

Grieving With Hope
1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
Senior Pastor Byron MacDonald

The Death that Leads to Confidence

It is a historical fact that Jesus both died as a substitute to pay the judgment for sin and on the third day He rose victoriously from the grave, v. 14.

Jesus' death and resurrection brought the victory over sin, Satan, and death for all who, by faith, put their trust in Him and follow Him as their Lord, v. 14.

The Death that Leads to Comfort

Those who trust in Christ and go through death, go right into His presence. Their bodies sleep in the sense that they are awaiting the resurrection from the dead, when the body is rejoined to the soul and transformed into the likeness of Jesus' resurrection body, vv. 15-17.

We grieve the temporary separation, but the grief is tempered by the comfort that our loved ones are with Jesus, and that we will soon be joined together for eternity, vv. 15-17.

We grieve with the help the Holy Spirit gives through His caring presence, through the promises of the Word of God, and through the love, care, and prayers of others (2 Corinthians 1:3-11), vv. 13, 17.

The Death of Death and the Hope of the Resurrection

There is a moment in time when Jesus will come, at the sound of the trumpet in heaven and bringing with Him those who have passed through death, and snatch His Church up (rapture) from earth to meet Him in the air (1 Corinthians 15:50-58), vv. 16-17.

In the certainty, comfort, and hope of the joyful and forever reunion, those who remain carry on the mission, v. 17.

Welcome to Rolling Hills Covenant Church!

We are a caring community of people who believe the Bible is the Word of God and choose to live by its truth.

**Our mission is to know Jesus intimately
and to share His love and truth passionately.**

May 5-6, 2018

Grieving With Hope

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Following each worship service, members of the prayer team will be available in front of the platform to pray with you and minister to your spiritual needs.

Receivers for the hearing impaired are available from our ushers.

JOIN US NEXT WEEKEND!

SATURDAY: 5pm - Worship Center
SUNDAY: 8 & 9:30am - Worship Center (Choir)
9:30am - 290s
11:15am - Worship Center & 290s

LANGUAGE OPTIONS:

RHCC en Español
Saturday, 5pm, 290s
Japanese Service
Sunday, 11:15am
North Campus Chapel

For more information about what is going on at RHCC this month, pick up a copy of *What's Happening* or our *Ministry Catalog*.

Homegoing of Pastor Mel's Wife, Kira

We are grieving over the news that Kira Ardón, the beloved wife of Melvin Ardón, Director of Spanish Ministries, died in a tragic car accident last Sunday night. We have established a fund to help the family. Please note "Kira Memorial Fund" with your donation.

We anticipate her memorial service will take place sometime this coming week. We will send an email when plans have been finalized.

Annual Congregational Business Meeting

Sunday, May 6 is our Annual Congregational Business Meeting. We will meet at 6:30 pm in the Worship Center. The budget for the new fiscal year will be presented, we'll hear a report from Student Ministries, receive new members, and more. Childcare available at 310.521.2539.

Join the Children's Ministries Team!

Be part of a dedicated team of volunteers helping our kids learn about Jesus. You can serve every weekend or just once a month. Summer and Fall opportunities are available. We especially need volunteers for our summer session (June 24-September 9). Come to the table on the patio following services for more information, or join us for our **Info Meeting on Sunday, May 6 at 11:15 am in the Loft.**

Patriotic Celebration Choir

If you are interested in joining the choir for our Patriotic Celebration please contact Theresa Cochran at tcochran@rhcc.net or 310.521.2514.

We're here for you! The pastoral staff at RHCC is available to help you with your marriage, finances, parenting, emotional issues, or if you are in need of prayer. We can also provide recommendations for Christian counseling services in the South Bay. Contact Pastor Nate Aanderud at 310.521.2565 or naanderud@rhcc.net.

Hands of Mercy

Help build loft-style homes for families in need on Saturday, May 12 from 8:30 am to noon in the rear parking lot. Wear closed-toed shoes and bring a hammer. Sign up with Mark DiBacco at 310.901.1549 or dibaccoclan@msn.com.

