

STUDY GUIDE

Speaker: Freddy

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Series: Signs of the Times

Date: Sunday, January 25, 2026

Summary

In this third message of the *Signs of the Times* series, Freddy walks us through the return of Jesus. He focuses on what Scripture actually says, how we should understand it, and how it should shape the way we live. He opens by pointing out a simple truth. Urgency changes our priorities. When something matters, really matters, we make different choices. That idea becomes the foundation for everything he teaches about Christ's return.

Rather than getting caught up in predictions or timelines, Freddy encourages us to shift the question. Instead of asking "when" will Jesus return, we need to ask, "how should we live until He does." He explains how the word rapture comes from the Latin word for "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4. But the heart of the message is not about word studies. It is about what the return of Christ means for our lives today.

Freddy walks us through Jesus' words about His return. He shows how they reflect a cultural tradition where a groom builds a room for his bride at his father's house. In that tradition, only the father can say when it is ready. Jesus is the groom. We are His bride. The Father decides when He will return. This is not delay from disinterest. It is love. It is mercy. It is preparation.

When Jesus returns, it will be loud, public, and clear. No one will miss it. Freddy reads from Revelation 19, painting a picture of the victorious Jesus coming back in glory and power. He is not sneaking in quietly. He is arriving as a King.

One of the most memorable parts of the message is Freddy's story about losing his dog, Ben. He searched for days. He printed posters. He knocked on doors. And when Ben was finally found, Freddy was overcome with emotion. But in that moment, God asked him a question that cut straight to the heart. Do you care about lost people the way you cared about your lost dog? That question lingers, and it invites all of us to wrestle with it.

The return of Christ is not just a theological idea. It is our hope for the future and our mission in the present. If we truly believe that Jesus is coming back, it should shape everything about how we live. It should give us peace, courage, and a deeper love for others. It should give us urgency. As Peter writes, "in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, as you are waiting for these things, make every effort to be found at peace with him, without spot or blemish." This is not about striving for perfection. It is about living with intention. It is about staying awake, staying aligned with the heart of God, and allowing our lives to reflect the hope we carry. Jesus is coming. Let us be found ready, and let us not waste the waiting.

Referenced Scripture

- **1 Thessalonians 4:17** – "...we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..."

- **Matthew 24:31–36** – Only the Father knows the day or hour of Jesus’ return.
- **John 14:2–3** – Jesus prepares a place in His Father’s house.
- **Matthew 25:1–13** – Parable of the ten virgins and readiness for the bridegroom.
- **Revelation 19:11–18** – Jesus returns in power, judgment, and victory.
- **1 Corinthians 15:50–53** – “We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed...”
- **2 Peter 3:8–14** – The Lord’s delay is mercy, giving time for all to come to repentance.

Main Points

1. Urgency shifts priorities. When something is urgent, our choices change.
2. The return of Christ will be visible and unmistakable.
3. The rapture means being “caught up” with Christ, not escaping, but being transformed.
4. Only the Father knows the day and hour and Jesus is waiting with longing and patience.
5. Jesus’ return reflects the love of a groom coming for his bride.
6. God delays judgment because He desires more people to come to repentance.
7. This is our hope: Jesus will return to bring justice and restoration.
8. Even in dark times, hope grows brighter.
9. We live today knowing the end of the story and it ends in victory.
10. Readiness isn’t about fear, rather it’s about love, devotion, and alignment with God.
11. Our mission now is to share His love while there’s still time.
12. If we care about His return, we’ll care about who still needs to hear.

Discussion Questions

1. What does spiritual urgency look like in your life right now?
2. What does it mean to you that we already know how the story ends?
3. How does the Jewish wedding analogy deepen your understanding of Jesus’ relationship with the Church?
4. What role does hope play in your faith right now?
5. What does Freddy’s statement “It’s not about escaping; it’s about becoming” mean to you in light of 1 Corinthians 15:52?
6. Freddy said, “If you stay ready, you don’t have to get ready.” What does staying ready look like in your life today?
7. Who in your life still needs to know Jesus? How can you be more intentional with them?
8. Freddy’s story about his ‘meat-treat’ loving dog Ben was powerful. What would it look like for you to carry that kind of urgency for the lost?
9. What are some distractions or comforts that might be dulling your spiritual alertness?
10. How do you see God’s mercy in the delay of Christ’s return?
11. What’s one thing God might be calling you to do differently this week in light of this message?