

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 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. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 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. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Theme

Jesus death and resurrection destroyed death and judgment, therefore we may live in hope.

Outline

1. What happens to those who believed in Jesus and have died
 - a. God answers this in v. 4:13-18. Very simply put, He applies the message of the Gospel which they believe (v. 13) to this specific question. Jesus' resurrection means that those who die while in Christ will be resurrected. Paul gives the details of this in v. 15-17.
 - b. The focus of the return of Christ is our reunion with all saints so that we are with the Lord forever. Christ is the center of heaven. Death does not hinder him from bringing us home.
2. Since Jesus coming will be as a thief in the night, do we need to be afraid?
 - a. God answers this in v. 5:1-11. He shows that the unexpected and inescapable nature of Christ's coming is not threat to believers, for we are already in the light. This is another application of the Gospel to life – the truth of our regeneration. Then he points out that we have no need to fear the day of wrath since Jesus died to deliver us from wrath.

Quotes

- *Jesus lives, and so shall I. / Death! thy sting is gone forever! / He who deigned for me to die, / Lives, the bands of death to sever. / He shall raise me from the dust: / Jesus is my Hope and Trust. / Jesus lives, and death is now / But my entrance into glory. / Courage, then, my soul, for thou / Hast a crown of life before thee; / Thou shalt find thy hopes were just; / Jesus is the Christian's Trust.*
- "Jesus Lives and So Shall I", Christian F. Gellert -
 - *The bride eyes not her garment, / But her dear Bridegroom's face; / I will not gaze at glory / But on my King of grace. / Not at the crown He giveth / But on His pierced hand; / The Lamb is all the glory / Of Emmanuel's land.*
- "The Sands of Time Are Sinking", Anne Cousin (Based on Samuel Rutherford's letters) -
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Application

1. Here is the kindness and patience of God. God does not wish to leave us in ignorance, for the fruit of ignorance is hopeless grief. He opens up His heart to us and reveals the truth about the resurrection. God does not reprimand us for not “getting the Gospel”, but patiently instructs us as to what it means.
 2. This applies to the sin of presumption. The lost are asleep in the night because they make up their own view of the end of all things. Peace and safety is their desire and they rest with no thought of judgment. When we live without thought of the day of the Lord, we are presumptuous and not applying its reality to our lives.
 3. This applies to fear and hopelessness. Ultimately, fear and hopelessness are unbelief in the Gospel. Jesus has overcome the ultimate enemy and threat of wrath and death. We are to speak this into our lives and believe it. Fear and hopelessness are how we respond to the lies about the future that we make up in our hearts.
 4. We need each other. Paul calls us to speak this truth to each other.
 5. Which sinful fruit do you identify in your life? Presumption, fear, or hopelessness? What false view of the future do you make up or respond to that leads to this? How would you apply the Gospel to your life to face these?
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