***1 Thessalonians***

***Chapter 4***

*Living to Please God*

**Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ﻿2﻿ For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ﻿3﻿ It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ﻿4﻿ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ﻿5﻿ not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ﻿6﻿ and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. ﻿7﻿ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ﻿8﻿ Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. ﻿9﻿ Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ﻿10﻿ And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. ﻿11﻿ Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, ﻿12﻿ so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**

**4:1** *Finally.* The main section of the letter is finished, though much is yet to come (see Php 3:1 and note). (CSB)

 *live.* Lit. “walk.” Paul uses this metaphor often of the Christian way (see Ro 6:4; 2Co 5:7; Eph 4:1; 5:17; Col 1:10, “live a life”; 2:6; 4:5, “act”). It points to steady progress. (CSB)

The Law is given as a guide for those who are already saved. Paul gives a guideline to those already saved through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

 *we ask you and urge you.* Paul is not arrogant, but he does speak with authority in the Lord Jesus. He has the “mind of Christ” (1Co 2:16). (CSB)

 *more and more*. Abundance of good works results from being grafted in Christ as a branch to the vine (Jn 15:4). (TLSB)

It is a wise pastor that can make a cordial commendation precede a necessary correction. The report of Timothy had, in general, been very favorable, but he had not withheld from the apostle the fact that certain abuses stood in need of correction. But Paul’s tone of cordial affection does not change: Moreover, now, brethren, we beg you and beseech in the Lord Jesus that, as you have accepted of us how you should lead your lives and please God, even as you have led them, that you excel still more. The apostle here opens the hortatory part of his letter, basing its admonitions and warnings entirely upon the doctrine which he had just laid before them in such an appealing way. It is in this sense that he calls the Thessalonian Christians brethren, that he begs them, that he entreats them in the Lord Jesus, on the basis of whose redemption and for whose sake all Christians endeavor to lead such lives as are in conformity with their calling, such lives as will please the Lord. There is not a hint of faultfinding in the entire passage. It is not a new burden which the apostle is trying to lay upon their unwilling shoulders; he is merely reminding them of instructions which they had received from him and from his fellow-laborers. Those instructions included also apostolic advice as to how they should conduct themselves in harmony with the obligation resting upon them as Christians, in order to please God. The Thessalonians had learned from the apostle and his companions in just what way they should conduct themselves in the various situations and exigencies of life, just how they should arrange their lives in the light of the Word of God. St. Paul willingly concedes and praises the fact that they had been willing to accept and follow instructions, that they were, on the whole, leading Christian lives. Since, however, a Christian is always in the making and never attains to ultimate perfection in this life, therefore the apostle begs and entreats that they should aim to excel ever more in their Christian life. (Kretzmann)

**4:2** *instructions.* Used of authoritative commands and has a military ring (see Ac 5:28; 16:24). (CSB)

Given to Paul by the Lord Himself, who gives it authority. (TLSB)

Paul now substantiates his admonition: For you know what instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus. The instructions or commandments concerning their sanctification had not been given by Paul at random or according to his own ideas, but on the authority of Christ, and therefore these injunctions were in full force for all times. With all these facts the Thessalonian Christians were fully familiar, and more, the apostle had commended their willing obedience to the Word which had been preached in their midst, chap. 2, 13. (Kretzmann)

**4:3** *sanctified.* See note on 3:13. (CSB)

Referring to the ethical or moral implications of the Gospel. A person who has been re-created in Christ must not continue to live in an immoral manner. A Christian’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who enables the believer to live a holy life (1Co 6:15–20). (TLSB)

Without further argument, therefore, he now refers to the summary of the doctrine concerning their sanctification: For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you desist from fornication, that every one of you know that he should get his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust like also the Gentiles that do not know God. This is God’s will, not His entire good and gracious will toward the Thessalonian Christians, but that part to which their attention needed to be drawn at this time, a point in which they should excel more and more. (Kretzmann)

 *sexual immorality.* In the first century moral standards were generally very low, and chastity was regarded as an unreasonable restriction. Paul, however, would not compromise God’s clear and demanding standards. The warning was needed, for Christians were not immune to the temptation (see 1Co 5:1). (CSB)

