

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 29 November 2020
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: A day is coming
Title: We will be with the Lord forever
Passages: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Outline: **The resurrection of the body**
The life everlasting

- When will you die?
- And you're already thinking – well – that's a nice cheery thought right there for a Sunday morning...or whenever you are watching this...!
- And of course you want to come back to me straight away and say 'well Mark, **how** am I meant to know **that?**'
- But actually, I'm being a **pain** and it's a **trick question**.
- Because by the **end** of this sermon, I want you to be convinced **that** your answer (if you are a person who has repented and are trusting the Lord Jesus), should be – Mark – I'm **actually never going to die** // I have **everlasting life!** //
- **Do you?** //
- **DO** you have **everlasting life?** //
- You regularly say you do if you are **often in church...**
- **"I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting..." - you just said it in the creed!... ///**
- Do you remember from John 11 when Jesus was talking to Mary about the death of her brother Lazarus...?
- He said *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me, **will never die.***
- Will **live** – even though they **die**...? /
- ...and whoever **lives** by **believing in me** will **never die**!?!? Extraordinary! //
- Do you know what Jesus' **very next words to Mary** were? //
- **"Do you believe this"?** //
- And I want to ask **you** // **do YOU believe this?** //
- Today we begin a four-week series for **Advent** called **"A day is coming"**
- As I said at the **beginning** of the service... Advent is not a **countdown to Christmas**.
- The Advent – the '**coming**' referred to – is not the coming of **Christmas** so you'd better get your **shopping done!**
- Nor is the Advent the coming of the Lord Jesus as a **baby** in the **Nativity**... that has **already happened**.
- No the '**coming**' – the **advent** of Advent – is the **coming** of the **Lord Jesus** at the end of time...
- So in this **Advent series** we are going to explore from the **Bible** what that **means for us**...

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- Here's the 4 week **outline**
- **A Day is coming**
 - **And we will be with the Lord forever**
- **A Day is coming**
 - **But we don't know when**
- **A Day is coming**
 - **But when is this coming??**
 - 2000 years ago we were told it was coming and it hasn't happened yet – so what's going on?
- **A Day is coming**
 - **In the mean time** – what is meant to happen as we wait? How is this coming day meant to impact our **life here** and **now??** ///
- Friends – a Day **IS** coming /
- A **glorious** day – when all **wrongs** will be **righted...**
- Where all **evil** will be **put down**
- Where death **itself** will be **dead**
- And here we are at Week 1 of Advent – with a **simple reminder** that that **coming** will mean that we will **be** with the Lord **forever**. /
- So is it that **1 Thessalonians 4** passage I want you to have **open** in front of you... and as usual – when I'm referring to that passage – I'll assume you have it in **front** of you – and when I want to show you **other** passages, I'll put them up on the **screen...** //
- A Day is coming – we will be with the Lord **forever**
 - Here is where we are heading this morning: two phrases we just recited in the creed – but showing you from 1 Thess 4, why we believe them to be **true...**
 1. **Resurrection** of the **body**
 2. **Life everlasting**
- First
- 1. **RESURRECTION OF THE BODY**
 - Have a look with me at 1 Thessalonians 4:14 – *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***
 - What happens when go through your **physical** death?
 - You go to **be** with the **Lord!**
 - The Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor 5:6-8 that *to depart from the body is to be at home with the Lord*
 - He writes in Philippians 1:22-23 - *if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far... //*
 - ...so the Bible's teaching is that **we will be with the Lord....**
 - Here in 1 Thess, he says he does not want us to be **ignorant** about those who **fall asleep...** or to grieve like the **rest** of people who have **no hope...**

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- So this understanding that those who die in relationship with Jesus, go to be with him forever, **changes** the very nature of our **grief!!**
- I don't want **you** to be ignorant... and I don't **your** grief to be like everyone else in the world who don't have this hope...
- So we grieve for those who die a **physical** death... of **course** we grieve...
- Some of you have lost loved ones this **year** – or in the **last** few years – and your grief is very **real...**
- But **OUR** grief is not like that of the **unbeliever** who has no **hope**
- I'm sure you've been to funerals of people who have no faith led by a funeral celebrant and the grief is one of utter **despair...** for they have **no** hope of seeing their loved one again – no hope that they are anything other than **dead!**
- But take a moment to consider that person of **real** and **great faith** in the **Lord Jesus** who you **knew** and **loved...**
- then according to **Jesus**, even though they **died** yet will they **live** and because they lived **believing** in **Jesus...** they didn't **actually die //**
- they went through a **physical** death... their **body** stopped **breathing,,,** their **heart** stopped **pumping.. //**
- But they **departed** to be with the **Lord...** and that's **fantastic** for them... **//** and one day we will see **them again. ///**
- **How** will we see them again?? This is what will **happen** from the passage in front of you (v16): *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.*
- You see what's described here?
- Jesus will **return** – bringing with him the souls of those who have been with him since their **death** and then they will be **joined** with their **resurrected bodies... //**
- Yet **how** will the Lord manage to bring us together with our **bodies** when people have been **cremated** and their ashes **spread** all over the place or **cemeteries** built over with **buildings** or people **lost at sea? ///**
- **Hardly** a problem for the **God** of the **Bible** for whom **nothing** is **impossible....! //** - but I don't know the details!
- **What** will those bodies be **like?**
- If **Jesus'** **resurrected** body is anything to go by – there will be both **continuity** and **discontinuity** with our present bodies...
- Mary only **recognised** Jesus when he said her **name** in the **old familiar way**
- Yet the two **disciples** on their way to Emmaus were actively **kept** from recognising Jesus – because otherwise they would have **realised** who he was...
- And remember **Jesus'** resurrected body **ate** and **drank** with the disciples and yet was able to appear in a room **suddenly** when all the doors were **locked!!**
- What a **great** and **amazing day** that will **be...! ///**
- what happens if you're still **alive** on that day when Jesus returns –?
- Glad you asked - v17 *After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in*

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the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...

