

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER



1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

JANUARY 7, 2024

INTRODUCTION

This week has been a difficult week for our church family as we mourn the loss of our brother Will while clinging to the hope of being reunited with him. This week, we took a short break from our Acts series to candidly discuss how we, as Christ's followers, should grieve.

Pastor Joey instructed us on four principles of Christian grief that come from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

They are:

- 1- We speak about death: Embracing, not avoiding the topic of death.
- 2- We grieve with hope: Allowing ourselves to feel the full weight of grief without diminishing our hope.
- 3- We give people Jesus, not answers: We don't try to explain why, instead we point people to Jesus.
- 4- We comfort one another: We encourage each other to face uncertainty with the certainty of eternity.

When we grieve in this way, we display to the world how the Gospel truly comforts us in our grief. Let's unpack the text and investigate how these four principles can help us comfort one another in our grief.

DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

Read: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We speak about death.

Pastor Joey stressed that Christians can shine bright by becoming comfortable with the topic in a world allergic to the reality of death.

It is expected to feel uncomfortable with death, and each of us responds a little differently.

- How does the topic of death make you feel, and why?
- How might that feeling impact how you talk about death?
- How might your feelings about death impact how you communicate with those who are grieving?
- What can this passage teach us about how we should talk about death?

We grieve with hope.

Pastor Joey admonished us to view grief biblically, allowing ourselves to cling to the hope of eternity without circumventing lament of the effects of tragedy and loss in our lives.

As humans, we tend to fall to one side of the hope/lament scale. Some of us know how to grieve well, while some know how to hope, but neither on its own is sufficient for the Christian life. We need both.

- Which side of the scale do you lean towards and why?
- How is that tendency insufficient for you to experience genuine biblical grief and hope?
- What can this passage teach us about grieving fully while hoping fully?

We give people Jesus, not answers.

Pastor Joey challenged us not to give into the temptation we feel to comfort ourselves while we are supposedly trying to comfort others in their pain.

When we see people experiencing pain, we are always tempted to "fix" it. This is because we care AND because pain makes us uncomfortable. In reality, people often need someone to sit with them, to be sad yet hopeful, and not try to fix them.

- Why do you think humans struggle to "be with" people when they are sad? Is this significantly more difficult for us because of the culture we live in?
- Why do you think we feel pressure to fix people's pain with our words?
- What does it mean then to "give people Jesus, not answers"?
- What can this passage teach us about comforting each other without "fixing" our pain?

We comfort one another.

Pastor Joey invited us to come alongside one another to comfort, encourage, and exhort each other in our belief amidst grief.

- How have you experienced true spiritual comfort in the past?
- How have you experienced comfort that was lacking or ineffective?

Pastor Joey also explained that the word “encourage” means to, through our words and actions, instill “heart” or “courage” into someone else. Encouraging and comforting are not the same as soothing, but are works of the Holy Spirit through us in another’s life.

- Do you think all those words are related? Why or why not?
- How does this passage teach us to comfort, encourage, and/or exhort each other in our grief?

APPLICATION

Which of the four principles is the biggest area of growth for you?

Which of the four principles do you need most in your grief?

What is one thing God is prompting you to do about it?

CLOSE IN PRAYER