

The Trumpet Will Sound

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[0:00] We can turn back for a time to our reading in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and we're going to look at verse 13 down to the end of the chapter.

And so on.

When you hear the word Advent, what do you think of what immediately comes to your mind? It's maybe not Easter time that comes to your mind when you think of Advent.

It more particularly maybe draws to mind Christmas time as we think of Advent. We think of Advent calendars counting down the days.

You open a slot on an Advent calendar to eat a chocolate as you're counting down the days coming up to Christmas. But there's more to Advent than that.

[1:20] Advent is not just a Christmas thing. Advent speaks about the coming of something. Advent is defined as the coming of an important person or thing.

And we especially rate Advent to the coming of an important person. Not just at Christmas time when we remember the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the sense of his incarnation, his birth as he came into the world.

But we have a greater sense of Advent now as well looking forward to another Advent that is to come. And here in 1st Thessalonians at the end of this chapter, chapter 4, we are reminded of another Advent that we are looking forward to, looking ahead to.

And as we approach Easter time, it's something that draws our mind towards it. Because at Easter time, we remember that the Lord Jesus, as he came into this world, he came with a purpose.

He came to give his life as a ransom for many. He came to lay down his life. He was put to death on the cross, just as he said he would.

[2:37] But he had also said that on the third day, he would rise. He would rise from the grave. And so it was. And it's that resurrection that gives us the hope of another Advent, of another coming of an important person.

When we read here, the Lord himself will descend from heaven. It's the second coming of the Lord Jesus as he returns to come and judge the world.

Advent has that sense then of a dawn of a new era. And indeed, the dawn of a new era came when the Lord Jesus came into this world in the first place.

As he came to live in the world, to serve in the world, to show the world who he was. A world that rejected him.

A world that turned away from him. A world that ultimately put him to death on the cross. But it was indeed the dawning of a new era.

[3:50] But we're also looking forward to the dawn of another era. An era of restoration. A time of healing. A time when the Lord will come to put right this whole world.

And call his people home to himself. And it's described here as that Lord coming. Himself, the Lord himself will descend from heaven.

And it's something that's described as having a sound with it as well. As you read there, he will descend from heaven with a cry of command.

With the voice of an archangel. And with the sound of the trumpet of God. The sound of the trumpet.

It's like a last post. A last call. When you hear this, you will know that this is the Lord's return. It may be a sound we've never heard before.

[4:50] We've never really thought how it might be. But one thing is for sure. That when this sound comes. When this trumpet sound comes. It'll be recognizable.

It'll be clear what is taking place. It is the Lord's return. But what will that trumpet sound mean for you?

And what will that trumpet sound mean for so many around us? If we are here to hear it. Is it something that you are looking for with expectation?

That you know that when the Lord returns. If he comes while we are here on earth. That we are ready for it. Or is it something that leaves you with a sense of trepidation.

A sense of fear. Because you know that well if the Lord was returning. I'm not ready. I'm not ready for the Lord's return. Well as you look at this passage here in 1 Thessalonians 4.

[5:53] It's one of the questions that the people in Thessalonica had. The believers in Thessalonica had. They had questions obviously about brotherly love.

As you see in verse 9. How do you love one another? Who should you love? All of these things were questions that they had. And Paul here is answering these questions.

Now concerning brotherly love. You have no need for anyone to write to you. For you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. So he's giving them instructions there.

God has taught you that you are to love. One another. But it's clear then as you go on into verse 13. To the end of the chapter.

That they had questions about another issue. And that was questions surrounding the Lord's return. What would it mean?

[6:46] What would it mean especially for those as they say in verse 13. Those who are asleep. Those who have already gone before them. What does it mean for them?

What will it mean for us? They had so many questions around this. And they're similar to the kind of questions that we can have as well. As we think of our own lives.

Our own eternity. All of these things. They make us ask questions. They make us wonder. What will the Lord's return mean? What does it mean for those who have fallen asleep before us?

What does it mean in the sense of the grief that we have experienced? What does it mean looking to our future? And what does the resurrection mean in it all?

What difference does the resurrection mean in it all as well? And the resurrection is the foundation of the hope that they find. Because the Lord has arisen from the grave.

[7:48] Because he has ascended to the Father. Because there is that knowledge that he will come. Again, come with that trumpet sound.

