

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 Facing Death in Light of Christ's Life

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[0:00] Today's scripture reading is taken from 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 13 to 5, verse 11.

! If you don't have a Bible, please do grab them from the front or at the back near the door. Our passage is on page 928 in the Church Bible, 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 13.

Hear, then, God's word to us today. But 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.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. Then the dead in Christ will rise first.

[1:22] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, encourage one another with these words. Now, concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While the people are saying, there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day.

We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

[2:30] But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word.

Thank you, CK. Let me pray for us, and then we'll look at this scripture together. Lord Jesus, your word is always good news. Sometimes we need to work a bit to understand what it's saying, but it always points us back to you, the fountain of life, the source of life.

And God calls us to hope in you and trust in you. Lord, I pray that we help us to understand this word. Help us to understand what you're saying in your scriptures, that we might hold on to you.

[3:33] In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. November the 13th, 1789, so almost 250 years ago, a very old and frail man by the name of Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, inventor of the electric light bulb and other things, he wrote a letter to a French scientist called Jean-Baptiste Leroy, a man he had befriended when he lived in Paris, and he wrote these now very famous words.

Our new constitution is now established and has an appearance that promises permanency. But in this world, nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes, right?

You've heard those words before. Nothing is certain except death and taxes. Well, many countries have tried to promote themselves as tax-free havens, tax-free areas where you don't need to pay tax, but no country has avoided the absolute certainty of death.

Despite Brian Johnson's best efforts and tens of millions of dollars, starving off death, starving off aging, trying to stay young forever, the death rate for the human race is still 100%.

Friends, each one of us, for each day that passes, is one day closer to the day when we will leave this world. None of us get to live in this world forever.

[4:58] And that means that all of us need to think about two things. We need to think about death, because that will come to all of us. And we need to think about how we're going to live our lives now in light of the fact that we will one day leave this world.

And that's what God wants to help us think about in this passage today. So if you've got your Bible, you'll notice when CK read to us, there's two very clear sections in our scripture. First one is chapter 4, verse 13 to 18.

And it ends with these lines, with these words. Therefore, encourage one another with these words. And then the second section is chapter 5, verse 1 to 11. And it also ends with these lines.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up. So the first section, chapter 4, is how do we think about death in light of Jesus' return?

Both of these sections talk about the fact that Jesus is going to come back again. And how do we think about death in light of the fact that Christ is one day going to return?

[5:59] And then the second section, chapter 5, helps us to think about how do we think about life in light of the fact that one day Jesus is going to return? So how do we think about death in light of Jesus' return?

How do we think about life in view of Christ's return? And what God wants to say to us this morning is the fact that Jesus died, but didn't stay dead, that he rose again, means he's alive.

And the fact that he's coming again means that we get to face death, both our own death and that of our loved ones, with hope, not fear.

And it means we get to live life with purpose and conviction, not apathy or indifference. Okay, so that's what God is going to be saying to us this morning. Those of us that are Christians get to face death, both our own and that of our loved ones, with hope, not fear, and get to live life with purpose and conviction, not apathy or indifference.

So let's look at it together. Look at the first section with me, chapter 4, verse 13 to 18. Facing death in view of Christ's return.

[7:06] So verse 13 says this, So what's going on here?

In the very first century, the early Christians, right? But they knew that because Jesus had died and risen again, as the Old Testament scriptures said he would, and as the apostles had witnessed and verified themselves, that meant that Jesus was still alive.

And it also meant, as the Old Testament prophesied was going to happen, that Jesus will one day come again and bring with him, collect with him, his believers, his followers, and take them with him into the new creation, into the new heavens and the new earth.

And so they were waiting for Jesus' return, when Christ will come and take us to the new creation. But Jesus' return took longer than they expected.

And so after a couple of months or years, some of the members of the church got old and some passed away. And so they have this question, What's happened to those that have died? Have they now gone to the land of the dead, to Sheol, and they are separated from us forever?

[8:29] Have we lost those, have passed away? Jesus will come and get us who are still alive. But what about those that are dead? Maybe we'll be with Jesus forever, and they are forever lost in the land of the dead.

