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The Promises Of God – Lesson 5



Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Online Bible Study

Zoom Meeting ID 973 678 1217, Passcode 6781293

I. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18: AN UNCONDITIONAL PROMISE OF GOD

¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For 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. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

II. ANALYSIS & CONTEXT OF THE TEXT

- A. This is a familiar but challenging text.
 - 1. Familiar because...
 - 2. Challenging because...
- B. The basic textual question; **“What happens to someone once they die?”**

III. DEATH IS A PROCESS

- 1. Everyone has to die.
- 2. Grieving is natural.
 - a. Those who grieve **who have hope**.
 - b. Those who grieve **who have no hope**.
- 3. A major shift from focusing on the death of individuals to the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of the resurrection:
 - a. “God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep (died) in him.
- 4. No mention in this text of any earthly services, funeral, etc.
- 5. The living will not **“precede”** those who have died before them.
 - a. Precede them to where? For what?
- 6. “The Lord himself will...”
 - a. Come down from heaven
 - b. Come with a loud command
 - c. Come with the voice of the archangel
 - d. Come with the trumpet call of God. 2 other passages where this idea is mentioned.

Matthew 24:26-31

²⁶ "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the wilderness,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ "Immediately after the distress of those days "'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' ³⁰ "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. **And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.**

1 Corinthians 15:12-57

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ **The last enemy to be destroyed is death.** ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. ²⁹ **Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?** ³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? ³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and

drink, for tomorrow we die.” ³³ Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” ³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. ³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” ³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. ⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we^[g] bear the image of the heavenly man. ⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- e. The dead in Christ will rise first. (I thought the dead went to heaven?)
- f. The living will be caught up together with the dead in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
- g. This is how Paul indicates that people either go to heaven or meet Jesus when he comes again.
- h. Knowing about the process ought to be an encouragement. “Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (verse 18)

7. **Extra added:** 5:1-3 – “Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”

IV. POINTS TO PONDER

- A. Do you have a personal “**theology of death?**” How did you develop it? Where did it come from?
1. This history of funerals (Ancient Greece, 130,000 years, home funerals circa 1860)
 2. Why do we embalm?
 3. Why are graves 6 feet deep?
 4. Cultural adaptations/personal preferences/visiting the cemetery/the perspective of the unchurched
 5. Moving on with life
- B. Do we believe that those who are “**in Christ**” go to heaven? When do they go? At death? Some point later?
- C. The difference between the second coming of Christ and a person going to heaven.
- D. What is the unconditional promise of the text?

V. NEXT WEEK: A CONDITIONAL PROMISE – READ ROMANS 10:1-13

- Last Bible Study before summer break
- Considering doing a makeup class since we missed last week. I will let you know.

Join us on the St. Matthew Prayer Line daily at 6 am & 9:30 pm.

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