- And Paul says in 1 Cor 15 - *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.*
- So if you're still **alive** when Jesus **comes...** at **that** moment you'll be **transformed** and receive your **resurrection bodies...**!
- And so says v17 – *we will **be with the Lord forever...*** (more of that in a moment)...
- But don't miss the **last** words of the chapter....
- Therefore v18 – ***encourage** each other with these words...*
- That's a **great exhortation...** “**encourage one another...**”
- What does that look like – to **encourage** each other with **these words**?
- **Reminding** each other – talking about this – saying to each other.... “isn't this **wonderful?**” – exploring – “hey – when we **die** – we won't **actually die...**!”
- “We'll **go** to be with the **Lord...**”
- “We will come **back** with him!”
- “We'll be **joined** to our **resurrected bodies!**”
- “We'll be **reunited** with those we **love!**”
- “We'll **be with the Lord forever...**! ///”
- Now that's morning tea/supper conversation **worth having...!**
- After church you can talk about the **weather** or **politics** or **real estate** or the **cricket** or what you're doing for **Christmas...** /// or you can **encourage** one another with **these words** and **celebrate** together **all** that is to **come!!** //
- For friends... we believe in the **resurrection** of the **body!!!** It changes **everything** about **death** and **dying...** //
- And we also believe in:

2. THE LIFE EVERLASTING

- So we've been **resurrected...** we're with **Jesus** in the **air...** we will **be with the Lord forever...** //
- **Then** what...?
- Come on – I want the **next bit** – what happens **then!!** ?? ///
- We don't know a **lot** about the **life everlasting...**
- **Here's** what we **do** know.... //
- Remember – we'll have **physical** bodies – we will be in a **new creation** – a new one of these – new **heavens and new earth...**
- Please don't be thinking we'll be forever floating around on the **clouds** with **harps** and **halos...**
- the **new creation** will be **beautiful...** without comparison to **anything** here...
- And it will not involve any **pain** or **sorrow** or **sickness** or **death...**

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- all evil will be dealt with so - so no **sin** – no **temptation**... in this life **everlasting**...!! //
- We also know, that we will **know things** then, that we **can't** or **don't** know now. /
- Here's how Paul puts it in 1 Cor 13: *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in **part**; then I shall **know fully**, even as I am fully known.*
-so we'll have clarity...
- And God will dwell with us... - *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be **with** them and be their God.*
- But here is the **best bit**...
- Rev 22 – the very last chapter of the Bible... v3b *The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴**They will see his face**.....*
- We will serve **Jesus** the **Lamb**....
- **And we will see his face**...!!! //
- We will see our glorious **Saviour** **Jesus** in all his **glory**...
- And... when we've been there **ten thousand years**,
bright **shining** as the **sun**,
we've **no less** days to **sing God's praise**
than when **we'd first begun**! ///
- Yes, **I believe in the life everlasting**!!
- Again brothers and sisters – **encourage** one another with these words..
- This is what **Advent** is all about... this series couldn't be more appropriate!
- It's been one **heck** of a year... on the back of **bushfires** and **drought**... and still we live with the presence of and impact of **COVID-19**...
- But the **return** of **Christ** – the **resurrection** of the **body** and the **life everlasting**... **that** is something to look **forward** to... to **lift** our **hope**... to give us **perspective**...
- And this is what the coming of Christ the **FIRST** time **set up** and **guaranteed**...
- Its **because** God entered our world to **deal** with **sin** and **reconcile us to himself** – that we can look forward with great anticipation to the **resurrection** of the **body** and the **life everlasting**...
- And when we live as though the stuff of **this** world and **this** life is all that **matters**... then - well it's an **insult** to **God** who gave of his **Son** so all that we might have everlasting life...
- And when we live **only** and **passionately** for the things of **THIS** world... then we **seriously miss out** on the **comfort** and **peace** and **hope** and **perspective** this **brings**...
- Because we will one day with the Lord **forever** - that means we ought to be living as if life **here** is **temporary**... because it **is**...!! //
- We ought to be living as if we have some **hope** for the **future** – because we most **certainly do**! //
- We ought to be living as if **THIS** is what actually **matters** to us... because surely **this changes everything**...! ////
- **When will you die?** //

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- You **won't**....!! for those who die **believing** in **Jesus** will **live even** though they **die**... //
- **There is a day coming** – that day when Jesus will return... and when **that** happens – we will **be** with the Lord **forever**...! ///
- **Therefore, encourage one another with these words!!**