

# The Lord's Coming 1 Thes 4;

by Svend Christensen

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*The sermon emphasizes the hope and comfort found in the anticipation of the Lord's coming as taught in 1 Thessalonians.*

**Duration:** 34:23

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 4:16

**Topics:** "The Second Coming of Christ", "Living in Expectation"

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## Description

Svend Christensen emphasizes the imminent return of the Lord as described in 1 Thessalonians, encouraging believers to live in anticipation of His coming. He reflects on the profound truths Paul shared with the Thessalonians in a short time, highlighting their conversion, the joy of witnessing, and the importance of love among believers. Christensen reminds the congregation that the second coming of Christ is a source of hope and comfort, urging them to be diligent in their faith and to share the gospel with others. He stresses the significance of living a life that reflects holiness and love, as they await the return of Jesus. Ultimately, he calls for a focus on the eternal rewards of faithfulness and the joy of bringing souls to Christ.

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## Transcript

You know, as I was thinking about all of us, don't let my bald head fool you, I'm not at all as I look, but at best, you know, thirty years from now, sooner, we'll most of all be in glory. By nature, you know, some of you may be around, but we have a great possibility to go much sooner than that without the undertaker's help. By the way, the upper taker.

Older Dad used to say that I'm not looking for the undertaker, I'm looking for the upper taker. And that's the one we're looking for. Now, First Thessalonians is a wonderful book in relation to that.

I just thought we'd say a little bit about that this morning because of encouraging us all to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming. He said he would.

New Testament alone has done 318 references to his second coming, so we can be sure he's going to come. He just said he will come, he shall come, and he will not tarry. So we'll read the first chapter of this.

The epistle is marvelous. The great truths that are unfolded in that. When you consider that Paul had only visited the Thessalonians for three Sabbaths, probably a few extra days on each side of each Sabbath, but he wasn't there too long, less than four weeks, and to think he conveyed so much profound truth to such young converts.

It's amazing. Paul and Tharzanius and Timotheus unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to you and Pete from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in all prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father, knowing, bread and beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as you know what man of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Spirit, so that ye were in samples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God was spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves saw of us what man of men again we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Now, the Lord adds his blessing to this beautiful chapter of his holy word. Now, you'll notice that in 1 Thessalonians, each chapter ends with the second coming, not before, the Lord's coming.

And I just want to mention that by way of introduction. In chapter 1, here you have in connection with their conversion, how they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. As soon as they are converted, the Lord's coming is brought before them.

And that's a great thing, you know. As soon as we're saved, there's always the possibility, even before I'm saved, 24 hours, the Lord may come. So to be kept before us, they were to wait.

And the word wait there means to sit up like a girl that's engaged to a man and madly involved with him and true to him, and he says, I'm going to come and get you one of these days. Whenever I get my home finished, I'm going to come for you. And she's not running around with somebody else.

She's diligently preparing her hope chest and waiting up, as it were, for him. So when he comes, she'll be ready to go with him to their new home. And so we should be waiting up, having all the love of the Lord Jesus, waiting for him to come to take us to be with himself.

Then you'll notice in chapter 2, it ends the same way. For what is our hope? Verse 19. For joy, a crown of rejoicing, and not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but his coming, for ye are our glory and joy.

Now here you have the crown. First chapter was the conversion. Now the crown, the soul in the crown.

Fourth chapter, when the Lord Jesus comes again, and we're caught up together to meet the Lord of the air, you are going to be our crown of rejoicing. Now that's something we all should be living for. What's our crown? What are we really living for? Who will be in glory because we were faithful to the Lord and

witnessing for him, a soul in the crown.

This is the soul in the crown. Ye are our crown of rejoicing. Oh, can you think of anything better we can take the glory than all the precious souls with us? Someone said the only thing we can take with us as far as the family is concerned is our children.

That's well said. You can't take anybody else with us, the glory, anything else of the material thing, only that which is precious souls. And I say it's a great thing.

What do you think of Paul, the rapture takes place, all these heathens converted to the Lord, going up, jewels in his crown, as it were. Ye, he said, are our crown of rejoicing. Now we need to live with that in view.

The Lord is coming. Who's going to go up with us that we witness to, and that we have one for the Lord Jesus? That's what's going to count, isn't it? The rich man died, and they said, how much did he leave? No one said he left at all. That's what we said on before, and we'll be caught up at the time of the resurrection, the first resurrection.

There'll be pressure, he'll be there with us forever. Now chapter three, verse twelve. Chapter one has to do with our conversion.

Chapter two, the crown. Chapter three, with the conduct. And the Lord make you in priesthood that bound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.

