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What is your hope for the future?



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"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

Earlier today Kathy and I were visiting with a sister in Christ who's facing her late husband's funeral. They were both friends we'd met many years ago. All four of us were then young and looking forward to many years of life. Time has passed quickly! This visit reminded us of the words quoted above.

Paul wrote these words to comfort Thessalonian Christians he knew. They'd lost fellow believers to death. Paul reminded them that the living spirits of those who've died, as true believers in Christ, are now with Christ. He's coming again, soon, for believers still living. When He does, He'll bring those departed believers with Him.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and

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"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

Our departed friend had suffered declining health for several years. The vigor of youth had evaporated. But now, with his Lord and Savior, he is vibrant once again. In fact, compared to him, the healthiest among us probably seem quite sickly.

Paul contemplated the superiority of his eternal future in a different letter, to the Philippians. He wrote,

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

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However, these blessings which Paul anticipated are only for those whom Christ has saved from

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