

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so 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 died. **15** For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. **16** For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

Here in 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul is answering a question that every single human asks... what happens to the ones we love when they die? The church in Thessalonica was surrounded by Gentiles who believed in nothing past this current life. Paul reassures the Christians of Thessalonica that, because of the resurrection of Christ, that they can have hope in their grief.

Big Ideas

- This hope that we have does not *take away* our grief, it *informs* our grief. Just because we are Christians and believe in resurrection does not mean that we are not allowed to grieve.
- God is not unfamiliar with grief. Jesus himself went to Mary and Martha after Lazarus had died and met them in their grief and wept with them. (See John 11)
- We are *not* called to grieve in **isolation**. Paul says in verse 18, "Therefore encourage one another with these words."

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. When have you experienced grief before in your life?
3. One of the points in Callie's sermon is that we do not only grieve when people die. What are some things you've had to let go of in life that have caused you to grieve?
4. Our culture has a limited view of how to grieve well. What are some ways we can grieve better as individuals? And, what are some ways we can grieve better in community?