



Why shouldn't we be ignorant of theology? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 1Thessalonians 4:13–18 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the Lord does not want us to be ignorant, because good theology glorifies Him and assures and comforts us.

Thursday, May 12, 2022 ▫ Read 1Thessalonians 4:13–18

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle not want them to be (v13)? Concerning whom? Lest they do what? What do all Christians believe (v14a)? What will God therefore do (v14b)? By what is the apostolic team speaking (v15a)? Until when will some believers remain alive (v15b)? But what won't these remaining believers do? Who will descend from where (v16)? Attended by what three phenomena? Then who will rise first? Then who shall be caught up together with whom (v17a)? Whom will this combined group meet (v17b)? When will this reunion be broken? What are believers to do with these words (v18)?

There are many who think theology is uncomfortable, so they'd like to keep Christianity simple. But if we're going to have true comfort (v18), then we can't afford to be ignorant (v13). Theology is the mechanism by which God communicates to us the comfort of Christ. Other words, idle words, ignorant words won't do. It has to be His words (v15a). "These words" (v18).

Without His words, then we'd just be people who have no hope (v13), who don't have the assurance of a risen (v14) and returning (v15) Savior.

God raised Christ from the dead, and Christ will physically return. Those whose bodies are sleeping in Jesus have souls that are very much awake and alive, and God Who raised Christ from the dead will bring their souls back with Him when He returns bodily (v14b).

Those whose bodies and souls are still together won't go first (v15). Instead, the dead in Christ will rise first (end of v16); their souls will be reunited with their bodies. That way, all who are in Christ can be caught up together (v17a) to meet the Lord in the air (v17b). There's no scurrying back to heaven at this point. The Lord returns to judge, and His people will judge with Him. The point is not merely being reunited with one another. Being reunited with one another is just a safeguard so that when we are reunited with Him, we will all be reunited with Him together. And thus *we shall always be with the Lord*.

That's the great comfort. Those who have "fallen asleep" are already with the Lord. Their bodies are still united to Christ and rest in the grave until the resurrection. But their souls are present with Christ, and will return with Him for the resurrection.

He Whom heaven lauds with shouts and archangel voices and divine trumpets (v15) has so joined us to Himself that death cannot separate our souls from Him, and resurrection will restore our bodies to His presence permanently. The more we know about who He is and what He has done, and the more accurately we know it, the more confidence and comfort we will get from it. Theology supports and strengthens our laying hold of Christ.

What is your attitude toward theology? How are you pursuing increased/improved theological knowledge? What use do you make of your theology for laying hold of Christ? How does this comfort and strengthen you?

Sample prayer: Lord, how merciful You are to want us not to be ignorant and to give us Your own Word! Forgive us for being content to be ignorant and even resisting the effort required to improve our doctrine and the discomfort of disagreeing with those whose theology is poor. Forgive the wickedness of our treating more knowledge of Christ as of little value. Grant that we would have hope and comfort from being sure about Christ, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH492 "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

First Thessalonians 4 versus 13 through 18. These are God's words, but I do not want you to be ignorant. Brethren concerning those who have fallen asleep. Let you sorrow as others? Who have no hope for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him.

Those who sleep in Jesus for this, we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord. While by no means precede those who are asleep for the Lord, Himself will descend from heaven. With a shout with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise.

First, Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord Therefore comfort. One another, with these words So far the reading of God's inspired and in errant word,

Theology is important. Theology is important first and foremost because it glorifies God, We know that it glorifies God because he tells us to have it. And to do it, the Apostle. Here by the Holy Spirit says, I do not want you to be ignorant brethren those who resist learning theology.

Or those who think that theology is just chatting about what they think instead of learning from the Bible especially as taught by those whom the Lord has given as Pastor teachers. So that our theology wouldn't be like wind blowing to, and fro and waves, tossing in the sea, as Ephesians chapter 4.