To the enemy establish your heart unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. In order to be praying that they may increase in that bound in love one toward another, that's the secret. And also granting to be among the Lord's people down here, and that the love may abound between us.

You know, the word of God is full of expectation for us to love one another, be kind to one another, forgiving one another. Life is too short, especially Christian life, to have any grudges or ill feelings toward any brother in the system. Let us really love one another.

That's what the word of God says, see. See Christ in each other. Love is for his sake.

The Lord's people, they're not perfect, but I'll tell you they're the best. The best people there are, the Lord's people, redeemed by the precious blood. In chapter 4, we have that wonderful portion of the Lord's coming to take us home, and this has to do with all comfort.

The Thessalonians were wondering now, some of the believers that were dying for their faith, are they going to miss out when the Lord comes again? Are they going to be left behind? And Paul writes this wonderful portion here, I would not, verse 13, I would not have your ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep, that ye saw not even the fathers which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we believe that, don't we? With all our hearts. Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Those that have gone on before. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord. And this was means by special revelation.

Paul was given great revelation, mysteries that were hidden in the Old Testament, now made known to him. And he had this wonderful revelation of the rapture of the church. The Lord himself, he says here, we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent that words should be preceded, will not go ahead of them which are asleep.

The Lord himself shall descend. He's not going to send Michael or anyone else. He's coming himself.

And that's a sweet study, you know, he's studied it himself. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel. With the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall arise.

What great words of strength and comfort. They're going to arise first. But yet at the same instant, then we which are remain and are alive.

Paul says in Corinthians, in the twinkling of an eye we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Not a blinking, but a twinkle.

Instantaneously. And we which are alive and remain we shall be caught up together by an irresistible force. We're going to be taken up with them, those that have died in Christ.

Their body will be resurrected in an instant. Those bodies will be glorified and together we're going to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

As it were, for comfort is the comfort the second coming brings. The rapture brings comfort one another with these words. Aren't they wonderful words of comfort? Some of you have lost loved ones, have already gone home.

But we're not going to precede them. Together we're going to be caught up to be forever with the Lord. It's a certain the Lord shall descend.

They shall be caught up. No question about it. Positive, strong language.

And then lastly in chapter 5, you have the Lord's coming and connection with our consecration. Verse 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you, that your heart and your guilt for a holy purpose.

Sanctify you holy. And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a tremendous prayer.

Knew the coming of the Lord. Our whole spirit, our soul, our body be preserved blameless unto the coming. And consecrated unto him and to his blessed person.

Let's turn back to chapter 1 again. Now chapter 1 is a wonderful chapter. I just want to point out to you there's five triplets in this chapter.

You have a triplet in all the ships. Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. Paul usually always has someone linked with him.

One more thing about the Bible, when the letters were written they always told you who wrote them. Sometimes we received mail, you know, and I was out reading, and I wrote about the dishes or something, you know, and I was out reading the letter and she said, Who's this from? I had to look down the bottom of the letter and see who it's from. But here there's no question.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. They're the ones. These two men are linked with Paul and writing to the Thessalonians.

So there's a threefold authorship here. And down in verse 3, there's a threefold subjective experience. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, your labor of love, your patience of hope.

A threefold experience. Down in verse 5, for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, and the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. The threefold perfection of that message came in power, and the Holy Spirit, in much assurance.

Verse 6, and then verse 7, and verse 8, there's a threefold we sought. First, they became followers of us and of the Lord. Verse 7, that they were ensembles to all that believe.

Thirdly, from you sounded the word of the Lord, not only Macedonian and Achaia. What a tremendous thing that was. The result of them receiving that message, that came to them in clarity and in power.

First, they became followers of us. They became disciples. They were saved, and received the world in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit.

Mine was a wonderful day one day. And as a result, they became examples to all that believe. And that's what every Christian should seek to be.

And it says that we get older. We are an example one way or another. People are looking at us.

We are influences to another. And may we be good influences, good examples to others. And then thirdly, from you sounded out the word of the Lord only.

And he said in every place, through their testimony, I don't think there's another assembly he writes to that he commends so highly for spreading the gospel. They were really an evangelistic church. Do you know the difference between being evangelical and evangelistic? The big difference.

These folks were evangelistic. Being evangelical says, well, we have a pulpit here, and we have a church, and we have seats. Come and hear it.

Being evangelistic, you are like a reservoir with the gospel water. You tap it to every hole. You go out with the gospel, knocking on doors and witnessing and taking the gospel to the people.

You don't wait for them to come to get it. We take it to them. And that's what these people did.

From you. He said we didn't have to do any work. You folks got it.

You spread it all about. There wasn't a stone left unturned. We've got that.

You've got it now. That's what it says. Isn't it? In every faith, both that in verse 8, you have faith to God that is spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything.

