

Ministry of Reconciliation (MOR) Bible Teachings



December 2019

Father, thank you for giving us an understanding of your Word which tells us your will regarding the hope of Christ's return for the born-again saints both dead and alive. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

In the [November 2019](#) teaching, we reviewed 1 Thessalonians 3 verse-by-verse. We learned in the beginning of this chapter Paul sent Timothy to establish and comfort the Thessalonian believers. God's Word must be fix firmly in our hearts.

Being born-again of God's Spirit is just the beginning. Countless people in the world are born-again of God's Spirit. However, the key to being "*established*" is to have teaching that continues to give us an understanding of God's Word. We need to be taught how to be fixed firmly or established on the Word of God! We need to know how to rightly divide this Word of God. When people see us, they should see Christ in us!

This month's teaching continues in 1 Thessalonians 4.

God's Word documents the sequence of events of Christ's return in 1 Thessalonians 4. Yet, I have been to several funerals in my lifetime where I have heard many things said that were not according to God's Word. Things like: "Brother, our dearly passed is in heaven with God." Or "God has taken our blessed family member home to be with Him."

If anyone should have died and went immediately to heaven it should have been the Lord Jesus Christ. He was tempted in all points (see Hebrews 4:15). What says the scripture?

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. - Matthew 12:40

Him God raised up the third day and shewed him openly. - Acts 10:40

And that he [Jesus] was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. - 1 Corinthians 15:4

Until Christ's return, all those who have died remain in the grave in corruption and unconsciousness. God's Word shows us that new life to the dead comes with the return of Christ. The Word of God is the Will of God. If you want genuine comfort when a loved

one or a friend falls asleep, you must rightly divide God's Word concerning the return of Christ. We must acknowledge the authority of the Word of God as the core of our beliefs and actions.

Let's start with 1 Thessalonians 4:1:

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received [into manifestation] of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more [abound to overflowing].

The Thessalonian believers were already manifesting the teaching of Paul, Silas and Timothy. They were employing the teaching on how "to walk and please God." Now they were encouraged to "abound more and more" in that teaching. We quicken our spiritual growth by abounding more and more in our usage of God's Word! When we expand our doing of God's Word, God gives the increase in our personal lives.

1 Thessalonians 4:2-3:

For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

In this verse, "fornication" is a figure of speech and refers to spiritual idolatry. The great spirit behind idolatry is called "the spirit of whoredoms" in Hosea 4:12. The Word of God referred to Israel as "playing the harlot" in Jeremiah 2:20, when the people served other gods. We are set apart by God's Spirit in us! We abstain from those spiritual idolatries, for this is the Will of God!

1 Thessalonians 4:4:

That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel [have mastery over himself] in sanctification and honor.

The word "know" means to understand clearly and precisely. The next word is "how" references the practical walk. The "vessel" refers to your whole self. You are a vessel with Christ in you, the hope of glory! The word "possess" means to have mastery or seize control. We are to seize control over our lives! We take responsibility for what we put into our minds! We adhere to God's Word with believing action from the depth of our heart and soul!

1 Thessalonians 4:5-6:

Not in the lust of concupiscence [the inward passion of the mind in good or bad], even as the Gentiles which know not God:

That no man goes beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

1 Thessalonians 4 tells us to not worship other gods. And not only are we to control ourselves in mind and body, but we are also instructed to not defraud or take advantage of our brother or sister or anyone in any matter.

1 Thessalonians 4:7:

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness [being mentally, physically, or spiritually impure], but [in contrast] unto holiness [purity, sanctification of heart and life].

As participants of God 's holiness, we satisfy His calling by committing ourselves to behave in accordance with His Will and Word! We are to be mentally, physical and spiritually in alignment with God's Word. We are to speak and act from the foundation His Word provides us.

1 Thessalonians 4:8-10:

He therefore that despised [to displace, set aside, disregard], despised not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.

The Thessalonian believers were accustomed to taking care of one another because they were taught to love one another according to God's Word. How were they taught? By His Word! Paul urged them to grow more and more in this kind of love.

1 Thessalonians 4:11:

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.

God tells us to be quiet or focused, and to do our own business. We are to work with our hands so that we lack for nothing. God's Word plainly states we are to take care of ourselves by staying focused and working for ourselves. This is not about getting a handout from anyone or having other people support us. We are to know ourselves through our practical walk as we stay mentally, physically, and spiritually committed to God's Word. The next verse provides a summary and an outcome for us.

1 Thessalonians 4:12:

That ye may walk honestly [elegant in figure, demeanor, and bearing; graceful] toward them that are without [outside the body of Christ], and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Next, God's Word sets forth the sequence of events for the gathering of the dead and saints (born-again believers) who are alive.

1 Thessalonians 4:13:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

The word "would" means passion or desire – God's passion and desire is that we are not ignorant –void of understanding - "concerning" (regarding) them which are asleep. It is a figure of speech to tenderize a harsh reality. It compares Death to sleep. Death is sleep! Even in the figure of speech, it is truthful. Death is the toughest thing there is in this life.