And so as you look in this section. You find Paul answering the kind of questions and the issues that they had. And we're going to look at four different things from these verses.

And the first is the concern that they have. The concern that they have. Then we see the compassion that they're shown.

And then we see the call that goes out to them. And then the comfort that they can share. So there's these four things. The concern, the compassion, the call, and the comfort.

So first of all, we see the concern. And that's the first thing to note here. That there is a real sense of concern for this matter.

[8:47] This morning we were looking at the book of Proverbs chapter 9. Where we were seeing the idea of wisdom and folly. And the choices that we can make in the midst of that.

And in some ways we see that this concern is looking for wisdom. And turning away from folly in all of this as well. So behind the concern that they have here is.

What does the idea of the resurrection mean? And what does death mean? What does the thought of the Lord's return mean?

And they're concerned about these issues. They have a concern. And to have a concern is a good thing. Because if we're untroubled and unconcerned about these things.

If they mean nothing to us. We just carry on in our foolishness. We're not seeking the wisdom of God in them. And so a concern here is a good thing.

[9:52] What does the idea of the resurrection mean to you today? What does the thought of the Lord's return mean to you today?

Does it concern you? Because if it doesn't it should. And it's a good thing to have a concern about it. Because it's so easy to be something you just put away out of your mind.

That you don't think about. You don't live in the reality of it. There can be so many things that we just push away. But we are to have a concern.

Just like they had in Thessalonica. They had these questions. What do these things mean? What does it mean for those who have fallen asleep? What will it mean for us?

They have these concerns. And so as Paul is writing to them. He's seeking in the midst of their concern. To bring comfort to them.

[10:50] So instead of being unconcerned about these things. He wants them to be concerned. But he wants them to have answers as well.

And the church at Thessalonica. It's a church that has heard the gospel. It's a church where the gospel flourished. Where they heard it. Where they believed it.

Where they had faith in the Lord Jesus. Where there were great examples of what a Christian church should look like. They were great examples to other Christians around them.

But just because they were going on well in their sense of their Christian faith. Didn't mean that they didn't have questions. And the same is true of ourselves. And no doubt you have questions around the Christian faith as well.

And what we see here is that one of the questions that troubled them. Was that of death. What does it mean? What happens? What does it mean for those who have fallen asleep?

[11:52] And it's a natural concern for us. Again to be untroubled by that. Is to be foolish. But to be concerned is to then seek wisdom. And to find wisdom with God.

And so they have these questions. And so you see the concern was adding to their grief.

It was increasing their grief. Because they're thinking here are our people. Those who have passed away. Those who are believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And many of them would have maybe died in difficult situations. Under persecution. And the hope that they had. The faith that they lived. Was that it? Was it gone?

Was it the end? Those who have fallen asleep. Is it just about life? Now and then there's nothing? What are the answers?

[13:02] Death leaves us with so many fears. And so many questions. And so where do we find the answers? Well Paul takes them to the word of God.

And especially back to that thought of the resurrection. In verse 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. And so here is the idea of the resurrection is behind it all.

It is so important for us to be concerned. But to have an idea of what the resurrection means. The importance of the resurrection.

Many people have reacted to the resurrection in different ways. And put it away as just nonsense. In the book of Acts chapter 17 verse 32 it says.

[14:03] Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead. Some mocked. Some mocked. Some mocked. But others said we will hear you again about this.

So this was the response to the resurrection. This was the response to those who have fallen asleep. And the idea that they might rise again in the day of the resurrection.

There was mocking. And that's the same as the world that we live in now. There's just mocking towards this whole idea of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Or the resurrection of the dead as we find it in scripture.

If there is a hope of resurrection and life after this. It's of our own making. Our own design. Our own choosing. But it should lead us to concern.

What does it actually mean? What does the scripture teach us? What does life mean? What does death mean? We should be concerned about this. And that's what they were.

[15:03] They were concerned. And they had questions. But there are answers to it as well. And that's why we read on here and see amongst this concern there is compassion.

There is compassion. So how does Paul begin to address the issues that they have raised about death and the Lord's coming and the resurrection? Well he brings them, as you say, to the word of God.

In verse 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.

So he brings them to the word of God. And that is where we are to find the foundation of our hope. Just as we were looking at Proverbs this morning.

