



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### Saints Triumphant November 14-16<sup>th</sup> 2020

#### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

*<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For 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. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

1. What is something about life on earth that brings you joy?  
(Someone write down the ideas for later.)

Answers will vary. If you need to prompt people, consider the following categories: People, Music, Food, Nature, Entertainment.

2. The story of Mary Magdalene experiencing Jesus' resurrection is found in John 20:11-17. List things that changed for Mary from the beginning of that story to the end.

*John 20:11-17*

*<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent*

*over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.*

*<sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"*

*"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.*

*<sup>15</sup> He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"*

*Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."*

*<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary."*

*She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").*

*<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

- She thought Jesus was dead, but now he's alive.
- She had no hope, but now she has hope.
- She was discouraged, now she has energy.
- She was crying, now she's rejoicing.
- She thought her life was empty, now it's full.
- There are many others!

3. It seems like the Thessalonians were uninformed or misinformed about what happens to dead people. Study verses 13, 15, and 17. What misunderstandings might St. Paul be correcting here?

V. 13 - It seems the Thessalonians were grieving with *no hope*.

V. 15- It seems they thought people who were alive when Jesus comes back would *precede* or have some advantage over people who have died. St. Paul assures them they will not.

V. 17- It seems they thought they might never again see their dearly departed. St. Paul assures them they will be *together*.

4. Paul, like Jesus, refers to death as sleep. Come up with three similarities between death of a Christian and sleep.

- We wake up from both.

- We are unaware of what's going on around us on earth during both.
- Our bodies receive rest from our labor during both.
- A Christian can look forward to both.
- There is peace during both.

Of course, none of these things are true about the death of an unbeliever. Let's share the gospel even more!

5. Paul begins his encouragement by saying what we *believe* about Jesus. Explain the connection between what we believe about Jesus and practical Christian hope.

We believe that Jesus died and rose. Jesus also promised to raise us from the dead. If Jesus himself can do it, then we too will be raised. Practically, all those who have preceded us in death we will see again. Practically we do not need to fear death since we our Savior has conquered it for us.

6. This is one of the simplest explanations of the end of the world in the Bible. What events will happen on the last day?
1. Jesus will come down from heaven.
  2. Jesus will let out a loud command (probably a command for the dead to rise.)
  3. The archangel will also shout.
  4. There will be a blast of trumpets.
  5. Dead people will come out of their graves so that all living and raised-from-the-dead Christians will be together.
  6. All Christians from all time will have a meeting with Jesus in the air.
  7. We will stay with Jesus forever.
7. The Resurrection of the Body has been called the “crowned jewel of Christian teaching.” For what reasons would Christians be so excited about the Resurrection of the Body?
- It is the moment we will fully experience heaven.
  - At that moment we will experience what God created us for—a return to the Garden of Eden, in a sense.
  - At that moment we will see all our loved ones again.
  - At that moment we will meet all Christians from history.

- At the resurrection, our bodies will be free from sin and all its painful effects.
- At the resurrection we will see Jesus with our own eyes.
- What others can you come up with?

8. Who are you most excited to see in heaven and why?

Answers will vary. If discussion begins slowly, consider meeting people from the following categories:

- Bible Characters
- Great Christians from History
- Loved ones you miss.

9. The best part of heaven is that “*We will be with the Lord forever.*” That is not the same as an everlasting worship service. The Lord gave us wonderful blessings on earth and he will in heaven too. Imagine the heavenly version of all your answers from question number 1.

This is without a doubt a matter of speculation. We cannot know for sure exactly what we will experience in heaven, because the Bible does not tell us.

However, the Bible does describe paradise in Genesis 1:1, and it includes people, nature, music, food, and work. When the Bible gives word pictures of heaven, it includes all those same things—a banquet, a feast, a wedding, a family, singing, joy, multiple cultures, etc.

Proclaiming our predictions about heaven as fact would be unwise but imagining what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what God has prepared for those who love him, can be a practical way to stay excited for Jesus to come.

Consider phrasing things like this: If an earthly joke made me laugh *this* hard, how great must be the joy of heaven! If an earthly song moved me *this* greatly, how jubilant must be the music of heaven!

Enjoy your dreaming!

10. Imagine you are at a funeral. Come up with three genuine encouragements a non-Christian could offer. Then use 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to come up with three uniquely Christian

encouragements.

Non-Christian:

- Your loved one is no longer experiencing pain.
- In time your pain will get better.
- I am ready to help you during your moments of grief.

Christian:

- You have not seen the last of this person. Jesus will reunite you.
- Your loved one's body is resting and his soul is in paradise. Soon we will join them.
- I can't imagine how difficult this is. Doesn't this make you long for Jesus to come?