It is God’s will that the Christians should grow in sanctification, that they should flee from sin more and more, that they should consecrate themselves to Him, that they should walk in newness of life. Paul’s specific warning concerns the sin of fornication, of intercourse outside of holy wedlock. To this sin the converts at Thessalonica were exposed, partly on account of the filthy heathen cult which was practiced there, partly on account of the fact that there was always danger of becoming tainted with licentiousness in a large seaport. (Kretzmann)

**4:4** *how to control his own body*. Our sexuality is God’s gift for use within the parameters of marriage. “Good people will know how to control the use of marriage, especially when they occupy public offices” (Ap XXIII 43). (TLSB)

**4:5** *like the heathen.* The Christian is to be different. (CSB)

Unbelievers outside of the Church who live by gratifying their lustful passions in wanton self-indulgence. (TLSB)

 *not know God*. Humans have an inherent sense that God exists (Rm 1:19–20), yet they sinfully corrupt that knowledge into idolatry (Rm 1:21–23). (TLSB)

The Christians must abstain, desist, from such sexual impurity, they must flee from its contaminating influence. For, as they know, the only way in which the desire for procreation should find its expression should be in this way, that every one have his own wife, that marriage be entered upon in sanctification, with due propriety, as a Christian duty and vocation, and in honor, Col. 2, 23; 1 Pet. 3, 7, with the proper regard for the wife as an heir of salvation, or at least as standing high above all beasts, with a full sense of the moral dignity of the relationship. All sinful abuse, all carnal excesses, are excluded by this plain statement of the apostle. And he emphasizes his meaning by a disgusted reference to the passion of lust such as was found among the Gentiles that did not know God. Marriage was not instituted for the gratification of wild and untamed passion; such behavior characterizes people that are without all reverence toward God, whom they do not know, and for whose will they do not care. Christians will be careful to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed also in the married state. (Kretzmann)

**4:6** *wrong his brother.* Sexual sin harms others besides those who engage in it. In adultery, e.g., the spouse is always wronged. Premarital sex wrongs the future partner by robbing him or her of the virginity that ought to be brought to marriage. (CSB)

Having an intimate relationship with someone else’s wife or husband. (TLSB)

The apostle here points to a second vice, one which is often mentioned together with uncleanness, cp. Eph. 4, 19; 5, 3. 5; Col. 3, 5, that of avarice, of greed: That no one overreach and defraud his brother in business, because that the Lord is an avenger concerning all these things, as we have said to you before and testified. The description given in these words fitly characterizes the sin of covetousness; for the greedy person goes beyond the limits set by the Law of God; he resorts to trickery and cheating. This will invariably result in fraud, in the deliberate attempt to get the better of every deal, to enrich oneself at the expense of one’s neighbor. Undoubtedly this vice was common in the great Aegean seaport and was not regarded as anything reprehensible, just as the average businessman in our day deems it an evidence of extraordinary astuteness if he can indulge in profiteering without being detected. (Kretzmann)

 *The Lord will punish.* A motive for chastity. (CSB)

“The wages of sin is death” (Rm 6:23). The anger and wrath of the Holy God will be on those who have not repented of their sin and are not covered by the blood of His Son (Eph 5:6; Col 3:5–6). (TLSB)

But the apostle holds up a warning finger, saying that the Lord is an avenger with respect to all these things. The sin may not become manifest before the eyes of men, but before the eyes of God nothing is hidden, and His punishment will strike the wicked in due time. The Christians being subject to the same sinful desires as all other men by reason of their evil flesh, Paul had included this warning in his instructions to the Thessalonians; he had, before, in an earnest testimony, told them the same thing. (Kretzmann)

 *beforehand*. While teaching in their city (Ac 17:1–9). (TLSB)

**4:7** *called us*. Just as God sought for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and called them when they sinned, so He seeks and calls us by the Gospel into faith in His Son. (TLSB)

Another reason for chastity is God’s call to holiness. (CSB)