Wisdom and folly. Folly is to listen to the ways of the world. Wisdom is to fear God. And to seek his word. To seek his commands.

[16:10] The word of the Lord is what informs us. And that's what he says here. In verse 13. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers. So if they're uninformed, where are they going to find information that lets them be informed?

The word of the Lord. For we declare to you by a word from the Lord. God has spoken on this issue. God has given us insight into this issue.

It's the whole purpose for which he sent his son into this world. That he came to die for our sins. To be placed in the grave. But that on the third day he would rise again.

Again. Are we uninformed? Are you uninformed about this tonight? Do you understand the significance? Or what it means?

You hear the phrase, ignorance is bliss. But what does it mean? Well if you're unaware of something unpleasant. Or a situation that's going on.

[17:17] You cannot be troubled by it. Ignorance is bliss. They say. But is that the way we are to deal with these matters before us.

Of life and death and eternity. Just to say ignorance is bliss. Just to bury our heads in the sand and think nothing of it. For many it is.

For many that's the way to deal with it. Ignorance is bliss. Let's not hear what God the Lord has said about this. But let's just have our own ideas.

Our own understanding of these matters. All you have to do is look around. And how often now do we see funeral services where there is no church connection?

It used to be maybe just something on the mainland. But we're seeing it more in our own communities now as well. Where the church has no part to play in funeral services.

[18:16] Avoid the scriptures. Avoid what the word of God says about it. In the hope that ignorance will be bliss. We want nothing to do with that. There's no comfort in that though.

If it's just our own thoughts. Our own ideas. Yes. But here Paul is reminding them. We declare to you by a word from the Lord.

That there is compassion from the Lord. That there is hope in the Lord. When you think of funerals. You think well what's the most common song sung at funerals?

We hear if we go to a funeral in church. We would probably answer well Psalm 23 is the most common song. Song. The Lord's my shepherd.

There's hope in these words. There's everlasting life. There's that hope of dwelling with the Lord forever. But it's not for everyone. If you look online and you find the co-op funeral services.

[19:23] They actually have a top ten of most commonly sung songs at funerals. Most commonly used songs at funerals. And you have to go way down the list to number eight.

Before you find anything with a Christian reference. Where the hymn, Abide With Me, is there. But you look down at the ones before that.

They're all songs with no thought of God. There's nothing about God. The top one is Time to Say Goodbye. And then you have Frank Sinatra's I Did It My Way.

These are the kind of songs that people want to hear. They don't want the reality of God's word. They don't want the reality of death and judgment and the resurrection to come.

They want to do it their way. But it's a very dangerous way to go. To be ignorant is to be uninformed.

[20:26] And it's to grieve without hope. It's to miss the hope that's on offer through this gospel. The compassion that there is with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Trying to avoid a subject like death is like trying to avoid a hole in your boat. And you're out at sea. The water's pouring in.

It's not going to go away. And it's going to overwhelm at some point. Ignorance is not bliss then. And trying to avoid the subject of death.

To be ignorant to it is avoiding the inevitable. That will overwhelm you at some point. And so there are questions. But the Bible is about answers.

And answers found in the word of God. Answers found in the word himself. Who became flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus. The phrase Jesus answered is something you hear so often through the gospels.

[21:34] Because people had questions. They gathered round him. They heard what he had to say. And so we are to be informed through the word of God.

Not to be uninformed. But to be informed. So that we might see our desperate need in the midst of these realities of death.

And the resurrection. And all of these things. And when we see the reality of our need of Jesus. And that's the third thing that we see here as we think of the call.

Just like we were looking at this morning in the book of Proverbs. The two calls. That of wisdom and that of folly. Well here we are called again to the way of wisdom.

Because the gospel calls us to faith. Do you have faith in hope of the resurrection? Because that's what Paul is getting at here.

[22:35] When he speaks about these things. When he says we do not want you to be uninformed. That you may not grieve as others do. Who have no hope.

We want you to be informed. And to be informed is to hear what God the Lord is saying. So that when he says in verse 15.

That we declare to you by a word from the Lord. Then he goes on to say that we who are alive.

Who are left until the coming of the Lord. Will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven. With a cry of command. With the voice of an archangel. The sound of the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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.