The phrase "that you sorrow not" tells us that God does not want us to be in sorrow as if there were no hope. The expression "no hope" falls into two categories: 1. Those that do not have any knowledge of the hope, and 2. Spiritualism or thinking the dead are alive. The Word of God says it is people who fall into these two categories that have no hope.

It's not wrong to feel sorrow for the loss of a loved one. However, God's Word exhorts us not to feel sorrow to the point we believe that our lives are over, and we have no hope. God's Word teaches us that one day the dead in Christ are going to get up first! This is the hope of Christ's return! This is what keeps us going. Without the hope of the return of Christ and our rising up with him, we could not endure the sorrows and pains of death.

1 Thessalonians 4:14:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep; in Jesus, will God bring with him.

We pause after sleep because “in” is the Greek word “*dia*” which means by way of or through. The wrong interpretation of this verse would be that we credit Jesus for people dying. This is in error for we know Jesus Christ came to “*destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Hebrews 2:14). We believe that Jesus died and God raised him from the dead (that’s how we were born again) and one day we shall rise again. We are born-again of God’s Spirit according to His Word as stated in Romans 10:9-10:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Thessalonians 4:15:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

According to the Word of God, those who died and are believers will rise first when Christ returns.

1 Thessalonians 4:16:

For the Lord himself [Christ] shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel [Michael], and with the trump of God [Gabriel]: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

This is the only place in the Word of God where these sequences of events are documented.

- Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout.
- With the voice of the archangel Michael and with the trump of God Gabriel.
- And the dead in Christ shall rise first.

The dead in Christ shall rise first! If the dead are already in heaven with the Lord, then why does God’s Word say, “*the dead in Christ shall rise first*”? With this knowledge, you now have two choices – 1. You can believe God’s Word, or 2. You can believe the traditions of man-made religion. To help make the decision, let’s find out what happens to the believers who are alive.

1Thessalonians 4:17:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet with the Lord in the air: and so, shall we ever be like the Lord.

So, the sequence of events associated with Christ's return continues with:

- The born-again alive believers are caught up together with the raised dead with Christ in the clouds.
- And then, we shall ever be like the Lord.

The Word of God is the Will of God! We are taught in 1 Corinthians 15:53:

For this corruptible [the dead] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [alive] must put on immortality.

When Christ returns, does he come on the earth? No! Those born-again believers – dead or alive - meet him in the air.

Look at 1 Corinthians 15:51-58:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible [dead] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [living] must put on immortality.

*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, **then** shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. [bold added for emphasis]*

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

These verses remind us of the mystery God hid from the devil. He did not want Satan to know that in Christ's death and resurrection, the born-again believers would be saved from a never-ending death. Praise God! See the teachings of [May 2019](#) and [June 2019](#) for more of God's Word on the Great Mystery.

Back to 1 Thessalonians 4:18:

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

God's Words in 1 Thessalonians 4 are to bring us comfort. If the born-again believers die and immediately went to heaven, there would be no need for Christ to return! If all the dead born-again believers are in heaven with Him having a great time, why would the born-again believers want to remain alive on earth fighting the good fight? Not only does this set God up to be a respecter of person (favoring the dead born-again believers over those that are alive), but it also reinforces death over life. God is not a respecter of person! God wants us alive so we can teach His Word on this earth. God worked this out so when Christ returns, the dead are raised and the living are changed. Then, we all get to heaven with Christ at the same time!

1 Corinthians 15:20 reminds us:

but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept [dead].

God's Word plainly says Christ is risen from the dead and becomes the first fruits of them that slept or are dead. There is nothing about those that are asleep rising up to be in heaven with God before Christ's return.

1 Corinthians 15:23 reinforces the sequence of events that is laid out in 1 Thessalonians 4:

but every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

So, I ask you, Has Christ come back yet? No! And since this is true, then the dead in Christ are still awaiting his return! The Word of God clearly tells us that Christ is the first fruit raised from the dead. The rest of the born-again believers who have died are dead until Christ's coming!

1 Corinthians 15:24-26:

Then comes the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is what? Death.

Death is truly an enemy of anyone who has loved and lost that love. There are times when the power of that finality – death – overcomes me. But I hold close to my heart the promises of God's Word, and a sense of relief and joy takes over and brings me calm and peace. Knowing that death will be destroyed, and the people I love, the people who believe God's Word, the people who are born-again believers through Jesus Christ who died, will rise first and then we which are alive will be with him is a comfort and a blessing to me and my household. We know God's Word brings comfort and peace when a loved one dies. His or her memories live strong through us and our family and friends. Read 1 Thessalonians 4 to bring comfort, and stay focused – mentally, physically, and spiritually – on walking in God's Word.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. We thank God for each of you and your families during this holiday season. May God's good will and peace be upon you all. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The January 2020 teaching will focus on the Church Epistles - 1 Thessalonians 5.

In the Lord,

Ministry of Reconciliation

Son of God through Jesus Christ

Ambassador for Christ