And so Paul writes, and he says, No, that's not the case. Look at verse 15. For we declare to you by word from the Lord, that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not proceed, that means not go ahead of, those who have already fallen asleep or died.

For the Lord Jesus himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with a voice of an archangel, with the sound of a trumpet from God. That means with authority and power.

And the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we who are alive, who are left, we will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord, and we will always be with the Lord together.

So do you see what Paul's saying here? When Christ comes again, it could be next week, it could be in a thousand years from now, those that are Christians, that are in Christ, that have already died, they will rise with new physical resurrected bodies, and they will meet Jesus.

[9:40] And we who are still alive, if Christ comes in our lifetime, we will rise with our physical resurrected bodies, and we will together meet the Lord, and we'll go with him to the new heavens and the new earth to glory with him.

Okay, so that's what Paul's saying. So we won't be separated, we won't be lost forever, we will together be reunited with Christ. Now, just as a side note here, those Christians who have already died over the last 2,000 years, where do you think they are now, and what do you think they are doing?

Do you think they are walking the streets of gold and the new creation, the new heaven? Well, actually, no. What it seems, the Bible says, is that those that are in Christ are in an intermediate state.

We are waiting for Christ's return. The new resurrection hasn't happened. Heaven and earth is not being united. We are not, they are not in heaven yet. That is still going to come. When Christ returns, that will be the resurrection, when all those who are in Christ will be raised to our new bodies, and we will be with him in the new creation forever and ever.

But in the immediate time, those people that are in Christ that have died, their souls are in heaven waiting for the resurrection, waiting for Christ to come and bring us with him to the new creation.

[10:56] So sometimes at funerals, you hear people say, well, it's so sad that my loved one's not here, but they are dancing on streets of gold in heaven. No, not yet. That'll come. But at the moment, they are waiting for the resurrection.

In fact, this week, I was with a friend. We were visiting a cemetery up in Taiwai, and we were walking around, and I stumbled across this headstone. This is a lady called Miss Anna Martinson. She's one of the very first missionaries to China and Hong Kong. Her husband moved to Guangzhou in 1902 with their three very, very small children.

Her husband then died 12 years later, and she stayed in Guangzhou province and then in Hong Kong for the next 50 years, raising her children. And she died in Taiwai and was buried.

But look at what her headstone says, awaiting the resurrection. She is absolutely right. Right now, where is Anna Martinson? She's in an intermediate space. Her soul is in heaven, but she is awaiting the resurrection for Christ to return when she will be given a new body, a perfect body free of sickness and death and aching and wheelchairs and all sorts of sicknesses, and Christ when Christ returns.

[12:09] So, what is the point of all this? Verse 13, We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

And that's what Paul is saying, that for those who are in Christ, death is not the end. Rather, on this side of the resurrection, while we wait for Christ to return, death just means the end of the dress rehearsal.

It's the end of the warm-up. It's the end of the warm-up lap until the real thing begins when Jesus returns and the new creation begins. And that's why the Bible uses this euphemism for death.

How does the Bible call death here? What's the word it uses? Sleep, right? Why does the Bible use the word sleep for those who have died? He says here in verse 13, We do not want you to be uninformed about those who are asleep.

God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. You know the word cemetery means the place of sleeping, the dormitory for those who are asleep. And the reason for this is because it communicates the temporiness of death for those that are in Christ.

[13:19] Just as when you sleep and you sleep will be followed by being awake, those who are in Christ who die, that will be followed by resurrection. Death is just temporary.

It's just a time while we're waiting for Christ to return. Friends, many of us here have lost loved ones. Many of us here have had to bury mothers or fathers, grandparents, just in the last week or so.

Friends, some of us have had to bury brothers and sisters. Some of us here have even had to bury sons and daughters, our children. Friends, for some of us here, our loved ones are still alive, but they are almost there.

And if they know and love Jesus, and if you know and love Jesus, soon, very, very soon, Jesus is gonna return. And look at what verse 17 says.

We will be caught up together with them and meet the Lord, and we will always be with the Lord Jesus together. So do not grieve as those who have no hope.