What a testimony this assembly had, spreading the gospel out. And that was a terrific job that they did. And then in verse 9 and 10, there's another threefold thing, how they turned to God for my love.

That was, you might say, the work of faith. In verse 3, that was the salvation. I tell you, the way to take something away from a child is give them something more attractive.

And that's the greatest thing, when you get saved and you really get the Lord and you get a good dose of salvation, the other stuff drops off. Nobody ever had to tell me, now you've got to stop swearing, you've got to stop smoking, you've got to stop doing that. No one ever had to say that.

It dropped off. I had something better. Some of you are acquainted with having a cat or something like that and you've been giving it skim milk and then suddenly your heart gets a little big and you start giving it half and half.

You don't have to tell the cat, now don't you drink skim milk anymore. It'll go for a half and half every time without you saying anything. It won't even look at the skim milk.

And that's the way it is with a Christian. It would turn to God for my love. It would turn to one who made it for himself and the only one who can fill our hearts and satisfy them.

It's a wonderful thing to really know the Lord and to be satisfied. And then they not only turn to God for my love, but then they deserve the living and the true God. The first part you have salvation, the next part you have occupation.

Occupied to let come. They were saved so they could serve and that's their label of love. Unless we serve the Lord, that love is not the right motive.

I should serve him not because I have to, but because I want to. The greatest desire of one's heart should be to please him who pleased not himself, but so willingly gave himself for us. And that's what they did.

They served the living God with a willing heart. You can see that from the context. And then, thirdly, to wait for his son from heaven.

That's the expectation. That's the expectation we have today. Isn't that great? Oh, they go over there dying.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? There's a great possibility that even we, at our age, are being senior citizens next month. Because that's when Enos started walking with the Lord. He wasn't interrelated that night, but of course, they lived longer than they do now.

But we have a great hope the Lord could come any moment. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing? Caught up to be waiting. I hope we're waiting up for the Lord from heaven.

I just want to touch a little bit on chapter 2 because it has wonderful things in it too. And that deals, you remember, with the sole winner's crown. Now, when Paul came to the Thessalonians on his special mission there with his brethren, you notice in verse 1 he says, our ancestors answered you it was not in vain.

And I believe when we're going to do any type of gospel work, and I believe that there was a tremendous lot of prayer. Paul could say, pray night and day. Pray night and day.

There was much prayer behind it. Much power. And when they went in, as you'll notice, they went in with the Holy Spirit power and much assurance.

They really preached the word of God with power. It's something to go into a heathen community like that. You read the background of it.

I believe it's in Acts chapter 17 how they went in there and how they were persecuted and so on. And it speaks of much affliction. But that message, or that mission, wasn't in vain.

It was successful. And what was the message he preached? Verse 2 tells us that to have power to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. It didn't just go easy.

And I thought, it's a good sign when there's opposition. And they came in there and they preached the gospel of God. That's the message.

There's no substitute. He didn't come in preaching or getting involved in the political scene that was out there locally or anything else. Social justice or injustice or labor unions and all this other stuff.

He didn't get at all involved in that. That wasn't his concern. His concern was to get people saved.

To really get people saved, it changes the whole picture, doesn't it? Remember in the olden days when they moved in some of those men within and God used them mightily that the liquor places dried up and the other places cleaned up. The word of God, it's quick and powerful. It changes from within and the life is changed outwardly.

You can put a pig in a nice living room but I'll tell you it won't change the pig any. It'll change the living room. You have to get the change from inside out and that's exactly what the gospel did.

And you'll notice when they came with that message that Moses was absolutely pure. They were not concerning pleasing men but God. And if all of us would have that as our first concern to be those that would seek to please the Lord.

He's the one we should be concerned about pleasing. And there was nothing that was looking at it from the negative point. There was no ulterior motive in verse 3. Our temptation was not with deceit or error or uncleanness or inguile.

We didn't bait or hook and cover it up with the sharp point of the hook. No, no. We came in the night openly and honestly.

You know what man and men we were among you he could say. What a testimony. I want to say this.

If we're going to be effective for God what counts is our lives. How holy and unblamably as he said they behaved themselves. The man is the message.

If a man isn't behind the message and consistent with his message it won't bear much fruit. You know yourself if I was standing here speaking to you today and you saw me running around with some of the other women here around these areas you'd throw me down the lake and I deserve that. There has to be a life behind the message.

And that's what they had. They came with a life that backed up the message and they were concerned about pleasing God and not men. You can't please God and men both.

Sometimes you can but all the time you can't. If it pleases men when you please God that's good. If it doesn't then that's too bad.

