

Sermon Follow-up | May 24, 2020

21 Letters — Paul's Priorities: Waiting Well

Focus Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Additional Context for Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians

Corollary Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 1 – 3

Other Passages Referenced: Hebrews 2:10; Revelation 21:1-4

Sermon Recap: The Christians in Thessalonica were feeling loss and grief. Friends, loved ones, and members of their community had died, and they were grieving those losses. In his letter to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul said Christians grieve, but we don't grieve like people who haven't placed their hope in Christ. Jesus knew what it meant to experience grief and loss. Jesus died and rose again so that we might rise from the dead with Him! Jesus not only died for us, but He is coming back for us! So, in your loss and grief, don't lose hope! Don't lose hope because we know how the story ends!

Study Helps

- Hope: "Hope" in the Bible does not have the idea of "wishful thinking" that English speakers are accustomed to. "Hope" is associated with waiting in certainty for God to complete what He has promised. In most cases where we see the verb "hope" we could substitute the verb "wait."
- Trumpet of God: "It could herald a great event or issue a warning to the people (1 Sam 13:3; Jer 4:5). It was often used in military settings (Josh 6:4–5; Judg 6:34; Neh 4:19–20; cf. 1 Cor 14:8)¹
- "In both the OT and NT, as well as in wider Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature, 'sleep' serves as a euphemism for death (e.g., Gen 47:30; Psa 13:3; John 11:11–13; Acts 13:36)."²

Group Gathering Interaction

Connect: Making Honest Connections with One Another (Pick one)

1. Please share briefly one of the following:
 - a. What was a "buffalo" for you this past week? ... Something unexpected or strikingly unusual?
 - b. What has God been saying to you through His word, the sermon, or other people?

Grow: Listening to and Learning from God's Word

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

1. Keeping in mind that "hope" is not wishful thinking but rather waiting for what God has promised, what is the hope Paul speaks of believers having that others do not?

2. In 1 Thes 4:18, Paul transitions from talking about grief to talking about encouragement. With what words are we to encourage one another?

¹ D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, vol. 33, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 151.

² John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 4:13.

Serve: Serving King Jesus and Others, By Living Out and Letting Others Know God’s Word

1. During this time of losses, has the Holy Spirit shown you anything you are holding too closely? ... Anything you are not holding closely enough?
2. Is there anything you’re losing hope about during this season of life? Does the distinction between “wishing” and “waiting” make a difference in your hope?
3. In your times of grieving, how do you pivot from the pain of the moment to the hope that comes from knowing how the story ends?
4. Do you know a Christian that is grieving that you can encourage as Paul commands in 1 Thessalonians 4:18?

Further Resources

- Bible Project –
 - 1 Thessalonians – <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=55>
- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org