[23:28] And so we will always be with the Lord. There is this call of the gospel. There is this hope of the gospel. And what Paul is saying here is that the gospel is good news.

And it's good news in the midst of our grief. He doesn't say here Christians. You should never grieve. That would not be right.

But what he says is. We do not want you to grieve as others do. Who have no hope. We all grieve at different points in our lives.

But it's how we grieve. We are to grieve with hope. And we can only find that hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul doesn't say that we are to be uninformed about these things.

So we do not do them. But he says I want you in your grief. To find that hope. And that's the call of the gospel.

[24:37] We see it with Jesus himself. When you look at the life of Jesus. Did he grieve? Of course he did. He grieved over sin.

He wept over Jerusalem. As he looked at the people there. And he saw the way they were living. The way they were turning away from him. He wept over sin. And he wept over the consequences of sin.

Which is death. Because of the death of Lazarus. His friend. He wept. But in the midst of that. He spoke to them.

The good news that there is in the midst of it. What did he say? In John 11 verse 23. As he spoke to the sisters there. He said. Jesus said to her.

Your brother will rise again. Martha said to him. I know that he will rise again. In the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her.

[25:35] I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me. Though he die. Yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me. Shall never die.

Do you believe this? So in the midst of his weeping. Over the death of Lazarus. And the people that he was seeing. Around him. He spoke these great words.

The resurrection. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me. Though he die. Yet shall he live. That there is life in him.

And he says. Do you believe this? And that's what we're being asked here. By Paul as well. This is what you are to believe. Do you believe it?

You have your questions. We don't want you to be uninformed. We want you to come to understand. What this means. The coming of the Lord Jesus.

[26:33] It means that we will be with him. We will be gathered together. We will always be with the Lord. But it's in light of the fact.

That he will come. That he will come. That he will come with the sound of the trumpet. The sound of the gospel.

The call of the gospel goes out. And is going out today. But it's before that final call. That final sound of the trumpet comes.

And so it's important to hear. The sound of the gospel. The call of the gospel now. Because when that sound comes. It will come. Unexpectedly the sound of the trumpet.

Have you ever heard. A sound that's made you almost jump out of your skin. You hear a noise. You hear like. A fire alarm suddenly goes off.

[27:31] It makes you jump. You hear a balloon burst. It startles you. You hear the sound of thunder. A sudden clap of thunder.

And it makes you jump as well. These are the kind of sounds. They have something in common. They come when maybe you least expect them. And that's the way the sound of the trumpet will be as well.

Because we are told that when the Lord returns. He'll be coming like a thief in the night. When you least expect it. That this sound will go out.

The sound of the trumpet. And so the gospel call should be the startling thing that we need just now. To make us jump.

To make us consider all of these things that we are hearing before the sound of the trumpet comes. To think of eternity in light of the resurrection.

[28:29] And the coming of the Lord Jesus again. The advent of the Lord Jesus. And so we have this before us this evening.

Where we are to look to the Lord Jesus. So from the call then we have the comfort. Where are we to find comfort in the midst of all this?

Well Paul concludes this section in verse 18. Therefore encourage one another with these words. Encourage one another with these words.

In other words he's saying talk about them. Ask your questions. Don't be ignorant. Don't think ignorance is bliss on these things. But ask your questions.

Talk about these things. Encourage one another with these words. So that as we are going through our various trials in this life. As we are going through our questions.

[29:32] Our troubles surrounding death. The resurrection. The coming of the Lord. Encourage one another. Speak with each other about these things. And listen especially to what the Lord our God is saying about them.

Because there we find comfort. There we find encouragement. Encouragement. Jesus before his own death.

What did he do for his disciples? He gave them words of encouragement. As we look. We read this morning in John 14 as well. How applicable these words are here too.

John 14 as he was speaking to his disciples. People who are filled with worry and anxiety and fear about what lies ahead. They know Jesus is going to the cross.

They know something is going to happen. But what does Jesus do? He speaks to them and says let not your hearts be troubled. There is comfort for them.

[30:35] And how does he encourage them? He encourages them in their faith. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.

There is encouragement to faith. So he connected their trouble to truth. The truth of God who he is. Believe in God.

Believe also in me. And that is where we can come to as well. With all our fears. With all our worries. To listen to the word of God that says do not let your heart be troubled.