Women's Mini-Retreat

Saturday, May 19, 10 am to 4 pm. Hear inspiring teaching from extraordinary women, explore your unique calling through conversation and creative expression, and take personal time to contemplate what God is inviting you into in this season. Register and get more information at RollingHillsCovenant.com/arise. Childcare available by reservation at 310.521.2539.

Prayer Ministry

Homegoings:

- Please pray for the family and friends of Suzanne Warner on her homegoing.
- Please pray for the family and friends of Maureen Keener on her homegoing.

Prayer Chain: Submit prayer requests to Vicki Hardin at Chaplain_Vicki@aol.com or 310.612.7832, by yellow card or at RollingHillsCovenant.com/prayer.

Need a hospital or home visit? Call the Ministers of Congregational Care at 323.825.9694.

Weekly Giving Report (as of April 29)

Giving goal (6/1/17-5/31/18):	\$8,100,000
Budget Needs YTD:	\$7,560,346
Received YTD:	\$7,253,065
Over/Under YTD:	(\$307,281)
Needed last week:	\$145,045
Received last week:	\$158,897

Text any amount to 310.307.3661 to give.

Death is always an intruder. Death comes to all of us but it is never a welcome guest. This past week, death came to our church family in a very shocking and unexpected way. Kira, the wife of our Spanish Ministries Director, Melvin Ardón, went out Sunday evening to do a little shopping. On her way home, she was in a car accident so violent that firefighters had a difficult task extracting her from the wrecked car. The driver of the other car was arrested at the scene for suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Kira did not survive the crash and was declared dead at the hospital. Melvin, his daughter Giulliana (15), and his son Luka (12) were waiting for her return. Instead they received the call to come to the hospital where they learned of Kira's death.

This weekend we grieve with Melvin, Giulliana, Luka, and our whole Spanish speaking family, as well as the whole RHCC family. Kira was a devoted wife, a caring mother, and a person who passionately shared Melvin's love of Jesus, the church, and ministry. Kira has been beside Melvin in marriage for 19 years. She has been a vital part of the Spanish Ministry and it is hard to imagine the fellowship without Kira there.

But as we grieve over the loss of Kira we do so with hope. We do so with a message to death, you did not win. For those who die in Christ our separation is only temporary. We know for Kira to be absent from the body, this past Sunday evening, was to be present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:8. We know that Kira is in the presence of Jesus, seeing Him face to face. As a mother and a wife would desperately want to know, Jesus Himself will be assuring her that He will continue to shepherd Melvin, Giulliana, and Luka. She will know that Jesus will move a church family to surround them with love and support them through the challenging days ahead. Jesus Himself will remind her that the separation from Melvin, Giulliana, Luka, and others is only temporary.

While we focus this weekend on sharing our grief with the Ardón family and our Spanish

speaking community, we know that hardly a week goes by at RHCC without someone else suffering the loss of a family member or someone else that is loved. Death is a continuous intruder into our lives. Apart from the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, we will all walk through death. Part of the reason we focus on the hope we have with Kira is because it is the hope that each of us have, who have come to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem we have with death is the possibility that it can forever separate us from God. The Bible calls that the sting of death. The sting of death is that we have broken the Law of God and stand in judgment before Him. Those who die in their sins will have no second chance, no opportunity to reconsider life's choices. Hebrews 9:27 states, "*And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after comes judgment....*" The Bible teaches that the sting of death has been abolished by the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and established by His resurrection.

Here is the glorious good news about the confidence we have in Jesus Christ before God and death. 1 Corinthians 15:56-57 declares, "*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" For those in Christ Jesus, nothing can separate us from God and His love, not sin, not Satan, not death. We know that Kira died in Jesus and thus is with Him now. We know that those who put their faith in Jesus will one day all be together, and never more able to be separated from God or one another. Thus, while we are a congregation that grieves over the temporary separation that death has brought to the Ardón family and the RHCC family, we do so with confident and glorious hope that the separation, in terms of time, is but for a moment, while the reunion never ends. And we know that Jesus, by the fullness of the Holy Spirit in us and working through the church family, will give us the grace, comfort, and strength we will need to continue the mission of reaching others with the Gospel.

~ Senior Pastor Byron MacDonald