With reference to both vices he therefore adds: For not has God called us for uncleanness, but in sanctification. The holy God wants clean hearts; to that end and object He called the believers, working faith and love in their hearts by His call. A Christian cannot live in any form of uncleanness with regard to any of the commandments; if that had been God’s purpose in calling him, He would become a servant of sin. (Kretzmann)

**4:8** *God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.* Still another reason for chastity is that sexual sin is against God, who gives the Holy Spirit to believers for their sanctification. To live in sexual immorality is to reject God, specifically in regard to the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

Reception of the Holy Spirit is not our achievement. The Holy Spirit is given when the Word about Christ is heard and the Sacraments are received by faith. The Holy Spirit reveals the meaning of the Word and the Sacraments by testifying for Christ. (TLSB)

The apostle, therefore, extends his warning: Wherefore, then, he that despises does not despise man, but God, who gave His Holy Spirit to you, To disregard the precept and warning which Paul here issues does not mean a mere despising of men. That in itself may be bad enough, but could at least be condoned. No, it is God’s will which the apostle has proclaimed with regard to these sins, and every one that despises his instructions thereby becomes guilty of despising God. Such a person is all the more culpable in the sight of God because the Lord, in issuing the call, in working conversion, gave His Holy Spirit, thereby granting the power to walk in newness of life. Any person that has once been converted and then deliberately indulges in such sins as here mentioned by the apostle, drives the Holy Spirit out of his heart and thus receives to himself damnation, unless he repents of his sin before it is too late. This fact cannot be emphasized too strongly in our days when indifference and worldliness is raising its head in the midst of the Christian Church. (Kretzmann)

**4:9** *brotherly love.* Translates *philadelphia,* a Greek word that outside the NT almost without exception denoted the mutual love of children of the same father. In the NT it always means love of fellow believers in Christ, all of whom have the same heavenly Father. (CSB)

This passage is another masterpiece of pastoral exhortation, for it combines a ready acknowledgment of the progress already made in sanctification with a tactful reminder of the fact that the goal has not yet been reached: But concerning brotherly love you have no need to be written to, for yourselves are people taught of God to love one another. With what effective skill Paul brings out his point! By representing the situation in such a way as to call them men taught by God Himself, through the Holy Ghost in the Word, and stating that under the circumstances his writing concerning brotherly love would be superfluous, he places this virtue before their eyes with the sharpest accentuation, putting all those to shame that were not practicing this love at all times.

 *taught by God.* Cf. Isa 54:13; Jn 6:45; 1Co 2:13. (CSB)

By the words of Jesus and the Spirit Paul passed on to them. (TLSB)

**4:10** MORE AND MORE – The apostle names a case of which he personally knows: For, indeed, you do it toward all the brethren in entire Macedonia. There was a lively intercourse between the Christians of those days, not merely in the home congregation, but also with the brethren in Philippi, Berea, and elsewhere in Macedonia. Toward all these Christians the members of the Thessalonian congregation were practicing brotherly love as it was required. (Kretzmann)

**4:11** Some Thessalonians, probably because of idleness, were taking undue interest in other people’s affairs. (CSB)

Paul warns against being overzealous for spiritual matters. The Christian life is balanced. “It is not only necessary for our life that our body have food and clothes and other necessaries. It is also necessary that we spend our days in peace and quiet among the people with whom we live and have dealings in daily business and conversation and all sorts of doings” (LC III 73). (TLSB)

 *work with your hands.* The Greeks in general thought manual labor degrading and fit only for slaves. Christians took seriously the need for earning their own living, but some of the Thessalonians, perhaps as a result of their belief in the imminent return of Christ (see 2Th 3:11), were neglecting work and relying on others to support them. (CSB)

But the goal had not yet been reached; they could not yet speak of perfection: But we exhort you, brethren, to abound yet more, and to make it a point of honor to live quietly, and to attend to your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we announced to you, that you may lead your life honestly toward those without and have need of nothing. The Thessalonians were to strive for ever greater perfection, also in the matter of brotherly love, since there are so many factors that tend to hinder its proper growth. At the same time, however, instead of seeking a false renown by their works of love, they were to strive most zealously, set their heart, soul, and honor upon that point, to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Nothing so aids to this end as minding one’s own business, tending strictly to one’s own affairs, not meddling with those of other people, an undertaking which almost invariably engenders strife. Also they should work with their own hands, they should be earnestly engaged, every one in his own occupation; for the devil finds work for idle hands, as the example of David shows. This commandment belonged to those which Paul had given from the beginning, for he may have foreseen the danger which would lead enthusiasts to expect the coming of Christ at any minute, and therefore to neglect their work with the plea that it was useless under the circumstances. (Kretzmann)

