

I Will Meet You There; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

I. The Story

- a. This song was written by Aaron Schotts
 - i. If you are familiar with Praise and Harmony, then you know who this is
 - ii. He helped with REGEN at TCC a few years ago
 - iii. He was one of the Base coaches when I sang with them when they recorded Ever-Present God and Beautiful God
- b. This song was written out of grief for the loss of his friends in a motorcycle accident
 - i. Two months after the accident he attended the Texas Normal Singing school to learn how to arrange music for his group Gr8ful Praise
 - ii. The first assignment was to write a verse for a song
 - iii. The first verse came from that assignment
 - iv. Arron writes that the melody and the rest of the song came very quickly after that
- c. Grief is a sure thing

II. Grief

- a. We all handle grief in different ways
- b. There are stages of grief – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (some add shock or disbelief and guilt)
- c. We go through all those stages; how we go through them is important
- d. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 (ESV) ¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, 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 fallen asleep.
 - i. ‘Asleep’ is just a metaphor for died, we don’t want to read too much into that word – ‘those who have already died’
 - ii. Paul does not want us to be ‘uninformed’, so he is about to pass on some information to us to help us be more knowledgeable about those who have died in the Lord
 - iii. The point behind this knowledge is to help us work through our grief
 - iv. In all the stages of grief we need to remember to say to ourselves, “God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep”
 - v. Revelation 14:12–13 (ESV) ¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”
 - vi. This will not stop our grief; it will help us work through our grief
 - vii. Grief hits us like waves
 - viii. This is the same concept as being joyful and thankful

- ix. 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV) ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
 - x. It is our eternal salvation that colors how we think about (and react to) everything!
- e. Grief has an important function, helping us work through the loss of someone we love very much
 - f. But we know that those who die in the Lord are blessed and resting from their labors

III. The Coming of the Lord

- a. It is in this concern that the Thessalonians have for those who have died that we get this great look at Jesus' return
- b. 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17 (ESV) ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
 - i. Paul received this directly from Jesus
 - ii. This is what Paul tells the Corinthian Christians
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (ESV) ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
 - iv. 2 Peter 3:10–11 (ESV) ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,
 - v. 2 Peter 3:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.
 - vi. We don't grieve as those who have no hope because we have hope; a hope in the resurrection (and return) of Jesus to claim those who belong to Him
- c. "There is no disadvantage to those who die before the coming of the Lord" ¹

IV. Encourage One Another

- a. 1 Thessalonians 4:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

¹ Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on 1 Thessalonians 4". "Coffman Commentaries on the Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/1-thessalonians-4.html>. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.

- b. When we find one another in the throes of grief (any stage), encourage one another
- c. These are strong words meant to bring us through our suffering

- i. It means we must let go of our own selfishness
- ii. It means we must realize that God's plan is better than ours
- iii. Romans 15:4–5 (ESV) ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,
- iv. Hebrews 6:18–20 (ESV) ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

V. I Will Meet You There

- a. It hurts to think of those who've gone. It hurts because I care.
- b. The love we hold in all our hearts for God's own family will stay within our hearts until we will meet them there.
- c. Encourage one another to remain steadfast so we can 'meet them there'