Describes those who tried to do theology in a different way, than than God has given us the study of his word, as overseen, and instructed, by those whom he has given for that purpose, they are being intentionally, willfully, ignorant. And of course, those who don't study at all and who say oh well, doctor and divide.

Yeah, well it divides truth from error. And it divides, those who believe truth from those who are in this world, without true. Hope If you don't have good theology, then you also don't have the good purposes for which God has given it. Theology is necessary and good not just because it glorifies God and He says to do it and he gave it.

But also, because it is in good theology of who God is what he has done. And in this case in particular, especially the implications of what he has done for us, it is through good theology. That God has given us comfort and hope If you don't have good theology, then verse 13.

You're sorrowing will be like that of those who have no hope. If you don't have theology, then verse 18, you will not have these words with which we are to comfort one another. And as he says in the beginning of second Corinthians, God is the god of all comfort.

And the comfort with which we may comfort. Anyone in any situation, is that very comfort with, which we have been comforted by God, God gives us comfort in the scriptures for our situations that apply to every situation so that we don't have to say. I know how you feel.

Or I know what that's like, because often we don't know how they feel and we don't know what it's like. And yet God has given us a comfort. So great for every one of our troubles that whether our troubles have been far worse than anyone else's, or whether they're troubles are far worse than anything that we have ever experienced is irrelevant because the true comfort is given by good theology.

And so glorifies God and it does good to man. And in this case, the good theology is good theology about the implications of the resurrected humanity of Christ for what a human is, and especially what happens to a believing human who has been united to Christ upon their death and between their death and the resurrection.

It's important theology and so it's no surprise that in the last couple generations in the church. One of the ways that the flesh and the devil have attacked, the church as by infiltrating it with bad theology, about end, timesy things. And instead of focusing on the reality of the believer, with Christ in the intermediate state, which is the focus here in which we comfort.

One another, with these words, It's been a lot of nonsense about raptures and and things that happen after the rapture, which hint, nothing happens after the rapture, because the rapture being seized and caught up in the air, with Christ is on the last day, it happens in the process of Christ's returning to earth.

That is cold, the day of judgment when those who are believers as first Corinthians. 6 teaches us. We'll judge men and angels alongside Christ. There is no, know, dystopian film-esque period of time after the rapture, when we are caught up with him in the air, when the heavens revealed Jesus, the rest of the world doesn't say, oh no, the airport.

They're the plane has no pilot, the rest of the world cries, to the mountains, to fall upon them and hide them. Because the day of the wrath of the Lamb has come. That's the Rapture. Is there a? Yes, there is a raptor but it's not, it doesn't mean what they think it means and the word is there.

Of course, in verse 17 caught up is the word from which we get the word rapture So good, theology. Then focuses on Jesus's, resurrection. Jesus, is ascension. Jesus is enthronement and our union with Him that is not even broken by death. So that it's sort of like sleeping, but we'll get into the passage and we'll show you the similarities and the important differences.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him. Those who sleep in Jesus. Okay. So their bodies are in the grave and sleeping and worse than sleeping because their bodies are being turned into worm poo. And yet their bodies are not.

They're not done with their bodies yet. God is not done with their bodies yet. And so he uses the word sleep. If you're slapping a long-term Fitbit on quality of sleep, you'd get like zero quality. I don't know what the Fitbit version is. You get like zero quality as long as it's worm poo and then suddenly you would get net, almost infinite, not truly infinite because we're still finite in the resurrection, almost infinite restoration because in the moment of the resurrection, the body will not just be restored to what it was before.

It will be made like unto Jesus's glorious body. So we were restored a little bit by our nightly sleep, but the body being put into the grave sown mortal and perishable like 1st Corinthians. 15 teaches us. We'll be raised immortal and imperishable. So the word sleep, there is not just talking about that.

The body is resting in the grave. There's actually an analogy of restoration and literal recreation recreation of the body that belongs to its sleep. But the soul is not asleep, that's very important. One of the things and I don't know if I got it from anybody else or if it just is related to our own speculation curiosity.

