

WE DO NOT GRIEVE LIKE THE REST

I. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

A. In the past 2 weeks we've lost some dear loved ones. Curt Taylor, who lost his wife a year ago to COVID, passed away unexpectedly in his sleep. Tony Montagnese was a man I shared an office with for 10 years. He was 95. Joe Sabo who some of you knew also passed. Sweet Sarah Stought followed the other three by just a few days. And we learned of Stuart Pierce's passing Friday afternoon...

B. Last week we talked about brevity, destiny, eternity, and you. Time flies but eternity never ends. Life races by at light speed but the love of the Lord and life with Him is unending. Job, Moses, David--all reminded us of our brevity. But Paul reminded us of our destiny in 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV): **9** *For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him.*

C. Not that we always know, but when you go to the funeral of those who've professed Christ and walked a walk that reflects their profession, the funeral scene is drastically different than that of one who seemingly has not. For the latter the grief is often so thick you can cut it with a knife. It's the elephant in the room. It leaves few eyes dry. But for believers our sadness is commingled with victory. Joy, hope, and the promise of reunion often make the room light...

D. I've done funerals for people of all ages. A new born; a 12 year old; teenagers; three people who took their own life; some who died unexpectedly; some who died from extended illnesses; others from old age. Both my parents. Janet's Mother. One man took the life of another, then took his own life. I was asked to officiate both their funerals. Fortunately I could only do one. At one gravesite service a wailing woman begged us to pull her deceased husband out of his casket. At another funeral a verbal tirade erupted. At another a similar ruckus was barely averted. I've been asked to officiate the funerals of people I didn't know--those for me are the hardest.

E. There's truth in the following phrases: *"None of us really know how old we are." "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." "Preachers can't preach anyone into heaven."* Likewise I say: *"Preachers also dare not preach anyone into hell."* When a surprised friend of W.C. Fields found a Bible next to his bed, Fields quipped, *"I'm looking for loop holes."* The Bible says there are none. Ecclesiastes 11:3b (NIV) says: *"Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie."*

F. In our text today, the Apostle Paul addresses a church that's deeply troubled about fellow Christians who've died. Some have apparently died recently, or since the time Christ died, rose again, and ascended. These folks have doubts about the eternal status of those who've passed, so much so that these believers fear they'll never see their loved ones again. Though Jesus' resurrection foretells of their own resurrections, the Thessalonians need reassured. The church in Corinth started believing there was no resurrection and Paul had to return them to orthodoxy. The Thessalonians may still believe in a resurrection but remain worried their fellow believers have missed out. Paul sets them straight. The same should happen for us too...

G. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV) should be bookmarked in all your Bibles:

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **(There are believers and then there's the rest of mankind. And what do we believe? The Gospel:)** **14** For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. **(When Jesus comes back to raise the dead, the souls of believers will accompany Him. If this isn't true, can you believe any of the Scriptures are true?! If this is true, then it should change the way we live as well as the way we face dying.)** **15** According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, 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. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words. **(If this does not encourage you, what will?! Let's listen to some dead guys speak...**

1) C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) said this of Jesus' return: "For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side."

2) Anglican preacher, J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) put it this way: "What will you see when the great event of Christ's return takes place? You will see the eternal Son of God return in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will come to raise the dead saints and to change the living ones, to punish the wicked and to reward the godly."

3) John Calvin (1509-1564) says it even more succinctly: "Let us consider this settled, that no one has made progress in the school of Christ who does not joyfully await the day of death and final resurrection."

4) St. Augustine (354-430) sums it up like this: "He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, steadfast hope and fervent love."

H. So where'd these diverse brethren over 16 centuries get such ideas? Did they make them up? Get them at their local post office or corner pub where they listened to every comer & goer, and then concocted the same notions? Did they take polls, write copious notes, then submit their respective philosophies to university professors for approval? Did they confer with the Oprahs of their time or other poobahs of popular yarns? Or did they turn to Scriptures like we just read? Whose words are you banking on in regard to life and death and life after death?

I. The Common Book of Prayer gives us this committal prayer: "*In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our brother or sister, and we commit his or her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*" **(What kind of hope? Sure and certain!)**

J. Encore: "*So we do not grieve like the rest of mankind who have no hope.*" **Do we even grieve then? (Think of Jesus at Lazarus' tomb--first He wept; then He raised His**

friend from the dead!) So we grieve, but we grieve differently--we grieve with hope! And our hope is different than the world's hope. Our hope is not wishful thinking. Our hope is sure and certain. Theirs is a hope made out of thin air; ours is made of solid rock. Hebrews 6:19 says *Hope is the anchor of our souls*. Try it this way: wishful thinking is the anchor of our souls. Wishful thinking is one poor anchor!