**4:12** *not be dependent on anybody.* Or “have need of nothing.” Both meanings are true and significant. Christians in need because of their idleness are not obedient Christians. (CSB)

Paul urges them to live on the fruits of their physical labor. (TLSB)

Paul wants the Thessalonian Christians to lead a life that is honest, becoming, respectable, decent in the presence of the unconverted heathen. For by working in the manner as here outlined they would be provided with the necessaries of life and would thus be chargeable to no outsider for help. Note: It is altogether fitting that this passage find its application in all the relations of the believers as such toward the unbelievers. To ask the aid of enemies of the Cross in the matter of building churches or schools or charitable institutions is to declare that the Gospel has lost its power to make the hearts of the Christians willing to perform the work which the Lord has given them to do. (Kretzmann)

**4:1–12** Paul gives advice on some practical matters dealing with sanctification so that their witness for the Lord may go forward blamelessly. We Christians must lead a sexually pure life so that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit. Our love to one another should not be superficial but honest and from the heart. We should live by our labor without improperly depending on others for support. The Lord—through His Spirit poured upon us—fights for us against the “flaming darts of the evil one” (Eph 6:16) so that we may live pure and blameless lives. • Thank You, Lord, that we are victorious through You and that Your victory is our victory. Mold us by Your Word so that we may imitate Your apostles and You in our daily walks of life. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Coming of the Lord*

**13﻿ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ﻿14﻿ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ﻿15﻿ According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ﻿16﻿ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ﻿17﻿ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ﻿18﻿ Therefore encourage each other with these words.**

**4:13** *those who fall asleep.* For the Christian, sleep is a particularly apt metaphor for death, since death’s finality and horror are removed by the assurance of resurrection. Some of the Thessalonians seem to have misunderstood Paul and thought all believers would live until Christ returns. When some died, the question arose, “Will those who have died have part in that great day?” See note on v. 15. (CSB)

Although the Thessalonians had been firm in the face of persecution, one thing bothered them. What about their fellow believers who died before Jesus retutned in glory? Would they be lost because of this? (PBC)

A euphemism for death (cf 1Ki 2:10). (TLSB)

 *others*. The pagan world, Gentiles who do not know God. (TLSB)

 *who have no hope.* Inscriptions on tombs and references in literature show that first-century pagans viewed death with horror, as the end of everything. The Christian attitude was in strong contrast (see 1Co 15:55–57; Php 1:21–23). (CSB)

Those who live without Jesus have no hope because they do not know of the resurrection. (TLSB)

It seems that the Thessalonian Christians, in their excessive eagerness concerning the second coming of the Lord, had stumbled into various misunderstandings. Their solicitude for their dead, for instance, caused them to fear that the latter would occupy a position secondary to that which they themselves, who would live till the second advent of the Lord, hoped to attain. This anxious concern incidentally tended to plunge them into a grief which came dangerously near being like that of the Gentiles. Therefore Paul combines admonition with instruction: But we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those that have fallen asleep, lest you grieve for them as do also the others that have no hope. It is true indeed that the faith of the Christians does not stifle and eradicate the natural affections. Christ Himself wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus. But even in this opening verse the apostle brings out two points that show the wide difference between the sorrow of the Christians and that of the unbelievers. In the first place, if Christians die, they fall asleep in the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 11, 30; 15, 20. Their death is like a gentle sleep, from which there will be a glorious awakening. For that reason, in the second place, the sorrow of the Christians at the death of their loved ones is altogether unlike that of the rest, of the outsiders, of the unbelievers, whose condition is aptly described by the words: They have no hope. When their friends and relatives die, they are gone, they are taken from them definitely, never to be seen again. Such a memory of a happiness lost beyond recovery, of a parting without the hope of meeting again, produces a hopeless, a terrible state. (Kretzmann)

