

## I. My Sympathy to the Family

- A. I know this has been an excruciatingly difficult week
- B. Please know you are in the prayers of us all
- C. There are no simple answers to 'fix' this
- D. There are many questions and no way to answer them all in this brief time
- E. But there is truth that helps us move forward

## II. How To Handle Death and Tragedy

- A. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
  - 1. People have always had questions about death
  - 2. Paul wanted to help them deal with this
  - 3. I want to briefly meditate on his words in Scripture
- B. I don't want you to be uninformed
  - 1. Death is universal - but we still do not understand
  - 2. What we think about death is very important
  - 3. What we think about death will determine how we face a tragedy like this
  - 4. It is important that we grapple with this by truth
- C. That you may not grieve as others who have no hope
  - 1. Paul does not say 'Do not grieve at all'
    - a. To not grieve at this would be sub-human
    - b. We grieve because we know this is not right

- c. Some try to short-circuit this with platitudes
  - d. That is foolish and unhelpful - we **must** grieve
  - e. This is why Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb - this world is not right
  - f. If we do not grieve properly it will impair our ability to live properly
    - 1. Grieving involves sadness, sense of loss, and tears
    - 2. Grieving involves asking God questions - look at the Psalms!
    - 3. Grieving can even involve anger at the senselessness of this death
    - 4. Take these things to God - do not repress
- 2. We are to grieve in hope - not like others
    - a. There is a way to grieve without hope
    - b. The primary way to do this is an improper "this life only" focus
      - 1. If this life is all there is - there is no hope
      - 2. There is so much pain & injustice in this world
      - 3. If Matthew's entire life was that brief time - what is the point?
      - 4. But even Christians can become so focused on this life that we grieve without hope
      - 5. But God has something better in store - an unfallen, perfect world with no sorrow or grief, sickness or death
      - 6. But death is the necessary end of this fallen life
      - 7. So we must be willing to let go of this life

- c. The only way to live - and grieve - in hope is knowing this life is not all there is!

D. Hope through the resurrection of Jesus!

1. Paul anchors hope in the resurrection of Jesus
2. This is not a platitude - it is historical fact
3. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 if Jesus did not literally, bodily arise, we are fools to be pitied
4. Jesus has conquered death!
5. Resurrection - not platitudes - is the foundation of hope
6. Resurrection is the door to the new, true, unending life
7. This is what comforted David in the loss of his son
8. This is what comforted saints throughout the ages
9. This is what will comfort us in the days ahead

**III. What We Should Do In the Days Ahead**

- A. We should continue grieving with the family
- B. We should continue praying for the family
- C. We should look to God in faith
- D. We should encourage one another with these truths (v18)

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. 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.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

**Meditations for Matthew Valentonis' Funeral**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14  
March 31, 2012  
Romans 15:13