

11/6/26

On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about "the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus." If you normally listen on Apple Podcast, I'm really sorry. We've had technical difficulties with getting it uploaded on Apple. We hope to get it resolved soon. It's still available on the Summit Point website. If you'd like to listen, here's the link… https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/

Blessings,
Jonna

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

This week we start a new theme in our series, Kingdom Outpost. It's called "Hope in Eternal Life." This is a big deal. For me, I know that I can easily get caught up in the here and now… and that can mess up my hope. I can start to place my hope in my circumstances and then be frustrated when my circumstances don't go as I plan or desire. But 1 Peter 1:13 calls believers to "set your hope FULLY on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." A few verses earlier, Peter said that it's when we realize we're "obtaining the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls," that our joy becomes "inexpressible and filled with glory." Is my joy expressible? If so, I'm probably placing my hope in something other than my eternity with Jesus. O Lord, please help me to put my hope FULLY on Your grace and Your plan of bringing me home to You.

What do I learn about this hope of eternity in Jesus from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18? What is one of the most painful things we experience in this life? The loss of loved ones. In this passage, Paul addressed this painful topic and explained how, even when we grieve, we can grieve with hope. Why? Because we have the hope of eternity with the Lord.

Vs. 13 ~ "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

Why does Paul refer to those who have died as those who are "asleep"? In Christ, there is physical death, but no spiritual death. We have hope. Though our physical bodies "fall asleep",

our spirits and souls are very much alive. And yet, when a person's physical body is "asleep", those of us who are awake miss them. And God is totally understanding of that!

My husband will say at funerals, "Tears are not a sign of a lack of faith. Tears are a sign that it hurts." We're not told not to grieve. We're told that in our grief we can still have hope. I find this to be comforting. My God is compassionate! Even Jesus grieved when John the Baptist was beheaded, knowing full well that John's physical body was only asleep, while his soul and spirit were in paradise with the Lord. And in Luke 11, knowing that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus still wept with those who were hurting over the fact that Lazarus was "sleeping."

What is this grieving with hope all about? Vs. 14-17 will explain…

Vs. 14 ~ "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep."

Because Jesus lives, all who confess Him as Lord live. God the Father promises that He will bring all who wholeheartedly believe in Jesus with Jesus to where He is. In John 17:24 Jesus prayed, "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world." Jesus never prayed anything outside of the will of the Father. The fact that He prayed it was promise in itself that it would happen. Death, or physical sleep, does not separate me from the Lord, it ushers me into His presence!!! That's a promise. I can put my hope in eternity with the Lord because "every word of the Lord proves true" (Proverbs 30:5).

Vs. 15 ~ "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep."

In every age of history, people have thought, "This is the generation when Christ will call us home." And I find no correction from God that says, "Nope. Not yet." So Paul spoke as though Christ may call us home at any moment. I don't think that's a bad idea at all. I think it's really important that I keep my mind set on the idea that He could call me home at any moment. Otherwise, I will forget. I will allow myself to get caught up in temporary things and try to make heaven on earth.

But in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul calls the bodies we're living in now "tents." They're temporary. He said right now we "groan, being burdened… wanting to be at home with the Lord." At any age of history, the call is to see our lives in light of eternity. And even if these bodies fall asleep, that just means we get to be the first ones who hear the call, whose physical bodies rise and meet the Lord where we will get our new bodies! The mortal will be swallowed by life! Philippians 3:21 says that Jesus will "transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body."

Vs. 16 ~ "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."

This will be AWESOME! The Lord HIMSELF will come for His bride, all those who put their faith in Jesus. The command will be given. The voice of an archangel will have the privilege of repeating the command. The trumpet of God will resound. And all the sudden all those people who denied Jesus as Lord will watch, probably in fear, while all those bodies start ascending into the sky as "the dead in Christ" go to meet their Savior face to face! (They'll probably explain it away as AI.)

Vs. 17 ~ "Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

Whatever believers are on this earth when the trumpet sounds will not be left behind. They will join those who were asleep to meet the Lord in the air. O my goodness!!! This will be incredible!

Let me not be lulled into distraction by the fact that it hasn't happened yet. If God has declared it, it will be! Isaiah 46:8-11 says that He "declares the end from the beginning…" and that His "counsel shall stand" and He "will accomplish ALL His purpose." If I can't trust this word of His, I can't trust ANY word of His. But I CAN trust EVERY word of His. And therefore, I can put all my hope in Him and in eternity with Him.

What do I see about my God in this passage?

- *Jesus died and rose again. He did this for me! He did this not only to save me from my sins, but to reconcile me to Him and to my Father in heaven.*
- *He WILL bring ALL His people to Him in heaven… first those who are physically asleep and then those who are physically alive. He has the power to do it. He has the plan to do it. Nobody can stop Him. He is the Alpha and the Omega… What He says will be. He is the Almighty God who is and who was and who is to come!*
- *He HIMSELF will descend from heaven with the command! He has all authority to accomplish all His will. The angels bow to Him in humble obedience, and I'm sure, they carry out His command with absolute joy. That trumpet blast will be the most powerful and exciting sound ever to be heard in all of history. It marks the hope of eternity finally coming so that our faith becomes sight.*
- *He is taking us home to be with Him forever! He has the power to do it. He WANTS to do it. He WILL do it.*

Vs. 18 ~ "Therefore encourage one another with these words."

Why does Paul encourage us to encourage each other with these specific words? First, because it's easy to forget who it is we worship. When we don't see things happening in our age of instant gratification, we need to be reminded to keep an eternal perspective. Second, we do grieve in this life. And God says we can grieve with hope. We need to be encouraged to grieve

and not be ashamed that it hurts… and also… to grieve with hope, knowing that this sorrow is truly temporary.

Someday I will stand face to face with my God. I will see His face. I will hear His voice. I am so excited for that day. I pray that knowing what my future is, I will live with hope today. I seriously doubt that I'll get before Jesus and start accusing Him of not caring about the things that I struggled with on earth. I will finally know Him even as I'm fully known… and whatever I experienced on earth will be replaced with the incredible view and love and peace and joy that I will experience in His presence forevermore. O Lord, please help me to live with the hope of eternity always in my mind. Let that be the encouragement I need for today.