



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Rescue

2 Tim. 3: 1-5, Matt. 24: 21, Thess. 4: 16-18

1. This week we continued our study of the end by asking why Jesus has not come back already. Peter gives the answer in **2 Peter 3:8 - But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.** Peter explains Christ has not come back because He wants everyone, as many people as possible, to come to know Him. What stands out to you from these two verses?

How does it impact you to know that God is waiting so that more people can come to know Him? Tell the story of when you came to know Christ or came to understand more deeply an aspect of His character.

2. In **Matthew 24:12 - Jesus says that as we get closer to the end, there will be an increase of wickedness, and the love of most will grow cold.** Do you see these two things happening now? In what ways?

Paul also points out that in the last days' wickedness will increase. **2 Timothy 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, three without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.** What stands out to you from this passage?

Verses 4-5 predicts that people will be **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power.** Be honest. Has there been a time in your life when you loved ungodly pleasure more than you loved God? Are there times even now when you choose your pleasure over obeying God?

What do you think it means to have a “form of godliness but denying its power”?

3. In **Matthew 24:21**, Jesus teaches For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. We learn from the book of Daniel that this time of tribulation will last seven years. The Bible also teaches that we don't need to wait for the end; we have times of tribulation and trouble right now. Jesus used the same word translated as "tribulation" in **Matthew 24:21** and in **John 16:33** **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** The Great Tribulation will be much more intense, but we also have troubles today. Facing trials, troubles, and tribulations reminds us that as the days get darker, we should seek God's strength and not be surprised or dismayed. Do you find yourself surprised when you face unexpected trouble? What is your response in these times?

Let's reflect on an Old Testament scripture for a moment. **1 Samuel 30:6 And David was greatly distressed ... But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.** In these dark days and the even darker ones to come, we need to follow David's example and strengthen ourselves in the Lord. Tell a story of a time you were able to draw strength from your relationship with God.

How do you personally strengthen yourself in the Lord?

4. Knowing that a time of tribulation is coming on the earth, a time of distress, wars, famine, and disease that has been unequalled since the beginning, makes 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 very comforting.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸So encourage each other with these words. What are your thoughts on this scripture?

These verses describe what theologians call the rapture. *The word "rapture" is taken from the Latin "rapio" for the two words "caught up" used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. It has come into popular use today to refer to the Lord Jesus coming for the church, to lift her up into the heavens.* - Adrian Rogers. Another word that applies is the word "rescue". God's role as a rescuer is well established throughout the Bible. The word rescue is used 129 times in the Bible, and generally, it applies to either God's people asking Him to rescue them or God reaching down into human history and rescuing them. Paul uses the word rescue when he references the rapture in **1 Thessalonians 1:10 ...and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.** Tell a story of a time when God rescued you.

In this current season of life, what do you need God to rescue you from?

How does it affect you when you think of God rescuing the church from the tribulation?