One of the things that I thought, maybe death was like until I understood the Bible, more clearly in this passage particular and others analogous to it more clearly, is that the soul just kind of was asleep and you weren't aware of anything that is not true. Because look at verse 14 again, God will bring with him.

Those who sleep in Jesus, their bodies are asleep, but they're souls are alive Now. I don't know if it's like this in other homes but you guys one of your favorite things to do when you get up in the morning and you're having your breakfast time is like, talk about your dreams and talk about them as if they were very real.

And sometimes you're in a dream, that feels very real. Well, when your body sleeps, your soul can be awake. And in this case, it's not just your soul by activity of your brain that is still functioning as your body sleeps, and is restored in your brain is actually restored in God's providential use of this part of your sleep, as you dream.

But you're there's an analogy there because as the body rests in the grave and gets ready for the resurrection. Being still united Christ. Your soul will be alive awake. Maybe a better word. No, it's alive, not dead. Of course, your soul will be awake and aware and with the Lord Jesus.

The other passage says to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ. Your soul has a location. It is not this disintegrated missed. That is location. Less. And so you're so your soul is absent from the body, but it is present with Christ and it is aware of things with Christ and here it says God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus.

And so when it says the dead in Christ will rise. First in verse 16, it's talking about the restoration of their body or the reunion of their body with their soul verse 15. Then for this, we say to you by the word of the Lord. Now whether he means that the Lord Jesus has said something that isn't recorded in the gospels during his earthly ministry or that the Lord Jesus has appeared to him on a particular occasion that isn't otherwise recorded and spoke.

In these words, we do have a few different places in acts and in Paul's letters where he refers to appearances of Jesus, to him to talk to him. Those are two possibilities but it seems more playing here since we don't have any indication that he's talking about. Either of those things that he's reminding the Thessalonians that when he speaks and when he writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is the very words of Jesus just as he commended them earlier in the letter that when he came and he preached and Sylvanus and Timothy or Silas and Timothy preached that the Holy Spirit has was convincing them to receive it, not as the words of men, but as it really was the Word of God.

And so he's telling them. These aren't just apostolic words as if that was a small thing but that the words that he is writing he is affirming that he is writing under inspiration. You know, there's this ridiculous idea that the I that the Canon of the New Testament was developed over hundreds of years.

And then finally decided by a council of men, as if men decided what the word of God is The recognition of the canon came under various threats for a few hundred years and those threats were all finally answered and awarded off. But the recognition of the the scriptures that were being inspired by the Holy Spirit and written down by the apostles, and by the apostolic teams as it were Here, you have an apostolic team Paul Silas and Timothy.

Even though Paul technically is the apostle, in the group, the recognition of those letters is the very Word of God, is something that was happening in real time as he says, you know, in first Corinthians 14, if someone's a prophet, let him recognize that I have the spirit of God and he writes to Timothy quoting from Luke and calling it Scripture and Peter refers to the letters of Paul as among the other Scriptures that those who are wicked and corrupt twist.

And so here, he's saying I'm giving you scripture, Pay attention, Jesus is making this to be written down so that you'll be sure of your theology and you'll have right comfort and right, hope real comfort. And real hope, One of the worst things. One of the hardest things as to minister to someone at a funeral and minister to someone who's just lost a loved one who's about to lose a loved one.

And they don't have gospel hope because you have to tell them the only hope that you can possibly have now, is that they would be united to Christ through faith. Are you united to Christ through faith? And you explain to them very simply that God who made all things has died for sinners so that we might have comfort and hope in the face of death because there is no comfort and hope except that in the face of death and to talk to someone who does not yet have that hope and have the courage to risk their wrath.

And there is definitely wrath for suggesting that there's no other hope. Was you pray to God that rather than wrath? They're rather than irritation and offense. There will be the desire to latch onto that hope and the Holy Spirit will give them saving faith. It's one of the hardest things.

But this is the hope we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, which turned out to be neither. Paul nor anyone who was writing to at the time, will by no means for seed those who are asleep.

