

# LIVE HOPEFUL

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Why this?

Looking at the \_\_\_\_\_ goal

Life in the Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_

Fitting the \_\_\_\_\_

But it is not \_\_\_\_\_

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND. REMEMBER.

It is hard in 15 (or so) minutes to talk about theological systems that shape peoples' thoughts and behaviors. One of the dominant ones in the last two centuries in America has been a theological system called "Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism." Practiced and understood mostly by Baptists and non-denominational people, along with those who came from those traditions like the people who preach a "prosperity Gospel" (God will reward you if you give me money), it has made significant gains in Lutheran churches where, theologically at least, we say almost the exact opposite. The reason I mention that is that this text from 1 Thessalonians is an important part of their theology, that of the "Rapture" – and it is fundamentally a misreading of what Paul is saying and why he is saying it. We can be thankful for faith in Jesus that many people share with us, but we must also be careful to critique things they get wrong, because the point of Jesus is *Immanuel* – God with us, and this is a word specifically about that, not escape into the clouds.

Read Isaiah 9:1-7.

Reflect:

What comfort is it to know that the point of Jesus is to be with us, and that we may live in that hope now?

How does that hope work in your life?

Respond:

God has come to dwell with His people.

Remember: "For to us a child is born..." Isaiah 9:6a

