal body, like His!
Resurrection body...No one has a CLUE...
Immortal: Doesn't Die Incorruptible: Doesn't Decay
~Clothed: That is the moment when we get our new Resurrection body
Rom 8:29 We will be conformed (fashioned) to likeness of Son of God
~Complete Knowledge: 1Cor 13:12 Now see Darkly, then face to face, Fully know Him
- A Reunion: Vs 17: Caught up together with them (dead in Christ) to meet with HIM in Air!
We are reunited with those we know and love that know Jesus...See Him Face to Face!
Part of why word rapture is used it to describe the emotion of those two things!
- A Reassurance: Encourage/Comfort, come alongside those struggling...remind them of the promise!

With all of that background...now understanding what the Rapture is all about...HOW DO WE LIVE? Because of ALL that is going to happen, there are some practical implications for daily living we need to take into account.

3. The Implications Of The Rapture:

Since all of those things are true, what does it mean for us? How does it inform and change the way we live?

- Prepare Ourselves: Here we are talking about the process of discipleship, day by day, moment by moment, become just a little bit more like Jesus. Titus lays it out for us: Live intentionally, self-controlled, Jesus lives

Titus 2:13 *"Say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age as we wait for the blessed hope the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,"*

~Say NO to living ungodly, sinful lives

~Say YES to living godly lives:

We do that, not just because it is the right thing to do, but because we want to be ready!

Illus: Every Bride goes to great pains to prepare herself for the moment her groom sees her for the first time.

One of the blessings I get by performing weddings is seeing the look on his face...and hers!

- Purify Ourselves: Here we are intentionally making sure that our lives are what Jesus wants them to be. I sometimes hear people say, Oh, that's just how I am, or, that's just Tom, that's just who he is! OK, well it may be who you ARE, but it doesn't mean that is the way you have to STAY! With the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life, you can CHANGE! You don't have to stay rude, don't have to stay mean, you don't have to stay sarcastically hurtful. You can be different!

John 3:2-3 *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."*

Notice where the responsibility lies! Purify yourself! This is something YOU take responsibility for...something you are actively involved in, something that isn't going to happen if you don't do it!

Maybe counselor, Maybe search through the bible for every verse applies, Accountability Partner YOU DO IT

- Preach the Gospel to Others: If we really believe that time is short, that Jesus is coming at any time, that those who have accepted Him as Savior spend eternity with him, and that those who have not spend eternity separated from the Father...then we preach the gospel!

WE make sure that the people we know and love are CLEAR on what it means to know Jesus! We talk about SIN, JUDGMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, FORGIVENESS, MERCY, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW JESUS...OR NOT...AND THE ETERNAL IMPLICATIONS OF THAT!

Col 4:5-6 *"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*

CONCL: ARE YOU READY?

- IF the trumpet blows today...Jesus returns...is your sin forgiven...go to be with Him? (need to fix that)
- Are there things in your life...sins, habits, attitudes, behaviors...that you need to get rid of?
- Are you day by day becoming more like Him? Frozen in time...Accepted Him, never spiritually grown?
- Is there someone you need to share Jesus with...so they will be ready...Pray, Plan, Preach...

Be so clear about the gospel that one of two things happens...Know Him...Say, STOP PREACHING AT ME!

Preaching: To Announce the good news...not good...if you don't want to accept Him...