Our Comfort BY Malusi Skunyana

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1 TH 4:13. 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.

1 TH 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1 TH 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1 TH 4:16 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:

1 TH 4:17 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.

1 TH 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The Bible contains a message of hope and gives us comfort in all our heartaches, even the greatest of them all – death. It positively teaches that our friends who sleep in death will rise again at the coming of Jesus to this world, and this is our great hope. When we lose our loved ones we may be comforted to know that the separation is only temporary, as someday Jesus will come again and we will be reunited with our loved ones.

When Paul was writing to the Thessalonian believers it seems they were sorrowing over the death of their brethren and wondered what would happen to them at the coming of the Lord. Paul refers to the dead saints as those who are “asleep” indicating that their death is not eternal; they will rise again. Speaking to His disciples concerning the death of Lazarus, Jesus referred to Lazarus’ death as a sleep. He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” John 11:25. So Christ’s teaching was that He would resurrect the dead saints at His coming, and to affirm this He raised Lazarus from death. The apostle Paul wanted to affirm this hope for the Thessalonian believers, that they needed not sorrow as the others who did not have this hope, for their friends would rise again at the coming of the Lord.

Jesus’ death and resurrection is the basis for this great hope of the resurrection of the dead, and without His death and resurrection, we would have no hope. But because our Saviour lives we have no reason to be concerned what tomorrow holds for us and our loved ones, for we know that He who died and rose from the dead holds our future in the palm of His hand. If we believe in Him and live for Him in this world, we shall see Him when He comes again, and we shall live with Him for eternity.

Paul wanted the Thessalonian believers to know that they had no need to worry about their sleeping brethren, for when Jesus would return the dead would rise first, then those living would be transformed, and all would be caught up in the clouds together to be with Jesus. So the dead would not miss the glory of the coming of the Lord. This message is our comfort also today as we are still waiting for that day when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise with immortality, and the living saints shall be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. Then they will all be caught up in the clouds to meet the Saviour. That day will be a day of gladness and all our tears will be wiped away; and forever after we will always be with Jesus and there shall be no more pain, no more suffering, and no more death.

Dear friend, for now we do experience sorrow and suffering, but let us look forward to the Second Coming of Jesus, when we shall experience overflowing joy. It is true that in this life we go through trials and tribulations, but let us embrace the hope that when our Saviour shall come again He will wipe away all our tears. For now, we may lose our loved ones through death, but someday there will be a joyous reunion. So let this hope comfort us in our affliction, and let us cling on Jesus and His promises. I pray that God may revive your hope, and that you may always find comfort in Him. May God bless you! Amen!