

The Grand Reunion

First Thessalonians 4.13–18

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 17, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2020

Prelude:

I. Every Sunday that we have missed assembling here at our building,

- A. I have been here in case anyone came by.
- B. Then for the past five Sundays,
 - 1. some of us starting having services online, and
 - 2. I also would record a video and post it online along with some songs.

II. When I recorded the songs,

- A. for the singers I used a group called, True Lift.
- B. I paired their songs with the slides that we used to be able to show here.
 - 1. To do that, I had to concentrate
 - a) so that I advanced the slides at the right time,
 - 2. just like when I was doing them in our worship assembly.
 - a) The best way to do that
 - b) was to sing along with the singers.
 - (1) However, something happened that I was not expecting.
 - (2) I realized how much I had missed singing with you, and
 - (a) I got choked up in my office,
 - (b) my eyes started to water and
 - i) it made me miss what we do here even more.
 - ii) What shall the singing be like up above later?

III. On that first Sunday when we met online, April 12th,

- A. I hosted what is called a Zoom Meeting and
- B. on my office computer,
 - 1. I have a large screen, 27 inches, and

2. I could see everyone as they were joining in.
 - a) Again, something happened unexpectedly.
 - b) All these faces that I love so dearly
 - (1) started appearing on my screen.
 - (2) That made me realize how much I missed everyone.

IV. Evidently, others have been thinking and feeling the same way.

A. Others teared up also.

1. Even the children have missed seeing everyone,
2. not just their friends of the same age group.

B. On Saturday, May 9th, Traci texted Kerri and I, saying:

“Carl went over to Lynn’s house and got her set up with Zoe’s laptop so she and the Hannans can participate in worship tomorrow.

“We just had a quick Zoom so they could practice. The kids loved seeing Lynn, but after it was over...Adam lingered and after a minute said, ‘I wanted to keep seeing her.’”

“He actually got really sad and teared up.

“We snuggled a few minutes and he felt better, but that sure was a good illustration of how much we all miss each other!

“Yes! It really was SO good to see her. We’ve seen the Hannans, but only from a distance and Adam was crying because he missed them so much and just wanted to hug them.”

V. What all of this triggers in my mind is the great reunion coming.

A. Is it not great to see one another

B. whom we have not seen in the worship assembly

1. since March 15th,
2. two months ago!
 - a) What then shall The Great Reunion be like when Jesus returns?

VI. However, there are some people we cannot see today because

- A. they have already passed on and
- B. they are waiting for us.
 - 1. How long has it been since you have seen various brethren?
 - 2. If it is emotional now for us to see one another,
 - a) what shall it be like
 - b) when we see people
 - (1) we have not seen in years and
 - (2) those whom we have never met,
 - (a) such as the people we know from the Bible?

VII.I want to show you passage

- A. that we use mostly to teach about the Second Coming of Christ, and
- B. that is a good use, for
 - 1. that is what Paul taught, but
 - 2. there was a reason why he reminded the Thessalonians
 - a) in First Thessalonians 4
 - b) of the return of Christ.

VIII.Let's find out why Paul reminded the Thessalonians of the return of Christ.

Persuasion:

I. First Thessalonians 4.13 • Hope of Seeing the Dead

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

- A. First, those who have died in Christ have fallen asleep.
 - 1. They have fallen asleep because
 - 2. their bodies shall rise again

- a) just as when we wake up in the morning.
 - b) Death looks like sleep.
 - (1) So the Bible uses that terminology
 - (2) to let us know that they shall rise again,
 - (a) which means we shall see them again!
 - (b) It also means that we shall see innumerable numbers of people
 - i) whom we have only known through the Scriptures or
 - ii) from historical documents.
- B. Second, yes we can sorrow, but
- 1. do not act as though you will never see those brethren again.
 - 2. You *will* see them again and
 - a) nothing shall ever happen again to keep us from one another.
 - b) How great is that?
- C. Therefore, Paul reminded them of a wonderful teaching
- 1. that they had known but
 - 2. in their grief during the deaths of their brethren,
 - a) they had forgotten.
 - b) Remembering Scripture always helps us in many ways.