[14:24] Do not mourn as if this world is all that there is. John Stott put it like this. The hope of Christianity is more than simply the expectation that the King is coming. It's the belief that when He comes, the Christian dead will come with Him, and the Christian living will join them, which means the people of God enjoy unbreakable solidarity with Christ and with each other, which death is utterly unable to touch.

about 130 years ago, some archaeologists were in Egypt, you know, digging through ruins, and they stumbled across a piece of very old papyri from the second century AD, so 1800 years old. And one of the pieces was a letter written by a lady called Irene to a couple. There we have it, Theronephorus and Philo, and they had lost their son.

Their son had passed away. And so she writes this letter of condolences, and she expresses her sorry for their loss. She weeps with them as she had wept over the loss of her own loved one called Didymus.

And she assures that her and her friends have done everything they can in the circumstances, which probably means they've offered funeral prayers and offerings. But then look at how she concludes this letter.

[15:41] But still, there is nothing one can do in the face of such trouble. So I leave you to comfort yourselves. Farewell. Friends, that's what hope she offers.

Still, there's nothing we can do. So comfort one another. Goodbye. Friends, that is not the hope of the gospel. That is not the hope of Jesus Christ.

Because Christ died and rose again. The hope that Christ offers us, the message of the Lord Jesus Christ is that we can have certainty and conviction that those in Christ have died will not stay dead. But they will rise, and we will rise with Him. And together we will join them in the new creation where there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more tears, no more sorrow, no more sadness, no more wheelchairs, no more old age and Alzheimer's.

Friends, we will rise with Him in the new creation forever and ever. And how do we know that this is true? Well, look at verse 14. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so through Jesus, God will bring with Him all those who have fallen asleep.

[16:55] Friends, the reason we can know this is because of the historical fact of history that there was a man called Jesus of Nazareth who died and didn't stay dead. He rose again, and the cross is empty, and the tomb is empty, and Jesus says that all those who trust in Him and believe in Him, just as He passed through death to life, we too will pass through death to life as well.

So what does this mean? It doesn't mean that Christians don't grieve. It doesn't mean that Christians don't mourn. It doesn't mean that death is not terribly sad.

If Jesus wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus, then followers of Jesus can weep at the gravesides of our loved ones too. But what it does mean is that we don't grieve and mourn without hope.

We don't grieve and mourn as if this is the end, for death is not the end. Christ has conquered death, and those who know Him will rise with Him again to everlasting life.

So, facing death in view of Christ's return. Secondly, living life in view of Christ's return. Now, the obvious question is, all this hangs, all this hinges on the fact that Jesus is going to come back again one day.

[18:10] But the question is, when is that going to happen? Is that next week? Is it next year? Is it 2,000 years from now? Well, look at what Paul writes in chapter 5. He says, Now, concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need to have anything written to you.

So he says, you don't need me to tell you what's going to happen. Why? Is that because they worked out some secret Bible code, and they worked out, we know when Jesus is coming? No, it's because when Paul was with them, he told them, nobody knows when Jesus is coming.

So, verse 2, Now, let's think about this for a bit, because it's a bit confusing.

Paul uses mixed metaphors here. He says, He says, On one hand, for some people, that Christ's coming again is going to be like a thief in the night. Now, this is a phrase that began with Jesus. Jesus says in Matthew 24, I will come again like a thief in the night. Therefore, he says, Therefore, you must also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect.

[19:24] And the Apostle Peter used this phrase, and 2 Peter chapter 3, and the Apostle John used this phrase. So this was kind of a common phrase in the first century, to talk about the time when Jesus will come.

And the meaning is quite obvious, right? Jesus will come in a way that is sudden and unexpected, like a thief in the night. We live in, obviously, one of the best cities in the world, Hong Kong, one of the safest cities in the world.

We often forget to lock our door at night. If you ever want to steal anything, our house is freely available. We don't even lock the door that often. But I grew up in another country called South Africa, which is not quite as safe.

And when I was growing up, we had a spate, probably about a year, where every couple of months, maybe every six to eight weeks, somebody would climb over the fence, they would cut out the window pane of our living room, climb in, and clear everything out.

TVs, high-fives, take it all. And we'd wake up in the morning, and we've all been cleared out. And then we'd replace it, replace the glass, and two months later, wake up in the morning, and it's all gone.

