

“My Hope Is In The Lord!”
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction:

1. “Are You Prepared To Die?”
 - Who Would Ask Such A Question?
 - A Preacher?
 - An Evangelist?
 - A Friend Or Family Member?
 - They Probably Do & Should!
 - But What About:
 - A Funeral Director!
 - Wanting To Sell “Pre-Arranged” Funerals!
 - An Insurance Salesman!
 - Wanting To Sell Insurance To Help Keep Your Family From Having To Pay Your Final Expenses!
 - Seen Their Ads & This “Sales-Pitch” On TV!
 - In Person! Even To The Point Of Using This “Sales-Pitch” Myself! Final Planning Is A Huge Market!
2. The Situation Was No Different 2,000 Years Ago In The City Thessalonica!
 - Faced With Death!
 - But They Had An Even Greater Despair!
 - Most Believed That This Life Was It! That Death Was The End!
 - In The Middle Of This Despair Of Death:
 - A Ray Of Light & Hope Came To The Young, Persecuted Church Started By Paul In This City:
 - 4:13 - “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope!”
3. There Is Hope From Death!
 - Why Was This Important?
 - Because Of The Opposition / Persecution They Faced!
 - Because Of The Labor Of Their Loved Ones In Christ!
 - They Worked Hard! To Be Holy & To Love!
 - If You Are A Born-Again Christian, There Is Hope!
 - And:

1. *Your Hope Is Coming!*

- 4:14 - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him!”
 - A Taste Of The Lord’s Coming Was Already Given!
 - In Every Chapter So Far:
 - 1:10 - “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come!” – Jesus Is Coming!
 - 2:19 - “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” – Jesus Is Coming!
 - 3:13 - “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints!” – Jesus Is Coming!
 - Now, These Small Glimpses Are Expanded & Expounded!
 - Jesus’ Coming Is Your Hope!
 - The Coming Of Jesus Christ Is Part Of God’s Gospel For His People!
 - We Believe In Jesus’ Death & Resurrection!
 - We Also Believe In Jesus’ Return!
 - “Will God Bring With Him!”
 - The Lord’s Return Is Just As Important As His Death & Resurrection!
 - Because He Is Alive, He Can Return!

- Pledge To The Christian Flag: “I Pledge Allegiance To The Christian Flag, And To The Savior, For Whose Kingdom It Stands. One Savior, Crucified, Risen, And Coming Again, With Life And Liberty To All Who Believe!”
- If You Believe The Gospel, Your Hope Is Coming!
- The Coming Of Jesus Christ Is Part Of God’s Goodness To His People!
 - Especially Toward Those Christians Who Have Already Died!
 - They Are Not Separated From Christ At Death!
 - Romans 8:38-39 - “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, / Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”
 - They Are Just “Sleeping” In Christ At Death!
 - Unusual Phrase: “Them Also Which Sleep In Jesus!”
 - But For A Christian, This Is All That Death Really Is! The Body Goes To Sleep Until It Is Awakened By The Coming Of The Lord!
 - If You Receive God’s Goodness, Your Hope Is Coming!
- There Is Hope! – Because Christ’s Return Is Coming!

* Death Is Everywhere!

- Cemeteries Everywhere!
 - Large / Small! Public / Private! City / Country! Human / Animal!
 - 3rd Largest Cemetery In US - Right Here In Indianapolis - Crown Hill Cemetery!
- Or Imagine Living In The City Of Colma, California!
 - A Town Of 2.2 Square Miles, But Nearly 75% Of Its Land Is Zoned For Cemeteries!
 - Acc. To Mayor Helen Fiscaro: The City Has: “1,500 Residents Above Ground / 1.5 Million Residents Under Ground!”
- Death Is Everywhere!
- But Through Jesus Christ, There Is Hope! And:

