

Hopeful Journey

Description

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Years ago, I had the privilege of pastoring a saint of the church. He was a loving and gentle soul, diagnosed with a horrible disease that eventually took his life. During my visits in those final weeks, as we talked about his funeral service, he told me, "I've heard a lot of sermons devoted to heaven. But it's the journey that's critical."

His words always come to mind when I am reading this passage. Paul knew the grief of the believers who had lost loved ones in Christ. Grief is normal and healthy, but our grief is not the same as others who don't have the hope of Christ (v. 13). Paul was helping believers (us) understand what our hope is. As my beloved parishioner described, it isn't simply about heaven. It is verse 17: We will be with the Lord forever! This is the pinnacle of a life, a journey as that saint put it, lived with the Lord. Our journey is with Jesus here and now: knowing, loving, enjoying, and serving God. We do it now, and we will do it even more wonderfully for eternity!

This is our encouragement. This is our hope!

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