

Let us open our Bibles to 1 Thess. 4. I shall read from the 13th vs. to the end of the chapter. "(Reading text)" This is a marvellous passage in the Word of God. We are told here that this is that which should be our comfort when our friends and loved ones die. I fear that many and many a funeral service has made no reference to this. But we can be sure that among the early Christian this is a passage that meant a great deal at such times as that and should be a passage that means much to us not only at such times but at all times.

Vs. 13 "But I would not have you . . . no hope." You notice he doesn't say that "ye sorrow not". It is not that we are not to sorrow when our loved ones are taken from us. It is that we are not to sorrow as those that have no hope. One who has never lost a loved one does not know what it means, what a pain, what an ache it gives. In a way it's like having a broken leg. There is much that can be said to comfort you but it takes time to get over it. You cannot in a short time no matter what happens, you cannot get over it. And yet I remember being at an occasional funeral of those that did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and seeing them sobbing frantically as if the end of the world had come. And it is nothing like that to the Christian. We do not sorrow as those that have no hope. In fact we know that our loved ones go that if they have believed in Christ they are with the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in heaven. They are far better off than they could be if they were here. We do not sorrow for them. We sorrow for ourselves. We sorrow for the loss that we have suffered and indeed we should. They may be a very great loss to us. But we rejoice for them that they are with the Lord Jesus Christ. We sorrow not as others that have no hope.

But now you notice how Paul goes right on to say, "For if we believe ~~that~~ that Jesus died and rose again even so them also God bring with him." Our rejoicing, our comfort is not simply that they are in heaven there with Christ. That is wonderful and that is something for which we praise the Lord. But Paul says that if we believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we know that they also will be raised from the dead.