II. First Thessalonians 4.14 • **God Will Bring Them with Him**

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

- A. Do you believe that Jesus died and rose again?
- 1. Not only do you believe it, but
 - 2. you reenacted it through your own baptism:

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with

Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection...

– Romans 6.3–5

- a) We died with Him
 - b) that we might live with Him.
 - (1) We live with Him now in the Spirit, but
 - (2) the time shall come when we shall live with Him in person.
 - (a) That means although we die in the body,
 - (b) later He will perform the great resurrection and
 - i) all of us shall be raised from the dead
 - ii) to join Him forever in heaven!
- B. So then, when Jesus returns
- 1. He will not come alone, for
 - 2. Paul said, **“God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”**
 - a) Right now think of Christians who have died.
 - b) I thinking of Ida Horne,
 - (1) the first Christian that I knew who died,
 - (2) who loved me and my wife dearly.
 - c) I am also thinking of Earl Herrington
 - (1) who taught me and baptized me.
 - (2) I have not seen him in decades, but he is gone now.
 - 3. What people in the Bible do you desire to meet?

III. First Thessalonians 4.15–17 • The Grand Reunion

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and

remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

A. The Grand Reunion shall follow a pattern or order.

B. The disciples of Christ living on the earth when He returns,

1. will not go up to meet the Lord first.
2. No, others have been waiting.
 - a) They get to go first.
 - b) Does anyone have a problem with that?
 - (1) Paul, you have been waiting.
 - (2) Brother, you get to go before me.

C. Here is how the general resurrection shall happen:

1. The Lord Himself,
 - a) get it, the Lord Himself,
 - b) shall descend from heaven.
2. His descent shall be announced in the most powerful way:
 - a) There will be a shout of the archangel Michael,
 - (1) announcing Him whom we will be seeing for the first time.
 - b) Along with that there shall be a blast of the trumpet of God.
3. What shall those two sounds be like?
 - a) Do not worry, you shall not miss any of this,
 - b) as John declared in Revelation 1:

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

– **Revelation 1.7**

- (1) It is not just His friends who shall see Him and
 - (2) hear the voice of the archangel and the sound of God's trumpet.
 - (a) Even those who hate Him,
 - (b) those who killed Him,
 - i) they shall see Him
 - ii) whom they do not want to see.
 4. With the sound of Michael and the trumpet,
 - a) Jesus shall call forth the dead.
 - b) Their spirits shall empty out of Hades,
 - (1) reenter their bodies, and
 - (2) they shall rise from
 - (a) the grave and
 - (b) go up into the air.
 5. Then the living believers shall go up in the skies,
 - a) we will be gathered with those just resurrected,
 - b) meeting them in the clouds of glory
 - (1) that accompany the Second Coming of Christ and
 6. then the whole group will do something
 - a) out of this world:
 - b) we shall all meet the Lord in the air.
- D. We shall never be separated from
1. the Lord and
 2. those whom He resurrected.
 - a) That shall be the reunion of reunions.

E. What shall we do with these words?

IV. First Thessalonians 4.18 • What to Do with this Teaching

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

A. Let us remind one another of the words about the return of Jesus and

1. that we shall see our brethren again and
2. meet an incalculable number whom we have never met.

B. Yes, cry when our fellow Christians die, but

1. do not act as though you shall never see them again.
2. You shall see them again in just a little while.

Exhortation:

I. This is for His loyal believers.

A. Give all diligence to make sure that you are in that number.

B. When you are weak,

1. ask for His help, because
2. He wants you there even more than you want to be there.

II. What is your need today?

A. Do you know what to do?

B. Are you confused?

1. Let us help.
2. Let us minister to one another.