

What Happens When I Die...

Discussion Guide Week of 4/16/2023 - **"The Return of Jesus"**

Scripture verse: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

OPENER:

We fear death and think this life is all there is. Jesus came to bring us victory over sin and death. We can hope in Him. Death is a reality for every person who has ever lived. While it was never intended to be part of the human experience, sin brought death. But it isn't the end of the story. The Bible speaks clearly that eternity is the full reality of all we were created for...being with God forever should be where we find our greatest hope.

As you gather, take time to pray together, remembering to ask the Holy Spirit to bring understanding to everyone, to give praise to God for the incredible gift of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, and to pray for one another as needed.

Leader tip: one way to get everyone to engage in prayer is by utilizing the "popcorn prayer" method. Each member "pops up" with a prayer and prayers continue popping up around the group. Start by encouraging each member to pray speak at least once. Everyone ought to at least be able to offer thanks for something good in their lives.)

LOOKING BACK:

On Easter Sunday, we had the privilege of celebrating the Resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ! Last week, we talked about our own resurrection...dying to a life of sin to be raised into a life of following Christ. With whom have you shared your "resurrection story"? Did it help them understand your relationship with Jesus? What was their response? Will you be following up with this person?

Leader tip: If no one gives any responses to the questions above ask the group what obstacles keep them from sharing. How can I (the facilitator) help you this week to share this coming week (using the passage you study today)

LOOKING UP:

There are many times in life when we are required to wait for things that we want. We have to wait for enough money, enough time, the right person, a certain event, and sometimes we even have to wait on God to provide answers to our prayers. But, waiting isn't always easy, especially when we do not truly understand what we're waiting for. Jesus's resurrection was a shock to many. It had been spoken of and prophesied about for centuries, but, though they had waited for and anticipated it, the Disciples and other believers neither understood that Jesus was the Messiah about whom the prophecies were told, nor did they understand He would be resurrected after his brutal crucifixion.

Ask if anyone in your group can share about a time when they were waited a long time for something. and What was the result when it finally happened? (Maybe it was a proposal, confirmation of recovery from a medical condition, seeing a

friend or loved one come to know Jesus after years of praying for them, etc.)

Have someone from your group prepare to **read** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 out loud for the group. You will want to follow up that reading with questions 1 and 2 below. But first, ask someone to pray once again for your time in God's Word this evening, for open hearts and minds to receive a clear understanding of God's Word today.

<p>READ THE PASSAGE</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 4:13:18</p> <p>Answer the first 2 questions after reading the passage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What stood out to you most?2. What was challenging or hard to understand?3. What does this teach us about God?4. What does this teach us about people?	<p>RE-READ THE PASSAGE</p> <p>Reading out of another bible translation... then answer the last 2 questions</p>
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LOOKING FORWARD:

God's desire is to spend eternity with us. He made the way possible by sending Jesus to die on that cross for the sins of every person who is, has been, or will be on earth. His blood sacrifice covers the sins of every person who accepts Jesus and follows Him. But God didn't stop there! Jesus further committed to God's plan by conquering death itself so that we, too, will one day be resurrected with Him. God's timing for the fulfillment of his plan - Jesus's triumphant return to earth - is not known by us, and we may not actually be walking this earth when it happens, but we WILL be brought forth to share in the eternity that has been prepared for us. Our earthly bodies may die, and we may "sleep" (this is a metaphor for waiting with Jesus for the resurrection of our bodies) until His return, but we

have nothing to fear when that happens. We are God's chosen and Holy people.

Close your meeting by leading the group to pray - placing your focus on "giving God thanks" for the plan of Salvation and the promise of eternity with Him.