

# Future Hope

## Faith in View of Christ's Coming

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WEEK 1

### WARM-UP

- If you could be mentored by anyone, who would you choose? Why?
- Have you ever received a physical letter, note, or greeting card? Tell us about who sent it and what it contained.
- Recall a movie or series you've watched about the end of the world. What did you think of it?

**WORD** *<sup>9</sup>For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:9-10**

(Read also **1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-8.**)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy wrote a letter to encourage the young church in Thessalonica. This church-planting team had preached the gospel and planted a thriving church there, but were then persecuted for the gospel and had to leave the new believers. As expected, they were troubled and anxious to know how the church was doing, so they sent Timothy to check. They were finally at peace when they heard Timothy's good report of their faith and passion for God. One of the concerns this letter addresses is how believers should live in light of Christ's second coming, the full establishment of His kingdom, and the coming judgment and rewards for believers. Paul and his fellow church planters wanted to guide and teach the new believers, especially because they couldn't be together. For the next few weeks, we can learn from Paul, Silvanus,

and Timothy, as well as the Thessalonian church. In this lesson, we will look at how the gospel transforms our lives.

## 1 | The gospel transforms our life direction.

*<sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit . . .*

### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:4-6

The believers in Thessalonica had heard and responded to the gospel in faith. As a result, they not only became imitators of those who preached to them, but also of the Lord. After encountering the Holy Spirit and having their hearts opened to the gospel, they were no longer the same. And even if that meant persecution and suffering for the gospel, they were set on following Christ. How did the gospel change the direction of your life?

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## 2 | The gospel transforms our affections.

*For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God . . .* **1 THESSALONIANS 1:9**

From serving idols to serving God, the believers in Thessalonica no longer had the same affections. Their hearts, minds, and souls were no longer set on idolatry and false worship. While we may not be involved in idol worship physically, our hearts can be captivated by pursuing our own interests and seeking after what the world has to offer. How do you think we would know if the gospel has transformed our affections? According to 1 Thessalonians 1:3,

what did Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy remember about the Thessalonians?

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### 3 | The gospel transforms our disposition.

*. . . and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

#### **1 THESSALONIANS 1:10**

A follower of Christ does not just hope in God for this life. In reality, the fulfillment of our hope will be at Christ's glorious return. Believers wait for this with much expectation, trusting that one day true joy will be experienced, rewards will be given to those who faithfully serve God, ultimate justice will be served, and His kingdom will be restored. How does the certainty of Christ's coming affect how we live today?

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### APPLICATION

- Has the gospel changed your life direction? In two minutes, share what your life was like before Christ, how you encountered Him, and how He changed you. To whom can you share your testimony this week? (Or provide an opportunity for everyone to respond to the gospel today.)
- Where would you say your affections lie? If there are areas in your life where you or something else has been taking God's rightful place, are you willing to surrender these to God and give Him your whole heart today?
- How do you think you should live in light of Christ's second coming? Who can you encourage to do the same this week?

