

# "Comforting One Another"

I Thessalonians 4:18  
57-30

Today you and I each spoke an enormous number of words. Talking at normal speeds through a normal day our words would fill a 150 Page Book. In just one years talk we have produced 132 X 400 Page Books!

Jesus said in Matthew 12:36-37 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.<sup>37</sup> "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." NKJV. What kind of book are you writing each day for God ? Every day we have a choice. We can be a blessing and strengthen the lives of all those God has placed around us. That is the way of comforting one another.

Look for a moment if you would please to our portion of study tonight: First Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NKJV. Now look at #556

Martin Rinkart was a pastor at Eilenberg, Saxony during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Because Eilenberg was a walled city, it became a severely overcrowded refuge for political and military fugitives from far and near. As a result, the entire city suffered from famine and disease. In 1637 a great pestilence swept through the area, resulting in the death of some eight thousand persons, including Rinkart's wife. At that time he was 41, widowed and the only minister in Eilenberg because the others had either died or fled. Rinkart alone conducted the burial services for 4480 people, sometimes as many as 40 or 50 a day!

We may well ask why all this dramatic experience and difficulty is not reflected in Rinkart's hymn. Had the good pastor seen so much stark tragedy that he had become insensitive to human needs and problems? Of course not. He simply had come to believe that Gods providence is always good, no matter how much we are tempted to doubt it.

One of the Christian's favorite, often-quoted Bible verses is Romans 8.28 (*Living Letters*): "And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God, and if we are fitting into His plans." Do we really believe this assurance? In our testimonies and prayers, and even in some of the songs we sing, we seem to enjoy

talking about our little troubles and difficulties, multiplying and magnifying them. We almost sound at times like "spiritual hypochondriacs!"

In the unclear world of tomorrow, it is entirely possible that we may experience great difficulty, persecution, and even war and death. Christians should prepare themselves and their families for this possibility, so that if and when it comes, we might face it in spiritual victory, giving testimony that ours is a faith that works. It may help us to know Martin Rinkart's experience and his hymn, which confirms these words of the Apostle Paul:

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or hardship, Can persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril, or the sword? "We are being done to death for thy sake all day long," as Scripture says; "we have been treated like sheep for slaughter"-and yet, in spite of all, overwhelming victory is ours through him who loved us. For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths - nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8.35-39, *New English Bible*).

Hymn #556

Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom His world rejoices;  
Who, from our mother's arms,  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace,  
And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God  
The Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him who reigns  
With them in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God,  
Whom earth and heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
And shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart (1586-1649)

Every day we have a choice. We can be a blessing and strengthen the lives of all those God has placed around us. That is the way of comforting one another. 1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NKJV

Our text has two parts:

- Our promised rapture to comfort our waiting and
- Our privileged responsibility to comfort one another while we are waiting.

## **The Rapture: Our promised rapture to comfort our waiting**

The word *rapture* is not used in the New Testament, but it is the literal meaning of "caught up." The Latin word *raptō* means "to seize, to carry off"; and from it we get our English word "rapture." To understand the rapture we need to see the various meanings of the Greek word that is translated "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Each of these 17 occurrences of *harpadzo* in 13 verses adds a special truth to the doctrine of our Lord's return.

### THE RAPTURE IS TO SNATCH US AWAY FROM THIS SIN CURSED WORLD

1. AWAY FROM THE ENSLAVEMENT OF SIN: Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
2. AWAY FROM THE SINFUL FLESH WE LIVE WITHIN: Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
3. AWAY FROM THE ORPHANED STATE SIN BROUGHT US TO: Romans 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.
4. AWAY FROM THE DETERIORATION OF SIN: 2 Corinthians 5:2-4 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,<sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.<sup>4</sup> For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.
5. AWAY FROM SIN'S GRIEF TO THE HOLY SPIRIT: Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
6. AWAY FROM THE LOWLINESS OF SIN: Philippians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. NKJV
7. AWAY FROM ALL THE TROUBLES OF SIN: 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
8. AWAY FROM THE DISTRACTIONS OF SIN: 1 Peter 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

9. AWAY FROM THE LESSENING OF OUR LOVE FOR GOD BECAUSE OF SIN: Jude 21  
keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ  
unto eternal life.

#### THE RAPTURE IS ALSO A CATCHING UP INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

1. WE ARE CAUGHT UP TO BE WITH HIM OUR SOULS LONG FOR AND LOVE: John 14:2-3  
"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.  
I go to prepare a place for you." 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come  
again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.
2. WE ARE CAUGHT UP TO EXPERIENCE HIS FULLNESS: Ephesians 1:23 which is His  
body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
3. Ephesians 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having  
spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
4. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout,  
with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ  
will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with  
them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the  
Lord.
5. Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the  
churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

#### THE RAPTURE IS ALSO A TRANSFORMING OF OUR BODY TO BE LIKE JESUS

1. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we  
shall all be changed—52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.  
For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be  
changed.53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on  
immortality.
2. Philippians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His  
glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things  
to Himself.

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with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the  
Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

How can we comfort each other through these precious promises of hope in Christ's  
coming? Here are ten ways the Scriptures offer us opportunity.

## **First Christ's coming Impacts our LOVING:**

1. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LOVE THE LORD'S TABLE First Corinthians  
11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's  
death till He comes.

2. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LOVE THE SAINTS MORE AND MORE. First Thessalonians 3: 12-13 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,<sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
3. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LONG TO BE TOGETHER WITH GOD'S PEOPLE. Hebrews 10: 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

## **Next Christ's coming Impacts our LEARNING:**

1. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LEARN FOREBEARANCE. First Corinthians 4: 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.
2. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LEARN PATIENCE. James 5: 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
3. Through Christ's promised Coming we can LEARN HOLINESS. First John 3: 1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

## **Finally Christ's coming Impacts our LIVING:**

1. Through Christ's promised Coming we can live HEAVENLY LIVES. Colossians 3: 1-4 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.<sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.<sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.<sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
2. Through Christ's promised Coming we can live ENCOURAGING LIVES. First Thessalonians 2: 11-12 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,<sup>12</sup> that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
3. Through Christ's promised Coming we can live WORD FILLED LIVES. First Peter 3: 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
4. Through Christ's promised Coming we can live EVANGELIZING LIVES. Jude 21-23 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.<sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a distinction;<sup>23</sup> but

others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.