Be thou faithful. The Lord says and he rewards for faithfulness not success not popularity. Well done thou good and faithful servant.

It's required in the steward that a man be found faithful. And you have him here with a real stewardship. It didn't come with flattering words.

Don't you see in verse 12 the Lord and the cloak are coveted and they'll not ask to gain. They had one thing in mind that was to glorify God and to give these people the gospel free of charge. You'll see that in the context.

Verse 6 No man sought to be glorified in either view nor yet of others when we might have been burdensome at the pothole of Christ. They didn't want to be a burden. They didn't want to be chargeable.

They just wanted to be a blessing. And brethren and sisters that's the greatest thing you'll find that if we just want to be a blessing and bless others and be for their good you'll be the happiest person in the world. You often get teenagers they're the most miserable people in the world.

Why? Because they're selfish. They're always wondering what can I do? There's nothing to do around me at dawn you know. And they're always miserable.

But you take a person that belongs to the seekers of living for God and living for others the little word joy Jesus first then others yourself last. That's how we get a blessing and we are a blessing. And know that that dear man and I'm going to tell you if you want to see something about shepherd care and I don't know when there's ever been a greater need for real shepherds than today.

Sometimes we have people and brethren we call them elders but sometimes they don't shepherd. Shepherd work is a very very important work. And Paul was a tremendous shepherd because in verse 7 he says here to among them gentle gentle among you even as a nursing mother is the thought here a nursing mother very very gently.

Jacob is a picture that in the old testimony he moved the flock very slowly. He told Ethel we can't keep up with you. We have many young ones and we have to move slowly and we have to have patience.

You remember in the qualification of the familiar that he'd be patient. Great patience. Sometimes you feel get up hurry up say you know can't you take it in can't you understand.

And we've had this some of these truths for years and years but to people that's absolutely new they can't always take it in. And that's why we need to be patient as a nursing mother. Give them the milk of the word.

Give it to them gently. Don't want to take so much to start with sometimes. That's what Paul is speaking about.

We treated you as a nursing mother we fed you with that which you needed and not too much to start with but kept on giving you more and more. That's good shepherding. It was gentle.

And there's something else that Mark being affectionately despised of you. We loved you he said. We had a real heart for you.

What is the mark of the great shepherd the cheap shepherd the good shepherd he laid down his life for the sheep. There's the mark of good shepherds they'll lay down their lives for the sheep. They'll have put their interests before their own.

I want you to turn to 1 John 3 16. There's a wonderful 3 16 in the word of God. 1 John 3 16 Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Notice what verse 8 says in chapter 2 says alone and so being effectually this size of you we're willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only but also our own souls. They're willing to lay down their lives for these believers. And I'll tell you love never faileth.

These other things can fail itself. But he says love never faileth. There was the secret of the success too.

Much prayer, much love. And no wonder what a great shepherd and what sacrifice they were willing to lay down their own lives because you were dear unto us. And I think that's how you can mark the men that have that are real elders are those with a shepherd's heart.

Those that really love the sheep. Those that are willing to really sacrifice on behalf of the Lord's people. These are the real shepherds.

Then he wants to remind them in verse nine, remember brethren, of labor and travail laboring night and day. Why? So we wouldn't be chargeable unto any of you. We preached unto you the gospel of God.

There was much, much sacrifice there. There was self-supporting and they were transparent in front of them. And they kept it on.

They were laboring night and day. They were continuous. They were evangelistic.

They preached the gospel. And then he said, You are witnesses, and God also, how holy. They were holy in their conduct.

Justly means they were righteous, completely upright, and unblameable. They had a testimony above reproach. That goes along with being useful, fruitful, for God.

We behaved ourselves among you the believers. That's how they behaved themselves, with holiness, rectitude, and beyond reproach. And then verse 11, I'm going to stop early to hold you up.

And you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father to his children. So you have in him a father and a mother to the believers. And that's why I believe there was such blessing, and God could so use them.

And that was the great concern. His mission was successful then in chapter 2. His message was the gospel. His motive was to please God.

His manner and method was that of holiness and righteousness, and he counted it as a sacred stewardship. Look at that in verse 4. I just wanted to mention that because we were allowed of God to be put in trust. Now the Corinthians also said, and it's required of the steward that a man be found faithful to That's what they were.

They were faithful stewards. They had been put in trust with the gospel, and they faithfully discharged their stewardship to the Lord. What a blessing.

May we learn from this, and may we see, like Paul said, be ye followers or imitators of me, even as I am of the Lord. May God bless these few thoughts of our hearts. And just all that means is I'm going to say from this morning to encourage you, the Lord is coming.

But while we're waiting, let us be busy laboring with these motives before. Father, we thank thee for this time together. Thank thee for the present situation the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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