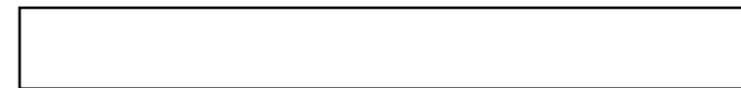




BECAUSE OF
J E S U S



1 T H E S S A L O N I A N S

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

- **They had done so well in following Christ- Paul wants them to keep on walking with Jesus!**
- **He encourages them to walk with Jesus all the way through death- why?**
 - **Some had died; what happens next?**
 - **Their culture rejected any idea of a true afterlife**
 - **Grief, which produces some unique challenges to Christianity (where we struggle to put our emotions and faith together)**
 - **God is God over the grave**

- **Paul doesn't say don't grieve**

- **Grief is natural and necessary**
- **Christians can do it in a way that betrays lack of trust in God and leads us to unfaithfulness and hopelessness**
- **What we believe changes how we live**
- **What do you believe about death?**
- **What do you believe about Jesus and his resurrection?**
- **It changes how we live and how we face death**

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

15 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, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

- **Remember that God is more interested in your character and comfort than putting a date on your calendar!**
- **The first comfort is that at the end of time, its Jesus himself who comes**
 - **With a shout and a trumpet**
 - **The party is just beginning!**

- **Sleep- talking about our bodies, not our spirits**
- **Always used in NT of believers, never unbelievers**
- **Believers' bodies sleep while souls are in heaven;
unbelievers die and go to eternal death**

- **Vv. 16-17- we will always be with the Lord**
- **We will be with others we have loved who have also trusted in Christ**
- **The big payoff here is being with Jesus**
 - **Is he your greatest good, greatest pleasure, greatest dream, greatest aspiration?**
- **This is our great comfort!**
 - **We die, we are buried, we go immediately to be with God, our body is traded for a new one- and we'll be with God forever!**

1 Thessalonians 4:18

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- **Good theology is always practical**
- **Jesus died, rose again, and if we have accepted that every area of our life is supposed to be submitted to his rule**
 - **Live every day to please God**
 - **Run after holiness**
 - **Love other Christians**
 - **Do daily tasks with excellence for God and others**
 - **Die knowing we will be with Jesus forever**
- **Take theology and apply it to your life, thoughts, feelings, actions**

- **What do we do with grief?**
- **As 21st Century American Christians,
not much- death is scary and confounds us**
- **Christ is Lord over all, including our grief**
- **Give honest expression to your grief**
- **Lamentations 3:17-18**

- **Going to God with grief and in prayer is an act of faith!**
- **Remember that hope is at the center of Lamentations (3:21-25)**
- **Psalms 40:1-3**

- **What do we do with our grief, when it seems like every day is Saturday? (Philip Yancey)**
- **This text is all about hope!**
- **A hope firmly anchored in Christ's death and resurrection**
- **Historical, actual event that promises the same in the future!**
- **Do you have this hope- really?**

- **God's love for you is greater than your greatest darkness, loss and grief**
- **Our hope extends beyond the grave because its rooted in Christ**
- **Is death just sleep for you, or a destination?**
- **With Christ, we walk through the valley of the shadow of death**
- **Without Christ, its a walk into eternal death**
- **It all hinges on what you do with Christ- will you believe and gain his life forever?**