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Here's Hope

By Rev. Jerry Rea

Up

We are *called up*. We are called up to a better and higher and more worthy lifestyle. It is not enough to say "I didn't *hurt* anyone." We must ask ourselves; did I *help* anyone. The morality of moral humanity is good as far as it goes. Believers, however, are called to a different life. Our life and lifestyle is to mimic that of our Savior, Jesus. Our thoughts ought to be up. In Colossians 3:1ff, the apostle counsels believers to think high. He recommends we set our minds on things above. We look up and we think up. That's all because we are called up. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith - is a continual look up. Our culture presses for citizens to be tolerant. That's good as far as it goes. Jesus called us to do something better than tolerance; He called us to be loving. Loving is very much different and every bit better than tolerant. Tolerant is neutral; it doesn't take sides and doesn't get involved. Loving is offense, both positive and giving. Christians are called to values like giving and forgiving and building up. Our value system is in no way passive, nor just moral. Our value system is good, loving and giving.

We are one day to be *caught up*. The Second Coming is a Biblical doctrine taught throughout the New Testament. He will return. He will return for His own. Because He loves us He will not forever leave us. Jesus told His disciples "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also." It's hard for me to imagine what that will look like. References to the Rapture speak of this being "caught up" as happening at any moment. There is a personal part to this day. He will come. He will not delegate it to His trusted servants, like Moses. He will come back... for us. When my son was small he didn't want mom and dad to go anywhere without him. I remember clearly the day I got down on my knees and looked him in the eye and said, "We'll be right back." Jesus will be right back. When He returns we'll be caught up to meet Him in the sky. The climax and consummation of earthly history is the beginning of heavenly history for those of us who believe. Because we believe we are constantly looking up.

The Second Coming is an event, but *looking up* is an attitude. We have everything to be happy about. We have everything for which to hope. We are quickly approaching the "glad morning" when our lives are over here, but beginning there. The older we get the more we have to which to look forward. Contemplating the end, though, can cause us to grasp an attitude for the journey. I've been told that at West Point they teach students to walk as if they're going somewhere. We, too, are going somewhere. Life is a journey you know. But you also know where we're going. The conclusion has been secured by Jesus. We've read the end of the book and we know how it ends. Good deeds will be rewarded. Struggling saints will be comforted. There is nothing that will happen to any of us, but that Jesus will be there and see us through.

That thought seeds a wonderful attitude. It is an attitude that looks up. That attitude picks us up. It lifts us up. It makes us think... up. Like an inflated balloon, we even drift up.

Look up believer, Look Up

Jerry Rea