

## Reflecting on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 September 13, 2020

**Introduction:** In this week's text, Paul addresses the concerns of the Thessalonian believers regarding fellow believers who had passed away. Paul comforts them with four important truths about the coming of Christ:

1. The triumphant Christ will return to the earth in the last day. (16a)
2. Those who die in Christ will rise again to join Christ in a place of honor (14-15, 16b)
3. Followers of Christ who are alive at his coming will join their Savior (17a)
4. The life after this one is characterized by God's eternal presence (17b)

The Big Idea of the message is that *God wants us to find comfort in the promised coming of Jesus.*

### **Up for Discussion:**

1. What is your biggest take home from today's message?

2. The key to understanding this text is verse 18: “Therefore encourage one another with these words.” The reality of the Christ’s return should be a source of comfort for believers. How can we “comfort each other” with this truth?
  
3. Verse 13 contrasts the way Christians grieve with the way non-Christians grieve. Talk about how you’ve seen non-Christians grieve and contrast that with how you’ve seen Christians grieve. (If it helps to have a question, here’s one: What does it mean to grieve *with* hope?)
  
4. In the middle of this text, Paul carefully explains that the believers who have passed away before Christ’s return will be the first to meet him in the clouds. Based on this truth, Paul’s readers (like us) have multiple reasons to be encouraged about their believing departed ones:

*Question continues on next page.*

- Your loved ones are not forgotten
- Your loved ones will be in a place of honor at the Lord's return
- You and your loved ones will be with the Lord forever

Which of the statements above is most encouraging to you? Explain your answer.

5. Take a moment to reflect on whether or not you really believe what this passage (1 Thess 4:13-18) is saying. According to verse 15, what is the primary reason for Paul's confidence and hope? Why is it so important that we base our beliefs in the truth of God's Word?
6. Paul believed that the Lord would return in his lifetime, and lived every day in preparation for Christ's coming. How can Christians today live with the same mindset?