

“Our Present Comfort in Light of His Future Coming”

1 Thess. 4:13-18

The Sufficiency of His Grace for the Sustaining of His Suffering People

The coming of Jesus brings comfort to the suffering. Paul continues the instructional section of the epistle with information concerning the coming of Jesus Christ.

We know from Acts 17:1ff that the church in Thessalonica was birthed in the cauldron of persecution. When Paul was driven from the city, the persecution of God’s people did not stop.

Paul refers to this in First Thessalonians 1:6 and 2:14-16.

Paul is writing to a people who are suffering. The persecution encountered was such that many had faced the blade and shed blood; others had given their lives for their faith in Christ. In the midst of their heartache and suffering, they also faced emotional confusion concerning future resurrection.

They wondered, “Will we ever see our dead loved ones again?”

Our knowledge of the future has tempered death. 1 Corinthians tells us that death has lost its sting and the grave its victory.

Consider how hollow our life would be if there were no resurrection from the dead? What if this life was all there is?

I. The exhortation is to hope in God (v.13).

By knowing who He is for us and we are in Him, we can have hope in the troubles of this life.

If we do not have this hope, then our grief, our anguish, and our pain will consume us.

II. The explanation as to why our hope is real (vv.14-17).

God will bring with Him those who are in Jesus, those who are already dead (v.14).

Think about it. If Jesus should return while we are still alive, those who have preceded us in death will surround him.

The transaction between the resurrection of the dead and the rapture of the living is simultaneous (vv. 15-17a).

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In Verse 17 we find the idea of rapture. The phrase “caught up together” is one word in the Greek language: **harpazo**.

The word means, “To grab or pull by force.”

When our Lord returns for His people, no force created will be able to stop Him from accomplishing His purpose.

Nothing can keep Him from us.

What is the result of His coming? We will be with the Lord always (v.17b).

III. The effect this has on the present (v.18).

This truth brings comfort to the sorrowing and suffering.

Look at John 14:1-3.

- There is a Peace (“let not your heart be troubled, agitated.” - used of boiling water).
- There is a Person (“believe also in Me”).
- There is a Place (“Father’s house”).
- There is a Promise (v.3).

It is the knowledge and certainty of His coming that brings comfort to the sorrowing.

- BE ENCOURAGED.
- HAVE HOPE.
- JESUS IS COMING.