



## Christ Our Hope In Death

### Key idea:

Christian hope, anchored in Christ Himself, defeats death by guaranteeing believers an uninterrupted union with Jesus - from death, through resurrection, and into eternal life.

### Key text:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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 and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.

### Key points:

1. As believers, we grieve the deaths of loved ones, but not without hope.
2. Our hope is anchored in Christ himself and our union with Him.
3. When believers die, their spirits are immediately with Jesus.
4. The bodies of believers who die will be resurrected when Jesus returns.
5. Believers will be with Jesus for all eternity.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Bret mentioned that our culture often avoids talking about death. Why do you think that is? How can we as Christians approach the topic of death differently?

2. How does Paul's metaphor of death as 'sleep' for believers change your perspective on mortality? What implications does this have for how we view and approach death as Christians?
3. In what ways does the concept of being 'in Christ' provide comfort and hope in the face of death? How can we cultivate a deeper understanding of this union in our daily lives?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14. What does it mean to "grieve with hope"? How is this different from how non-believers might grieve?
5. Paul emphasizes that believers should grieve, but not without hope. How can we practically balance genuine grief with the hope of resurrection in our lives and communities?
6. How does the immediate presence of believers' spirits with Christ after death challenge or affirm your current beliefs about the afterlife? What questions or concerns does this raise for you?
7. Discuss Bret's statement: "All death is, so to speak, is the nap for the body." How does this perspective change how we view death?
8. In what ways does the promise of bodily resurrection at Christ's return shape our understanding of the value and purpose of our physical bodies now?
9. How does the promise of bodily resurrection impact your view of the afterlife? Why is this important?
10. How does the idea that those who have died in Christ are 'ahead' of us in experiencing fullness with Jesus challenge our typical views of death? How might this change how we comfort those who are grieving?
11. Bret said, "Joy is going to swallow up grief. Hope is going to swallow up despair." How can we hold onto this truth when facing the death of a loved one or our own mortality?
12. In light of Paul's teachings, how can we cultivate a counter-cultural willingness to discuss death openly and hopefully within our Christian communities?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. Encourage one another: The passage ends with "Therefore encourage one another with these words." This week, reach out to someone who may be grieving or struggling with thoughts of mortality. Share an encouraging word based on the truths in this passage.
2. Meditate on your union with Christ: Spend time this week reflecting on what it means to be "in Christ." How does this impact your daily life and your view of death?

3. Counter-cultural conversations: Look for opportunities to speak hope into conversations about death. Practice articulating the Christian perspective on death and resurrection to others.
4. Prepare a "hope letter": Write a letter to your loved ones expressing your hope in Christ, to be read in the event of your death. This can be a powerful testimony and source of comfort.
5. Listen to the song [On That Day](#) by City Alight to cement our hope in Christ in the face of death.