

**IF JESUS IS RISEN, . . .**  
**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

**Significance of the resurrection**—for most of us it's related to theology—affirmation of Who Christ is & of God's acceptance of His death to pay penalty for our sin, & to satisfy God's wrath because of our sin.

However, at least 2 implications of the resurrection, are directly related to our lives:

**1. The power of God's Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead gives us new life. Rom. 8:11** *"If the Spirit of*

*him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Impl.: Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, we can know that God will raise US.**

***Because He lives we too shall live. 4:14** "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."*

**Funerals**—we've had privilege of being present at funerals of godly people who, after years of walking with God, & years of physical suffering, have gone home to be with their Lord. Incredible difference between those, & people without Christ, who have no hope! *Reminder this week!*

As we talk to families that lost loved ones, time after time they agree that, while we miss people we love when they go home, we wouldn't want to cling to them. It's always a special moment to be present at the bedside of a godly person, who goes home! It's a time of peace—often even a time of joy—when people *KNOW* where they're going.

When my dad was about to go home to be with the Lord, he was ready to go. He just wanted God to take him. People often say, "I don't know why the Lord leaves me here. Why doesn't He take me?!!"

Paul writes about certainty of our hope in 1 Th. 4

Church at Thess. was among 1<sup>st</sup> churches in Macedonia.

Paul's ministry there was fruitful.

People responded positively to the gospel. 1:3-10

Testimony of changed lives leads to persecution.

Paul writes to struggling, confused saints:

**To answer question of people** suffering for faith & need assurance concerning what they're going through & what to expect in the future.

They're facing hard times and need security.

They're seeking answers.

**CONCERNING THE DEAD IN CHRIST 4:13-18**

**The problem 4:13**

They're well-taught, in spite of his brief time with them

**\* They believe the Lord's return is imminent.**

Christ is coming soon.

He could come at any time!

Paul assumes he & they will be among those still alive when He comes.

**4:15** "...we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

They seem to have same assumption!

\* **Before the Lord comes back, some die.**

They'll no longer be present when Christ returns.

\* *What will happen to them?!!*

They need answer from God to know how to face the days they're living in. **4:13** "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope."

**The solution 4:14-17**

Paul assures us that we need not be concerned about those who die.

**Resurrection 4:14** "We believe that Jesus died & rose again, & so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."

Jesus' resurrection assures our resurrection!

That's one of the key lessons Easter teaches us.

As we remember our Lord's resurrection,

***If death can't stop Jesus' resurrection,  
it can't stop ours either.***

That IS our hope!

If we believe *Jesus* was raised from the dead,  
we can be sure God will bring back  
those who have died with Him also!

As we bury our loved ones,

we say goodby

–but it's an "hasta luego,"

NOT an "Adios!"

It's a "see you later!"

NOT a "Goodby!"

It's the farewell of the airport,

knowing we'll see each other again!

**Rapture together 4:15-17** "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel & with the trumpet call of God, & the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>After that, we who are still alive & are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. & so we will be with the Lord forever."

Those affected are the "dead in Christ"

–description of N.T. believers,

**Those who die in Christ will be resurrected before those who remain alive.**

First – God will raise the dead in Christ.

Then – God will raise the living who trust in Him.

*The living don't beat the dead!*

**The 2 groups meet in the air.**

ALL will be glorified (1 Cor. 15)

**Both groups meet the Lord.**

**Both groups remain with Him forever.**

**Those who die ahead of time don't miss anything!**

**∴, We don't mourn as those who have no hope!**

**He focuses on what takes place; NOT when.**

But it *does* express our hope.

- The argument presupposes the imminence of our Lord's coming.

He could come at anytime!

This is next great event in God's revealed timetable for His church.

Paul assumes this could happen *any day now*!

He expects to be here when it happens (as do we!)

**The Result 4:18 “Therefore encourage each other with these words.”**

This assurance encourages people who suffer for their faith.

**We can encourage each other with this truth**

**We'll all enjoy eternity together**

The celebration begins with the rapture, when the trumpet sounds, and the Lord descends, to gather His people from the grave.

### **Practical Implications for Our Life:**

**1. When faced with death of those we love, we comfort one another.**

**4:13, 18 We don't grieve as those who have no hope...**

*We can encourage each other with these words.”*

**Jn. 14:1-3**

*“Don't let your hearts be troubled!*

*Trust in God; trust also in Me!”*

*“I'm going to prepare a place for you...*

*I'll come back & take you to be with me!”*

It's exciting at the hospital when people go to be with the Lord, and at the funeral home with their family.

We have reason to comfort each other with our hope

One family member said to me, *“I can't be sad. There's too much to be happy about.*

*We're having a great time remembering life together & celebrating mom's/ dad's presence with the Lord... I can't be sad!”*

We encourage one another

by reminding one another of that reality!

**2. We stand firm & keep working. 1 Cor. 15:58**

*“Therefore, my brothers, **stand firm. Let nothing move you.** Always **give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord**, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”*

### **3. We purify ourselves.**

**1 Jn 3:2-3** *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, & what we will be hasn’t yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

*<sup>3</sup>Everyone who has this hope in him **purifies himself, just as he is pure.**”*

What does the future hold?

We don't know.

There are evidences that the Lord may return soon.

Therefore, we comfort one another.

We hang in there, stand firm, & keep serving the Lord.

We keep ourselves pure.

### **What will we dedicate our lives to?**

If we dedicate our life to serving the Lord, we can't lose!

If we have another 100 years, we'll have the best possible life

We'll enjoy privilege & blessing serving Him.

If we die next week, or if Christ comes today, we'll be with Him & achieve our heart's desire—to see Him.

*“For to me to live is Christ & to die is gain!” Phil. 1:21*

Living is all about Him.

It's even better to die; be in presence. No barriers!

We want to be sure we're ready when He comes!

### **Are YOU ready?**

The promise is for those who “die in Christ.”

It's for those who trust HIM.

### **Are YOU trusting Him?**

Or, are you still trying to do it yourself

—still trying to make it on your own?

**Jn 11:25-26** Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection & the life. **Whoever trusts in me**, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>& everyone who lives & **trusts in me** shall never die.”*