Believe in God. Believe also in me. Jesus goes on later to say in this world you will have many troubles. But he says be of good courage.

For I have overcome the world. And so our greatest comfort is found. In knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. That when it comes to these issues of life, of death, of the resurrection and the coming of the Lord.

[31:41] What is our greatest comfort? It is to know Christ through faith. To know what he has done for us. That at the cross he came to take away our sin.

And that through faith in him we might not die but live. And live through him. There is a story I probably used to be forward here.

But it is one that just so often reminds me of what it is to be in Christ. And what he has done for us. There is a story from many years ago when the pioneers in America were making their way across the states to a distant place where they were going to set up their homes.

They were going out through the prairie lands. And as they were traveling they were using wagons thrown by either oxen or horse. And progress was slow.

And going out into the prairies especially in the warmer months of the year. The place was dry and it was quite common for fires to be burning at different times.

[32:49] And as they were making their way. They were horrified to see a long line of smoke in the direction that they were going. A long line of smoke stretching for miles.

And they recognized that the fire was coming towards them. And they were afraid of what was going to come and what they might do.

But one person had understanding of what needed to be done. They thought well we can't outrun this fire.

We can't get back to safety in time because we're going to be overwhelmed. But one man had the answer. And his answer was to set the grass around them on fire.

Which seemed to make little sense to anybody else because they were trying to get away from fire. But what he did was start a fire behind them. In the direction that the wind was blowing.

[33:52] And so that the dry grass that was behind them started to burn away from them. And back the way that they'd come. And the fire again soon spread and burnt that ground.

And as it burnt away from them. What was left behind was just a scorched land. And the man said now we gather where the fire has been.

A little girl was afraid. And she thought well there's fire coming towards us. There's fire behind us. How are we going to be safe? But the man said to her.

My child the flames cannot reach us. For we are standing where the fire has been. The fire couldn't go there because the ground was already burned.

And so the fire that came went around them. Went past them. And that's the picture used of what it is to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[34:49] When we think of being uninformed in those who have fallen asleep. Uninformed in these issues of life and death. And the resurrection and the judgment to come.

Where do we find our safety? Where do we find our refuge? Well it's by standing in the place that Christ has already been.

That he has gone to the cross in our place. That he has gone to the grave in our place. That he has risen from the dead to give us the hope of the resurrection.

And that he will come again with the sound of the trumpet. Are we ready for that day? Are you ready for that sound?

There are many who are uninformed. Who are ignorant. Believing ignorance is bliss. But to be informed is better. And to be informed by the word of God.

[35:52] That these are issues we cannot avoid. But the issues that we can be ready for. As we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The trumpet sound will come.

And to be ready is to be trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who is the resurrection and the life. And so may we find our safety in him.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God. We thank you for all that you have done for us. For every provision that you have made for us in life.

And for eternity too. We thank you that in Jesus Christ. We have the one who has prepared a way. And who is even preparing a place.

And that he will come again. And we know Lord that as your word says. He will come with that sound of the trumpet. He will come like a thief in the night.

[36:56] And we ask this evening Lord. That you would help us to be informed. And to be ready. And that even in our grief as we have it in times. That we would not be without hope.

And that hope that is found. In the Lord Jesus Christ. So hear us Lord look down upon us. Bless us and keep us. As we ask all in his name. Amen.

We will conclude by singing to God's praise. In Psalm 48a. The Sing Psalms Version.

Psalm 48a. We are going to sing from verse 8 to 11. These three stanzas. To the tune Kilmarnock. Psalm 48a.

At verse 8. As we have heard. So we have seen. God's city will endure. The Lord Almighty evermore. His city keeps secure. We contemplate your steadfast love.

[37:54] Within your house. O God. For like your name. Your praise extends. Through all the earth abroad. We will sing from verse 8 to 11. To God's praise. As we have heard.

So have we seen. God's city will endure. The Lord Almighty evermore.

God's city keeps secure. We contemplate your steadfast love.

For like your name. For like your name. Your praise extends through all the earth abroad.

All that you do is righteous Lord.

[39:02] God's city will endure. All that you do is righteous Lord.

Mount Zion's joy is great. And who does thanks rejoice.

As they your judgment celebrate. After the benediction.

I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close the benediction. now may grace mercy and peace from god father son and holy spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore amen so so so so so so so so so so