



Comfort for the Future

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18

- A lot of times when we think of the future, we can have feelings of worry and anxiety. That's because we have limited understanding about the future. We can guess what will happen tomorrow, but we really don't know.
- All we have to deal with is the present and the past.
- So, a lot of our time, energy, and effort goes into planning what tomorrow may or may not hold.
 - o We schedule as much as we can. We save money in preparation for a rainy day. We pay insurance for our homes, cars, businesses, and our life all because we don't know what the future holds. We have meetings at work, discussions at

home, and meetings with others who can give us advice on preparing for the future.

- How much of our lives is spent trying to prepare or show concern for the future? God doesn't worry about any of that.
- Remember the **communicable attributes** of God and the **incommunicable attributes** of God. He has given us the capacity to love, create, and reason. But He has not given us the capacity to see into the future.
 - o We have to rest in what only God is able to do.

o "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34

- Overview of 1 Thessalonians so far. They have been faithful in many ways. They have stood firm and have continued to show their love for Christ and one another. But they are concerned about the future. *What about their loved ones that have passed away before the second coming of Christ?*

Main Point: We can find comfort in the future no matter what trials may come today.

I. Knowledge and hope

- a. Love reading quotes from the late baseball player Yogi Berra.

i. You can observe a lot just by watching.

ii. When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

iii. It ain't over until it's over.

iv. The future isn't what it used to be.

- b. We have an idea of what the future may hold. But there are plenty of times where we are simply wrong about the future.
- c. In response to that, some people view hope as this final attempt at grasping for straws concerning the future. They think - if they can't know the future, they are just going to give up understanding and assume that every day is like shooting in the dark. Even if they say they're trusting in the Lord.
- d. However, because God is in control of the future – there are some things that we can know for certain.
 - i. Paul told the Christians in Thessalonica that he didn't want them to be uninformed about their loved ones who were believers.
- e. The idea of knowledge and hope go hand in hand with the plan of God. **“We don't grieve as those who have no hope.”** When we focus on the hope of Christ – we do so based on our knowledge of God's faithfulness.
 - i. This is not wishful thinking. This is not blind obedience. This is not “dreaming rooted in ignorance.”
 - ii. The hope of Christ is based on the character and absolute knowledge of our sovereign God.

II. **The promise of the Gospel**

- a. VERSE 14 and 15
- b. Common euphemism at the time for those that had died – fallen asleep. Some today advocate for a doctrine called “soul sleep.” Where those who have passed will be sleeping apart from the presence of God until He comes back again.
- c. There is no biblical justification for that. This is speaking of those who died.

- d. Main point here – If Jesus died and rose again, you and I will die and rise again as well.
- e. Recent study has shown that the segment of the population with the most mental health issues – atheists. It's truly a hopeless ideology.
- f. NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE – We have the promise of the Gospel. God has already defeated death, hell, and the grave.
- g. This reality of a future is based on verifiable and historical fact. We remind ourselves of that Sunday after Sunday. Every Sunday is a mini-Easter celebration.
- h. Lots of people today have a serious fear of growing old. We do everything we can to prolong life and try to hold on to youth. Our image and our health.
 - i. Thanks to Missy Lundy's etiquette camp, Maggie now calls older people elderly. She told Sara the other day that it's not nice to call them old people. It's kinder to call them elderly. Then she said, "Dad is getting gray hair and becoming elderly."
- i. As Christians, we don't have to worry about age or dying. To live is Christ and to die is gain! Philippians 1:21.

III. Moving forward

- a. VERSE 18 – Encourage or comfort one another with these words.
- b. Every one of these words are faithful and true. They are trustworthy and reliable. Paul writes this letter to encourage the Christians in Thessalonica to stand firm in the midst of adversities and trials. What better way to encourage one another than with reminding Christians of what is to come.

- c. Greek term for the verb comfort – *parakaleo*. To come alongside and implore and exhort. The comfort alongside someone. What a wonderful blessing of being a part of the local church.
- d. Revelation 19.