

Three Comforting Words

29 October 2017 AM - 1Thessalonians 4:13-18 - Scott Childs

Introduction: Death is a fearful thing for many people because they have no hope. They think death ends all. The Thessalonian Christians were confused about this as well. They wondered if Christians who die will miss out on the blessed hope of Christ's coming and eternal life.

Transition: In our text this morning, the apostle Paul mentions three comforting words regarding our future that ought to encourage every one of us. I encourage you to write down the many references I will share with you.

The 1st comforting word is that ...

1. The Souls of Christians who Die will **RESIDE** with Christ until He Returns (v.13-14)

a. In the first century, Christians were concerned about the souls of believers who *slept* or died.

b. When a Christian dies, we should not sorrow as unbelievers who have no hope.

1) Death is not the end!

2) When a Christian dies, his soul goes to be with the Lord.

a) (2Cor 5:1-8) "*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*" (2) "*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*" (3) "*If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*" (4) "*For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*" (5) "*Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*" (6) "*Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:*" (7) "*(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*" (8) "*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*"

a) (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.*"

b) (1Thess 5:10) "*Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*"

b. A split second after the dead are raised, the living believers will be caught up.

1) They will meet the Lord in the air.

a) (Col 3:4) "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*"

b) (2Thess 2:1) "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,*"

2) They will receive immortal bodies on the way up.

a) (1Cor 15:51-53) "*Behold, I shew you a mystery; 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.*"

b) (Phil 3:20-21) "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*"

c) (1John 3:2) "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

Conclusion: The comforting hope of every true Christian is that when he dies, his soul goes to reside with the Lord. One day the Lord will resurrect his body and rapture those who are still living. Then we will EVER be with the Lord. Death is not the end. Death is just the beginning of all eternity.

If you are not positive you are a true Christian, now is the day of salvation! Tomorrow may be too late! Jesus could come today!

Song: Jesus is Coming Again, 151

- b) (Phil 1:23) "*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.*"

c. **The souls of those who sleep in Jesus will return with Jesus at the rapture (v.14).**

- 1) Their bodies are in the grave.
- 2) Their souls are with the Lord.

The 2nd comforting word is that ...

2. **The Bodies of Christians who Die will be**

RESURRECTED when Christ Returns (v.15-16)

a. **When it is time for the resurrection, live Christians will not *prevent* (i.e., go ahead) of dead believers (v.15).**

b. **The bodies of dead Christians will be raised first (v.16).**

- 1) (1Cor 15:22-23) "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*"
- 2) (1Cor 15:51-53) "*Behold, I shew you a mystery; 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.*"
- 3) (Luke 20:36) tells us that Christians are "*... the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*"
- 4) (John 5:25) "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*"
- 5) (John 5:28-29) "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" This verse does not speak of salvation by works because the only good a person can do is to repent and trust Christ for salvation.
- 6) (Rom 8:11) "*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from*

the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

7) (1Cor 6:14) "*And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*"

8) (Heb 9:28) "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*"

c. **The resurrection will take place in phases**

- 1) The resurrection of Christians is called the FIRST resurrection. It includes several phases.
 - a) The O.T. saints
 - b) Believers at the Rapture
 - c) The Tribulation saints
 - d) The Millennial saints
- 2) (Rev 20:5-6) "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*"
- 3) The resurrection of unbelievers is the SECOND resurrection. They will be raised to be sent to the Lake of Fire. (Rev 20:6) "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*"

The 3rd comforting word is that ...

3. **The Souls and Bodies of Living Christians will be RAPTURED when Christ Returns (v.16-17)**

a. **The Lord will descend from heaven to rapture the Christians from this world before the Tribulation (v.16).**

- 1) The Lord will not come completely to the earth but only in the air. Later at the Revelation after the Tribulation He will come completely to earth.
- 2) The archangel will shout.
- 3) The trumpet will sound.
- 4) The dead will rise first.