



The Great Hope

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Pastor Dan Turpin WestCoastChurch.com

Introduction; May 19, 1780, was a very unusual day in Hartford, Connecticut, a day that has been recorded in history as New England’s Dark Day. The sky surrounding Hartford, darkened ominously for no explicable reason. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared; and the fowls retired to roost. The legislature of Connecticut was then in session at Hartford. The House of Representatives, being unable to transact their business, adjourned.

The Massachusetts Senate or Upper house also in session that day and conducting business. The Speaker of the House was Colonel Abraham Davenport, a man whose character was firm, even stern; he was steadfast and dedicated to his responsibilities concerning all of community and church life, which at this time were a single entity. A proposal to adjourn the Council was under consideration and some of the representatives, glancing out the windows at the ominous darkness feared that the end of the world was coming. When the opinion of Colonel Davenport was asked, he answered, “I am against an adjournment. The Day of Judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for an adjournment; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought and we continue our work.” And so the State Senate continued working on legislation by candlelight until later in the afternoon, when the darkness eventually dissipated, permitting sunlight to return. The cause of this strange occurrence has never been conclusively determined by scholars. Abraham Davenport’s stands as an example of calmness and fortitude during a period of uncertainty and darkness.... And we as followers of Christ we are not to fear the dark—instead, we are to be lights as we watch and wait for His coming.

Two things today: (1) Do not be Ignorant (2) Encourage each other with these words. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

- #1. Do Not Be Ignorant** (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 NLT* Dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.)
- A. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** spoke of our eternal nature, “Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal; dust you are, to dust you return, was not spoken of the soul.” And our trust today is in Christ who said (*John 11:25-26*), “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me shall live, even if he dies; and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.
- 1. Do Not Grieve Like Those Without Hope** (*John 14:3-6 NKJV* Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you [*Revelation 21:9-27*]. I go and prepare a place for you, And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know. ⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way? ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
- We do not grieve because of ...**
- a. Eternal Life** *John 17:3 NLT* This is the way to have eternal life—to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one You sent to earth.
- b. Henry Ward Beecher:** God pardons like a mother, who kisses the offense into everlasting forgiveness.
- c. Sir Walter Scott:** Death is not the last sleep; it is the final awakening. Your soul from the moment of your creation was destined to be eternal—you will live for as long as God lives.
- d. God through His Provides Everlasting Life**
John 3:16-19 God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.
- f. There is no Condemnation:** *Romans 8:1, 9, 13-14; 10:9-13 NKJV* There is ... no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die;

but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God.

- g. Life while we live—Life after Death** **1 John 5:12-14 NLT** Those who have the Son have eternal life; they who do not have the Son do not have eternal life. ¹³I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

i. References: **Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 16:16; John 1:10-13; John 3:1-6; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 6:9-12; 1 Timothy 2:3-5**

#2. Encourage Each Other *(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NLT For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died ... ¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸So encourage each other with these words.)*

A. Ecclesiastes 9:10 *Death is the destiny of every living being; the living should take this to heart. As there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave where we are going, and as we know that we shall someday die; let us here consecrate ourselves to seek the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.*

1. What happens to a person once he or she dies?

a. Pastor Dan: Before Jesus was crucified when a righteous believer died his or her soul was carried by the angels to Abraham's side in paradise.

***** Luke 16:19-21 NIV** There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.

b. Pastor Dan: Before Jesus was crucified when an unrighteous sinner died they were taken by the angels and thrown into hell—the bottomless pit—the Abyss; that practice continues today and will continue until after the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on earth [**Revelation 9:1-2**].

***** Luke 16:19-** There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day The rich man also died and was buried. ²³In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

c. Pastor Dan: Since Christ's crucifixion and resurrection when a believer dies their spirit is carried by the angels into the presence of God when they await the sounding of the trumpet when their spirit being and renewed body will be reunited (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**).

***** 2 Corinthians 5:1-2, 8 NLT** For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. **NKJV** ^{v8} Yes, we are confident, yes well pleased rather be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

d. Pastor Dan: After Jesus was crucified many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. That is when Paradise or Abraham's Bosom was emptied and those souls were escorted by the angels into the presence of God.

*** **Matthew 27:50-53 NLT** Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, ⁵² and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. ⁵³ They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.

e. Pastor Dan: As I read earlier—when Jesus returns to earth in the not too distant future, most likely in my lifetime, the souls of those have died will return with Him and be reunited with the bodies that will resurrect from the graves.

*** **1 Thessalonians 4:14 NLT** ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** Let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies

f. Pastor Dan: When Jesus returns to take up or rapture every believer on earth—we who are saved and right with Him—our bodies will be instantly transformed and we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

*****1 Thessalonians 4:15-18** We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ^g ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died ^h will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** Let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies

Closing and Invitation: **1 Corinthians 15:50-53 NLT**, “Dear brothers and sisters, our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. ⁵¹ But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

(**1 Corinthians 15:35-39**)