

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 27) – November 12, 2023

“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.”

–1 Thessalonians 4:13–

St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians to set the record straight regarding the End Times. Paul writes out of care and concern for the Thessalonian people. He comforts them concerning matters of death and grief. Paul assures the Thessalonians that those who have died in Christ will be among the first to experience the resurrection and the risen Christ. When Christ comes again, we will all be reunited and together once again. This is what gives us Christians living hope.

That said, this doesn't mean that the Christian never grieves. In fact, Jesus sets the example for us as he grieved over the loss of his dear friend Lazarus (see Jn. 11:33-36). We grieve over the death of loved ones, but we don't grieve like those who don't have hope. Indeed, death separates us from our loved ones. Death stings. Death causes great pain. Despite that, we have victory over death through Jesus' death and resurrection.

From a young age, I experienced grief. The first loss of a loved one I had experienced happened when I was about eight years old. The woman who died was in her nineties– she lived a full life, and she was a devout Christian woman. My parents ached as they saw their daughter grieving, but for them, they were able to give me comfort and hope because our hope is in the Lord and in him alone.

For these brand-new Christians in Thessalonica, they needed someone to remind them of the power of Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul proclaims to them once again the life-saving power of Christ and his victory over sin, death, and the resurrection. May we, too, seek to share the truth of the Gospel in the same way.

Prayer: Gracious God and Father, we give you thanks for the gift of your son Jesus Christ, who died to save us from sin, death, and the devil. Strengthen our hope in him that, even as we grieve the loss of loved ones, we might not lose sight of your promise life eternal. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.