2. ***Your Hope Is Certain!***

- 4:15 - “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep!”
- Because Of His Word To You!
 - “By The Word Of The Lord!”
 - The Same As Saying: “Thus Sayeth The Lord!”
 - And “What He [Has] Promised, He [Is] Able Also To Perform!” (Romans 4:21)
 - Because Of His Word To You, Your Hope Is Certain!
- Because Of His Will For You!
 - His Will Is Not To Give You The Timing Of His Return!
 - Though It Is Imminent – Can Happen Any Time!
 - His Will Is Not To Give You The Identity Of His Remnant!
 - His Will Is To Give You The Promise:
 - Of His Presence! Of His Priority!
 - No One Get’s Left Behind!
 - Because Of His Will For You, Your Hope Is Certain!
- There Is Hope! – Because Christ’s Return Is Certain!

* Death Affects Everyone!

- Example At Crown Hill Cemetery In Indianapolis:
 - Famous People: Authors / Bank Robbers
 - 11 Indiana Governors / 1 US President!
- It Doesn’t Matter Who You Are Or What You’ve Done!
 - Death Affects Everyone!
- But Through Jesus Christ, There Is Hope! And:

3. ***Your Hope Is Clear!***

- 4:16 - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first!"
- Because It Will Be A Personal Return!
 - "The Lord Himself!" – The Same One Who Has Saved You!
 - The Same One You Believe In & Worship!
 - No Matter How Long It Seems! Even If It Seems That He Has Forgotten! He Will Return!
 - And "We Shall See Him As He Is!" (1 John 3:2)
- Because It Will Be A Promised Return!
 - Many Times Jesus Promised This!
 - John 14:3 - "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!"
 - Acts 1:11 - Angels: "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven!"
- Because It Will Be A Powerful Return!
 - He Will Signal His Coming!
 - He Will Summon His Church!
 - Verbal / Loud / Authoritative – Literal!
 - Like The Trump Of God In Exodus 19:16, 19 At Mt. Sinai!
- Because It Will Be A Perfect Return!
 - His Purpose & Plan Will Be Fulfilled!
 - The "Dead In Christ Shall Rise!"
 - Because They Were Always His!
 - Romans 14:8 - "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's!"
- There Is Hope! – Because Christ's Return Will Be Clear!
 - You'll Know It When You See / Hear It! If You Are Christ's – Living Or Dead – You Will Not Miss It!

* Death Arrives Anytime!

- The Greenfield Reporter Lists Nearly 50 Obituaries For February!
 - From Age 20 - 97!
 - Age Doesn't Matter!
- According To The World Health Organization:
 - 2 People Die In The World Every Second! (85,000 Today)
 - Geography Doesn't Matter!
- Death Arrives Anytime! And Every Moment In Time!
 - But Through Jesus Christ, There Is Hope! And:

4. ***Your Hope Is Complete!***

- 4:17 - "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!"
- A Complete Rapture!
 - "Caught Up!" - Latin Translated "Rapturo" - Rapture!
- A Complete Reunion!
 - With All Other Christians – Alive & Dead!
- A Complete Reward!
 - We Will "Meet The Lord In The Air!"
 - He Is Our Reward!
 - Revelation 22:12 - "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be!"
- A Complete Result!
 - In His Personal Presence Forever!
- There Is No Need To "Sorrow . . . Even As Others Which Have No Hope!"

- There Is Hope! Because Christ's Return Will Be Complete!

Conclusion:

1. This Is Your Hope – If You Are A Christian!
 - It Is Coming! Certain! Clear! Complete!
 - So: 4:18 - “Wherefore comfort one another with these words!”
 - I Hope This Message Has! Now, Do The Same!
2. When Faced:
 - With Death!
 - Don't Grieve Like Unbelievers!
 - Because You Have A Great Hope In The Return Of Christ!
 - With Difficulty!
 - Don't Give Up!
 - In Your Efforts Of Holiness & Love!
 - Because You Have A Great Hope In The Return Of Christ!
3. Because: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 - “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, / In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. / For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. / So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. / O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? / The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. / But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

* “It Will Be Worth It All!”

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