



UNIONTOWN
BIBLE CHURCH

Sermon Guide
November 16: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Question: What happens after we die? Are our loved ones who believed already with Jesus, or are they waiting for Him to return? What about what we call "the Rapture?" What is heaven anyway?

Key Takeaway:

1. The Gospel foundation: The Bible tells us what God has done to earn our salvation through Jesus Christ, not what we must do to earn it.
2. Grief is real and okay: Being a Christian doesn't mean floating around like a "spiritual robot." Grief shows up because something mattered—it's a sign of great love, not a failure of faith.
3. Death doesn't change what matters most: If you're in Christ, nothing—including death—can separate you from God's love (Romans 8:38-39).
4. Christians who die are resting in Jesus: They immediately go into God's presence and are awaiting the resurrection.
5. The great reunion: When Christ returns, the dead in Christ will rise first, and we will all be together—with Him and with each other—forever.
6. Heaven is Physical and Beautiful: It's not clouds and harps, but a recreated, perfected world where all good things exist without sin's stain.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 together. What stands out to you most from this passage? What questions does it raise for you?
2. Why do you think Paul uses the word "sleep" or "asleep" so many times when talking about death? What comfort does this metaphor provide?
3. Paul says we "do not grieve like the rest who have no hope" (v. 13). What's the difference between Christian grief and grief without hope?
4. Have you experienced the loss of a loved one? How did your faith (or lack of faith at the time) shape how you processed that grief?
5. Lament isn't just allowed—it's modeled, patterned, and necessary. Do you find it easy or difficult to be honest with God about your pain? Why?

6. Christians often argue about the timing of the rapture but that Paul "does not care about the timing" in this passage. Why do you think Paul focuses on what happens rather than when it happens?
7. How does the promise of bodily resurrection (not just spiritual existence) change the way we think about our physical world and bodies now?
8. Read Romans 8:38-39. How does this passage complement what Paul is saying in 1 Thessalonians 4?
9. For those grieving: What practical steps can you take this week to honestly bring your grief before God in prayer? (Consider journaling, praying the Psalms of lament, or sharing with a trusted friend)
10. For the whole group: How can we better support those in our church or community who are grieving? What should we say (or not say)?
11. How does the hope in the reminder that "one day we will see [Jesus] as we stand next to [our loved ones]." change the way you live today?

Practical Applications:

1. When you sin this week, practice plain confession without excuses, minimizing, or renaming. Simply say to God: "I sinned. I [specific sin]. Please forgive me." Then receive His forgiveness and move forward.
2. Set aside 15 minutes to look back over the past year. Write down specific ways Jesus has changed you, even small ones. Thank God for the progress, not perfection.
3. Memorize Romans 8:1 and 1 John 1:9. When you struggle with guilt or shame this week, speak these verses out loud as a declaration of truth.
4. Each day this week, notice when you're trying to "supplement" Jesus with your own efforts versus resting in Him as your substitute. Journal about what you discover.
5. Share one lie you've been believing about God's forgiveness or your standing with Him. Pray for each other, thanking God for Jesus as our substitute and asking for grace to walk in freedom.