K. Let's jump back into a couple verses to take us home...

* **1 Peter 1:3-4 (NCV) says of this Hope:** **3** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God's great mercy He has caused us to be born again into a living hope, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. (And so will we!)* **4** *Now we hope for the blessings God has for His children. These blessings, which cannot be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty, are kept in heaven for you.*

* **1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV) declares our better Hope:** **19** *If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (And if you go home today and read all of 1 Corinthians 15, your sure and certain hope of resurrection unto eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ will become all the more sure and certain and you will not be among the pitied, but rather the privileged--the privileged, blood- bought adopted children of God whose inheritance is kept securely in heaven for you and this forevermore!*

* Close with Prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 \(NIV\)](#)

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[1 Peter 1:3-4 \(NCV\)](#)

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[1 Corinthians 15:19 \(ESV\)](#)

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Quote by C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) on Jesus' Return

"For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side."

- C.S. Lewis, *The Case for Christianity*.

Quote by R.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

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Bonus Goodies

The Intermediate State - Dr. John Neufeld

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2DyKK-HlyI>

"Grave Robber" - Petra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKyhGyTW_TM

Caterpillar To Butterfly

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkiU9uFwqmw>

"When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder" - Kelly Joe Phelps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNkm3kiGOOI>

Preaching a Funeral of a Nonbeliever - Hershael York - Pastor Well Podcast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJCp52h-c8M>

More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras

Psalm 42:5 (NIV)

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (ESV)

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. **2** For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **4** But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. **5** For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. **6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

1 Corinthians 15:1-58 (NIV)

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5** and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. **6** After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **7** Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, **8** and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. **9** For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. **11** Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. **12** But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. **15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. **20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a Man. **22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. **24** Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25** For He must reign

until He has put all his enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27** For He “has put everything under His feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put everything under Christ. **28** When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all. **29** Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? **30** And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? **31** I die every day--I mean that, brothers--just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. **32** If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” **33** Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” **34** Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God--I say this to your shame. **35** But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” **36** How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. **37** When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. **38** But God gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body. **39** All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. **40** There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. **41** The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. **42** So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; **43** it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; **44** it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **45** So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. **46** The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **47** The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man from heaven. **48** As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. **49** And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from heaven. **50** I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- **52** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. **54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” **55** “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

[Revelation 21:1-8 \(NIV\)](#)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. **2** I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. **4** He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." **5** He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **6** He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. **7** He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son. **8** But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Quote by F.B. Meyer

"Death is abolished! The wasp struck its sting into the cross of the dying Lord, and lost it there, and is now stingless forever. The poison fang of the viper has been extracted, Goliath beheaded by his own sword. The teeth of the lion have been drawn. And for this reason the apostles always speak of a believer's death as being but a sleep. Death is not to be more dreaded than sleep, its twin. In all likelihood we shall be quite surprised when we have passed through the dark portal, that was so slight and easy an experience. We dread it now, because we do not really believe that Christ's death has made it all so different. If we believed this, it would give us great confidence. But whether we believed or not, we shall find it so. A step; a moment; a passage across the Bridge of Sighs; a transition from darkness to light; a birth — that is all. Absent from the body, present with the Lord. No moment of unconsciousness or oblivion! The veil rent, the shell broken, the iron gateway passed whilst the light and air of the eternal morning break on the emancipated spirit!"

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Without Christ there is no hope."

Quote by R.C. Sproul

"Hope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19), because it gives stability to the Christian life. But hope is not simply a 'wish' (I wish that such-and-such would take place); rather, it is that which latches on to the certainty of the promises of the future that God has made."

Quote by John C. Broger

"The hope that God has provided for you is not merely a wish. Neither is it dependent on other people, possessions, or circumstances for its validity. Instead, biblical hope is an application of your faith that supplies a confident expectation in God's fulfillment of His promises. Coupled with faith and love, hope is part of the abiding characteristics in a believer's life."

Quote by John Calvin

"The word hope I take for faith; and indeed hope is nothing else but the constancy of faith."

Quote by Rex Rouis

"Hope is the raw material from which faith builds the house."

My Hope Is Built/The Solid Rock

Words: Edward Mote Tune: Solid Rock, William Bradbury, Circa 1863

<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/m/y/h/myhopeis.htm>

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.