So it's very plain then that he's talking using the word asleep to talk about death because he contrasts it to. We are alive for the Lord. Himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel. And with the trumpet of God, not a secret rapture, not a mysterious disappearance of thousands or millions of people and everyone's like, oh, what happened, were they go, No, everyone will see, everyone will hear.

It's the return of the King. It's the appearance of the judge. It's what makes everyone say not? Where'd they go? But to cry out to the mountains fall on us and hide us for the day of the wrath of the Lamb has come and it is in that day.

And in that descending of the Lord, that the resurrection happens. The dead in Christ will rise. First. So God is bringing back with Christ. The souls that have been awake and aware and praising Him and reigning with him. If you look at I believe it's 20 it might be 19, they blur together the last of each chapters Revelation the text where it talks about reigning with him for a thousand years.

It's their souls that are alive and reigning with him very specifically souls not bodies. It's talking about the intermediate state of believers, as they are aware of Jesus and praising Jesus, for the reigning, the ruling that he is doing right now on the earth that despite all of the attacks upon his people and they're even not loving their lives, even unto death, that his people even as they die, they are overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

Why? Because the Word of their testimony is true, and the courage they have in the face of death is vindicated when by the blood of the Lamb, when they die their bodies sleep. But their souls reign and they reign with Jesus. There has never been an enemy of Christ, who martyred a true Christian.

Except that he became the one who seated that Christian in glory with Jesus, and who sent his soul to its greatest victory. As the one whose under whose feet all his enemies are being placed is enjoyed sinlessly. And praised ceaselessly by the souls of believers who have died, whoever every bit awake and aware as if they had a body even in their bodyless state between the death and the resurrection.

And so the dead in Christ rise. First, their victorious, souls that have spent all the time between their death and this day return, the souls are returning with the

Lord, Jesus Christ, their bodies rise, glorified and are reunited to their souls. And then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so the the compliment of Christ and His holy angels and all of his elect for whom he died.

And now all of whom have been brought to faith in him and now all of whom have been perfected and holiness, praise God in him. And now all of whom have received their glorified bodies, the entire compliment of the Lamb and all his hosts judge, and Satan and death, and all the demons cast into hell.

And all who are without Christ, cast into hell with them. And all who are with Christ rain and rejoice forever and ever soul and body. Now, and you heavens and a new earth. Thus, We saw always be with the Lord. We're with him by faith. Now until we die, We are with Him by faith and our souls being present in that glorious display of himself with the holy angels and the assembly of the souls of the just made perfect, your soul has a location right now.

It is located with your body Wear with the Lord. Now, by faith, we are with the Lord, then and our soul's presence with Him. And it's absence from the body. And we'll be with him forever, and then you heavens and the new earth body and soul with the Lord Jesus.

And it's presence with Him. That is our great comfort. We are made to enjoy him to be with him. This is eternal life. The Lord Jesus says praying to his Father and John 17 that they know you and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. And this is our great comfort.

And this is our great hope, and this is why good theology sound theology is so necessary because these are truths in realities comfort and hope that you get from pleasant sounding ideas or lies. That you tell yourself, It's an empty comfort and an empty hope. And in those moments when you realize that, it's not based on any real truth, the comfort and the hope vanish comfort and hope.

That is based on truth and reality will only become stronger and more solid until the day that faith becomes sight. And we realize that we shall always be with the Lord. Praise God. Let's pray. Father, please help me and my wife and my children to have this good sound theology.

Where the truth that you tell us about the history of what Jesus has done in the past and the history of what shall be done with us, what He will do and what we will do in the future are as real to us as the present things that we encounter and go through every day.

So that we may have solid joy and lasting treasure that none but Zions children know. So make us to know your word and make us to treat theology with the importance that you have given it unto your glory and make us to benefit from genuine theology with the benefits that you have given us by it.

And in this particular case, the comfort and hope of those for whom Christ and being with him, our everything to us. Thank you, O God for this wonderful truth. Write it on our hearts. By your spirit. We ask In Jesus' name, Amen.