

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Instructions of Christian Life

Interpreting the Text:

1. In chapter 4, Paul is suddenly providing guidance about sexual morality to this community. Does it seem as though Paul is addressing a particular concern that was known about beyond this letter? Why might this have been important to Paul in his ministerial objectives?
2. Paul talks about grief and hope for those who have died, telling us a little more about his understanding of the end times and resurrected life with Jesus. How does Paul use imagery here to demonstrate his own hope in the resurrection?

Applying the Text:

1. Professor Bartlett shares a struggle of how to talk about eschatological hope (hope in Jesus' activities at the end of time) in our contemporary time. What do you think about Jesus' second coming or the end times? How does this chapter from 1 Thessalonians factor into your thinking?
2. How do you understand the relationship between faithfulness to God and the gift and responsibility of labor? How does this affect our vision of a church or a community that can be both loving and rigorous?
3. Paul clearly is deeply concerned with the interdependence within congregations and probably among congregations as well. In your own church, how does your community move beyond polite relations with other Christians and other churches to a deeper and more strenuous commitment?