**4:14** *died.* Paul does not say that Christ “slept,” perhaps to underscore the fact that he bore the full horror of death so that those who believe in him would not have to. (CSB)

But the Christians are in an altogether different position: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also those who fell asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him. (Kretzmann)

 *rose again.* For the importance of the resurrection see 1Co 15, especially vv. 14, 17–22. (CSB)

That is the belief of all Christians, that Jesus truly died on the cross, but that just as truly He rose again on the third day. The believers in Christ, however, belong to Christ, they are partakers of all His work of redemption and of all the blessings which He earned through His vicarious suffering. (Kretzmann)

 *those who have fallen asleep in him.* Believers who have died, trusting in Jesus. (CSB)

Jesus becomes a mediator through whom the dead are resurrected. (TLSB)

Therefore the Christians, all those that have fallen asleep in Christ, trusting in His complete salvation, will pass through death into life. Just as surely as we believe in the crucified and resurrected Christ, just as surely as we are united with Christ in life and in death through faith, just so surely the Lord will lead us and all believers that have fallen asleep in Jesus with our Savior into the realms of eternal glory. That is the comfort of the Christians with regard to those friends and relatives whom they have laid to rest in the grave. They are at rest, they are asleep in the Lord; even in death they are the Lord’s. When Christ, therefore, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory, and all believers with us, Col, 3:4. (Kretzmann)

**4:15** *According to the Lord’s own word.* The doctrine mentioned here is not recorded in the Gospels and was either a direct revelation to Paul or something Jesus said that Christians passed on orally. (CSB)

A teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., Mt 22:23–33) or a revelation given to the apostles in His name. (TLSB)

The apostle now adds a word of instruction regarding those that will be living on earth at the coming of the Lord: For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living ones, that remain over for the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede those that fell asleep. This was a word, a saying, of the Lord which had been preserved by the disciples and is here recorded by the apostle. (Kretzmann)

 *we who are still alive.* Those believers who will be alive when Christ returns. “We” does not necessarily mean that Paul thought that he would be alive then. He often identified himself with those he wrote to or about. Elsewhere he says that God will raise “us” at that time (1Co 6:14; 2Co 4:14). (CSB)

 *will certainly not precede.* The Thessalonians had evidently been concerned that those among them who died would miss their place in the great events when the Lord comes, and Paul assures them this will not be the case. (CSB)

Those who died in Christ will have no disadvantage when the Lord returns. The second coming will be seen by them as well as the living. (TLSB)

When the last day comes, there will still be some believers living on earth, having been left over by God unto the return of Christ. But these believers will have no advantage over those that fell asleep in the Lord, whose bodies are lying in the grave. Both they and those that fell asleep in the Lord will be made partakers of the glory of their Lord and Savior. The Thessalonian Christians were evidently worrying lest their sleeping relatives and friends would not be present to see and receive Christ, the Victor, when He returns in the clouds of heaven for the Day of Judgment. They themselves, in the fervor of their first love, were so intensely eager for His coming, were so sure of His speedy advent, that this thought filled them with great anxiety. Paul therefore showed them that their fears were groundless. (Kretzmann)

**4:16** *the Lord himself.* See Ac 1:11. (CSB)

 *cry* … *voice* … *sound*. Three ways of expressing the same calling (action) of the Lord. (TLSB)

 *command*. It is the quickening Word of the Lord. (TLSB)

 *archangel.* The only named archangel in the Bible is Michael (Jude 9; see Da 10:13). In Scripture, Gabriel is simply called an angel (Lk 1:19, 26). (CSB)

Mentioned only one other time in the NT (Michael, Jude 9). The Lord uses angels to execute His will. The pseudepigraphical book 1 Enoch mentions seven archangels: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Sarakiel, Gabriel, Remiel (1 Enoch 20:1–7). (TLSB)

 *dead in Christ*. Those who passed away while believing in the Lord will rise first. Cf v 15. (TLSB)

 *will rise first.* Before the ascension of believers mentioned in the next verse. (CSB)

