

Comfort at the Grave

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

B. Keep loving and keep working.

II. If you are a Christian, God teaches you how to love others. (Romans 5)

A. If you choose to be bitter, love cannot be manifest.

B. If you reject bitterness, love can be demonstrated.

C. This love is a new capacity that the world does not have.

D. This does not mean that we will immediately feel loving—we can ultimately reject the feeling and act in love because of God.

III. True faith in Christ does not produce fanaticism.

A. Keep steady and do not get others to meddle in fanatic affairs.

B. Keep busy providing your own needs.

IV. The problem of tomorrow: believers will “fall asleep.”

A. Death for the believer is nothing more than sleep.

B. The Thessalonians thought that it would be a long time before they saw their deceased loved ones but Paul encouraged them otherwise.

1. They expected the return of Jesus within days or weeks—Jesus’ words suggest this is not the case.

2. They projected their concept of time into eternity, but eternity would be timeless.

3. All the believers would be together.

4. The believers would always be with the Lord—the parousia is the overall presence of the Lord and His Coming covers a broad range of time and events. (Revelation 7, 14, I Corinthians 15)

5. The comforting hope is that we shall all be together as the great family of God and forever be with the Lord.

Application questions:

1. How can a Christian love although he may not feel it emotionally?

2. Which principle concerning Paul's discussion of the end times brings you the most comfort? Be specific.

3. How does the discussion of the end times generally encourage believers to keep working in the faith? Explain.
