As in the Days of Noah

(*Living Faithfully While Awaiting the King's Return*)
"The Blessed Hope"
November 8, 2026
Pastor David Bardowell

Big Idea:
Jesus has promised to return for His Church. This blessed hope gives believers confidence in His promises, comfort in the face of death, and motivation to live faithfully until He comes.

Kingdom Response:
Live expectantly, encourage one another, and help others discover the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

Series Heartbeat:
The return of Christ is not an escape from the mission—it is the motivation for the mission.

I. Faithful Disciple-Makers _____

_____ (John 14:1-3)

"Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:1–2, CSB)

"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." (John 14:3, CSB)

Key Truth:
Our hope is not based on knowing when Jesus will return, but on knowing the One who promised to return.

II. Faithful Disciple-_____

_____ (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13, CSB)

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thessalonians 4:14, CSB)

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, CSB)

"Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:17, CSB)

Key Truth:
For those who belong to Jesus, death is not the end of our story. Resurrection is our promised future.

III. Faithful Disciple-Makers _____

_____ (Titus 2:11–14)

"Waiting for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13, CSB)

Key Truth:
The blessed hope is not a reason to disengage from the world. It is a reason to engage the world with greater urgency and love.

Pastor David Bardowell, Senior Pastor
PastorDavid@TheGateOC.com
Info@TheGateOC.com

Small Group Questions — Week 9

The Blessed Hope

Text: John 14:1–3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Titus 2:11–14

Start Here — Reflective Question

Think of a time when you were eagerly anticipating something important—a reunion, a special event, or a long-awaited promise being fulfilled. How did that expectation affect your attitude or the way you lived while waiting?

Discussion Questions

1. TRUST JESUS' PROMISE TO RETURN — John 14:1–3

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus comforted His disciples with the promise that He would prepare a place for them and return to take them to Himself. Our confidence rests not in knowing when He will return, but in trusting the One who made the promise.

- Why do you think Jesus began His promise about returning with the words, "Don't let your heart be troubled"?
- What does Jesus' promise to personally return for His followers reveal about His love for us?
- Why is being with Jesus forever the greatest part of His promise?
- How can trusting Jesus' promise to return help us face uncertainty about the future?

2. FIND COMFORT IN THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION — 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Paul encouraged believers who were grieving the loss of loved ones by reminding them that Jesus' resurrection guarantees the future resurrection of those who belong to Him. Christ will gather His people, and they will be with Him forever.

- What does Paul mean when he says believers do not grieve like those who have no hope?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus give us confidence about our own future?
- What encourages you most about Paul's description of Christ gathering His Church?
- How can the promise of resurrection help us comfort someone who is grieving or afraid of death?

3. LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS — Titus 2:11–14

Paul describes Christ's return as our "blessed hope" and connects that hope to godly living and faithful service. Rather than withdrawing from the world, we are called to live expectantly and remain engaged in Christ's mission.

- Why do you think Paul calls Christ's return our "blessed hope"?
- How should the expectation of Jesus' return influence our daily priorities and decisions?
- What are some ways Christians can become so focused on end-times events that they neglect their present mission?
- How can the promise of Christ's return motivate us to make disciples rather than simply wait for His coming?

Disciple-Making Connection

The Kingdom Response this week is:

Live expectantly, encourage one another, and help others discover the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

We've been learning to use LAF — Listen, Ask, Follow as a simple approach to Spirit-led disciple-making.

- **LISTEN:** Who in your life might be struggling with fear, grief, or uncertainty about the future? How can you listen to their concerns with genuine compassion?
- **ASK:** What question could you ask to begin a spiritual conversation about hope, eternity, or what happens after death?
- **FOLLOW:** How could you follow the Holy Spirit's leading to help someone discover the hope of eternal life through Jesus?

Closing Challenge: Ask the Holy Spirit to bring someone to mind who needs hope or encouragement. Look for an opportunity this week to listen to their story and share how the promise of Jesus' return gives you hope. Remember, our job is not to convert. Our job is to converse—and trust the Holy Spirit with the results.