

# *Grieving With Hope...*



*In the face of death!*

Saturday, 11/7 at 4:00 | Sunday, 11/8 at 9:00

23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2020

## **Introduction:** Dear Friends!

- Right now we are alive; however, a day is coming when each of us will die! As you think about your last day on earth, are you ready? If TODAY is the last day for YOU, are you ready? When we ✎confess our sins and ✎have God-given faith in Jesus, *we are ready!* When we are ready, *that reality will show in our lives!*
- For us we are still alive, but some of our loved ones have died. As we think about them, are we grieving with hope? If **yes**, *good!* If **no**, *this sermon will bring you hope, encouragement, and peace!*

Before we go to **1 Thess. chapter 4**, what was the general situation in Thessalonica (*an important city in northern Greece*)?

- Paul and his missionary team had stopped in Thessalonica to proclaim **the bad news of sin** and **the good news of forgiveness through Jesus!** By the grace of God some believed! Those people were severely persecuted, *but the Holy Spirit kept them in Christ!*
- Since they were taught that **Jesus would return** and **they should remain ever-ready**, *they expected Jesus to return VERY SOON!* However, as they waited, *some of the believers in Thessalonica died.* Those who were still alive became concerned that such people would be *forgotten* when Jesus did return. Therefore, in today's sermon text, Paul addressed that concern.

1. **Sad, But Believing God's Promises:** <sup>13</sup> **...we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep** [*who have physically died with their trust in Jesus as their Savior*], **so that you will not grieve** [*be sad, distressed*] **as do the rest who have no hope** [*who believe that death is the end*].
  - a. Death is hard – As we live on earth, *we have many God-given relationships:* **within our families,** **at our church,** **among our friends,** **in our neighborhoods,** **at our workplaces,** etc. When we and they are alive, we can **communicate,** **give and receive encouragement,** and **take action to help!** But *when death comes,* all such things cease – **SO WE GRIEVE!**
  - b. Grief WITH NO HOPE – For many, they believe death is *the beginning of total separation.* So they have **no** comfort, **no** hope for anything positive yet to come.
  - c. Grief WITH HOPE – For Christians, we believe death is a transfer of our loved ones from earth to heaven. So

😊we know where they are and 😊we know we will see them again! Therefore, we grieve BUT WITH HOPE – *as we look forward to joining them in heaven!*

2. **Believing Two Impossible Things:** <sup>14</sup> **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus [died trusting in Jesus].**
  - a. Jesus died and rose again – That sounds completely impossible! Yet, *with our God-given faith*, that is what we believe! He died for our eternal benefit **and** He rose to prove His victory over sin and death!
  - b. When Jesus returns He will bring with Him those who died trusting in Him – Just as *Jesus seemed dead – and yet He rose*, so we believe 😊our loved ones are with Jesus and 😊He will bring them when He comes! The world thinks we are fools, *but we believe God's truth!*
3. **Still Alive and Second in Line:** <sup>15</sup> **For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord [that is, who are alive when Jesus' returns], will not precede [not be ahead of] **those who have fallen asleep** [died before Jesus' return]. // When Jesus comes, there will be two groups of believers: (1) people who died in Jesus and (2) people who are still alive and believe in Jesus. Even though the alive' ones seem first and the dead ones seem second or forgotten, *they will be FIRST – before those who are still alive when Jesus comes!***
4. **Jesus' Loud Return:** <sup>16</sup> **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God [in ways that are not secret, but known by everyone], and the [bodies of the] **dead in****

**Christ will rise first.** // Jesus' return will not be secret, *but with a SHOUT, a VOICE, and a TRUMPET!* Then, regarding *EVERY* dead body, Jesus will raise them ([John 5:28-29](#)) and change them from perishable to imperishable; then, *for all who are still alive when He comes*, He will change them from perishable to imperishable ([1 Cor. 15:51-54](#))!

5. **Together Again:** <sup>17</sup> **Then we who are alive and remain [when Jesus returns] will be caught up [raptured] together with them [with those who died in Jesus] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.** // Even though some teach a SECRET rapture, BEFORE the end of the world, the Bible teaches a TOTAL-AWARENESS rapture AT the end of the world ([Rev. 1:7](#))!
6. **Comfort Now as We Await the Reunion:** <sup>18</sup> **Therefore comfort one another with these words.** // From those words, what do we know? (1) Those who died in Jesus are with Jesus now; (2) when Jesus returns, He will bring those people with Him; (3) when Jesus returns, He will raise all dead bodies and make everyone imperishable; and (4) all believers will be together with Jesus in an awesome existence forevermore! **The best is yet to come...**

**This Week's Challenge:** Start attending Bible Class and reading your Bible at home *to grow in your knowledge, certainty, and comfort!*

**Let Us Pray:** Father in Heaven, in the middle of this evil world, we thank You for Your word of truth – *which comforts us in our grief and makes us long for the great reunion yet to come!* Keep us in Jesus, and use us to reach others!

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