**4:17** *we who are still alive.* See note on v. 15. (CSB)

cf 2Th 1:5–10. Believers who remain alive on the earth. (TLSB

He now also explains the sequence of events on the last day: Because the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud summons, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will arise first; thereupon we, the living ones, that remain over, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we always be with the Lord. The events of the last day are here unfolded before our eyes as successive acts. The first is that the Lord Himself, the exalted Christ, will appear in the clouds of heaven, visible, as He ascended up on high. With great power and might He will come down from heaven, Acts 1, 11. With a loud summons, with a shout of command, as a victorious captain going forth to the destruction of His enemies, with the voice of an archangel summoning the great host of the heavenly spirits, with a trumpet of God, a majestic note that will strike terror into the hearts of His enemies and cause the hearts of the believers to beat higher with exultant joy, the great King will descend from His throne. It will be, as Luther writes, like the coming of a great and powerful king or emperor in full battle array, filling the air with the clamor of battle-cries and trumpets. The shouting of the victorious Conqueror of death and hell will reach the dead in their graves, the believers will hear the voice of their Savior, and they will come forth from their graves with glorified bodies, ready to join Him in His triumphal pageant, 1 Cor. 15, 42-44; Phil 3, 21. That will be the first event of interest in this connection. (Kretzmann)

 *caught up.*† Or “taken up.” Millennialists read into this verb a “rapture,” from the Latin Vulgate rendering. Note that Paul seems to be describing something open and public, with loud voices and a trumpet blast. (CSB)

Gk *harpazo* carries with it the sense of a sudden and violent action. The point is that we will be gathered together at the resurrection, the dead as well as the living, when Christ returns. (The Vulg used the term *raptus*, from which the modern false doctrine of a “rapture” gets its name. Paul’s teaching is about the resurrection and not a secret return of Christ.) Chrys: “When they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance on every side, no one [causing] this, but the ‘shout’ being sufficient … when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know.… What fear will possess those that remain upon the earth” (*NPNF* 1 13:356). (TLSB)

But immediately afterwards the believers whom the Lord has left over till this day, who are still living in the flesh, will experience the power of Christ’s majesty in their own bodies. They will suddenly be caught up into the clouds to join the retinue of the King of kings. The mortality of their bodies will then also be left behind, this corruptible having put on incorruption, 1 Cor. 15:52, 53. (Krezmann)

 *with the Lord.* The chief hope of the believer (see 5:10; Jn 14:3; 2Co 5:8; Php 1:23; Col 3:4). (CSB)

In the ancient world, dignitaries were welcomed officially by people who escorted them. The focus is the coming together of the Lord and His people. The air is considered to be the abode of evil spirits (Eph 2:2), who will yield the place to Him who has all authority in the heavens and on earth. (TLSB)

In the company of their exalted Savior the believers will then appear in glory before the whole world, to be forever with the Lord, wherein the essence of eternal bliss consists, to be in His presence, to see Him face to face, world without end. (Kretzmann)

 *always be with the Lord*. In heaven after the resurrection. (TLSB)

**4:18** *encourage each other.* The primary purpose of vv. 13–18 is not to give a chronology of future events, though that is involved, but to urge mutual encouragement, as shown here and in v. 13. (CSB)

Some Thessalonians feared that loved ones who had died in Christ might not be able to see the second coming of the Lord. (TLSB)

With the certainty of such joy before us, the admonition of the apostle surely ought to find willing ears and ready obedience: So, then, encourage one another with these words. There is a world of consolation and comfort in this short passage, which can barely be indicated in a brief explanation. (Kretzmann)

**4:13–18** Paul comforts the Thessalonians, saying that the dead in Christ will be the first to taste the resurrection and come with the risen Christ. At the second coming, we will all be together once more. Christians grieve over the death of loved ones but not as those who have no hope. The resurrection of our Lord, and the victory we have over death through Him, gives us a living hope, despite the fact that death separates loved ones and causes great pain. • Thank You, Lord Jesus, for making the way through death a path of hope and joy, due to Your resurrection. Create in our hearts the joy and hope of Your victory over death. Amen. (TLSB)