

INTRO

In her message, Jennifer shared her personal journey with the 2nd coming of Christ through the film "*Thief in the Night*."

Was there a *cultural film, book, church experience, or person* that influenced you most on how you envisioned Christ's 2nd coming?

In one word, what would best describe your feeling about Christ's return?

IDEA 1

Read Acts 1:9-11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 out loud as a group. In both passages, Jennifer notes that Christ's return can be described as *imminent, personal, and visible*.

What does it mean for us as believers that Christ's return will be imminent? Does this provide fear or hope?

Is there something significant in the fact that Jesus "will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go?"

How are you to live in light of these truths presented in these scriptures? (cf. Matt. 24:14; 1 Cor. 14:24; 2 Peter 3; Rev. 21:3-4)

IDEA 2

Confidence in the second coming of Christ instills hope and inspires holy, missional living. Hope is grounded in our own resurrection and ultimate victory. Holy and missional living is centered on the purpose and value of our lives in the present, which extends toward the future.

How can an awareness of a future hope give us peace and joy in this present moment?

What is the connection between living faithfully and the return of Christ?

How should Christ's imminent return motivate you toward living on mission?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

One of the distinctive qualities of a Christian community is the virtue of hope for Christ to bring redemption and restoration into the broken world. Believers are often called to live in the tension of the already but not yet. Living in light of hope in a world of pain and sorrow.

As a group, read Revelation 21:3-4 together. As a community, consider sharing what pains, grievances, sorrows, and losses you eagerly wait for Christ to make right when He returns.

Allow this time to be both a time for lament and hope.

NEXT STEPS

Jennifer finished her message by giving *four* clear *imperatives* the return of Christ calls all believers to do. As you go into this week, consider how you might live into each one in light of your hope in Christ's return.

- **Hold on to Hope**
 - *Open your heart to hope*
 - *Take the risk of hoping*
 - *Practice turning your eyes to Jesus*
- **Be alert and self-controlled**
 - *Pay attention to the world around and the pressures of culture and society*
 - *Let your decisions and disciplines be based on a different scale*
 - *Choose to live faithfully*
- **Engage in mission**
 - *Ask God - where would you have me share, give, serve...*
 - *Neighborhoods*
 - *Nations*
- **Encourage one another**
 - *Remind yourself and others that this is not all there is*
 - *Remind yourself and others that God WILL but all to right*
 - *Remind yourself and others that there is hope*