[20 : 27] And this happened about four or five times in one year alone, right? But of course, if you know when the thieves are coming, well, what are you going to do? You're going to wait up.

You're going to set a trap. You're going to have the police waiting for them. You're going to catch them. But of course, the point is, thieves know that. So they don't come when you're expecting it. They come when you don't expect it.

That's the whole point. So that you can be caught off guard. Jesus says that for many people, his coming again is going to be like that. It's going to be unexpected.

It's going to be surprising. When people are living for themselves, seeking personal pleasure, self-glory, hedonistic lifestyles, just living it up, not a care in the world, Jesus will suddenly appear, and all the stuff that we were seeking and living for will feel shallow and have zero bearing in our life.

Jesus is going to come, and his coming is going to be a surprise and sudden and unexpected. And some people say, I'm not really ready to get serious with God now.

[21 : 31] Let me just live my life and enjoy my life and wonder when I'm older, I'll settle down, and then I'll take God seriously. And Paul says, you don't know what you're talking about. If you think that that's the way it works, that's a myth.

You're going to be caught unaware. Jesus is going to come one day, and you're going to face him face to face. Either he will come, or your life will be taken from you, and you'll be face to face with your creator, and it'll be too late.

But then, so Jesus says, on one hand, his coming will be like a thief in the night. But then he says, on the other hand, it's going to be like a pregnant woman experiencing labor pains. Now, unlike a thief in the night, if you are pregnant, labor should not be unexpected.

Okay? Sorry to tell you, it's coming your way. It's just a matter of time. But the point here, is that Christ's coming is not unexpected.

It's inescapable. It is inevitable. If you have a child growing in your womb, it's just a matter of time before labor comes upon you. And there is nothing you can do to avoid it.

[22 : 31] Well, in his day anyway, maybe now you can have a cesarean. Okay? But the point here is, if you are on labor, it is inescapable. And so, Jesus says that his coming again will be both unexpected and inescapable.

As one commentator said, in the first case, there is no warning. In the second case, there is no escaping. But then, Paul seems to change track. And then he says, but actually, for many of you, it's not going to be like that at all.

Because it's not going to be like a thief in the night. It's going to be like a visitor who comes to your house in the daytime. Someone that you've been expecting and anticipating all day long. Look what he says in verse 4.

But you are not in darkness, brothers and sisters, for that day to surprise you like a thief. No, you are children of the light. Children of the day. So, Jesus says, for some people, it's going to be like a surprise, like a thief in the night.

Or labor for a pregnant lady. But for other people, oh, it's going to be an expected thing. It's like a guest that you welcome your home. You've been waiting for them to arrive. You've got everything ready.

[23 : 32] And when they come, you're glad to see them. So, which one is it? Is it a thief in the night? Or is it someone coming? And the answer is, it depends.

It depends on your standing with the Lord Jesus Christ. It depends on whether you know him or not. It depends on whether you're part of the domain of the kingdom of God or the things of this world. Whether you're the age of God or the age of this world. You see, in the Old Testament, the Bible described this world as like a long, dark night. And when the Messiah would come, it was like the sun was going to rise on the darkness of this world.

Remember Malachi 4? The sun will come and bring healing on its wings. And Jesus talks about himself like this. He says that this world is darkness, and the light has come to the world, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jesus says that he has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his glorious light. Jesus says that he is the light of the world. And so whether we are ready for Christ's coming or not, depends on which kingdom are we a part of?

[24 : 39] Which age are we a part of? Are you part of the age of this world? Are you living for the things of this world? Is this where your hope, your identity, your security is, your status? Or are you part of the kingdom of the sun?

The kingdom of the light? Paul writes here and he says to the Christians, you are not in darkness for that day to surprise you. You are children of the light, children of the day.

So friends, what about you? Where do you stand? You can't have a foot in either world. You're either of the night or of the day. You're either of the kingdom of this world or the kingdom of the sun. Are you awake to Christ and his grace or are you dead to his reign? That's the essential question. And so what does this mean for us? Well, look for those of us that are in Christ. It means we get to live now, ready and expectant, attentive and purposeful as we wait Christ's return.

Look at verse six to eight of chapter five. He says this, so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober minded.

[25 : 45] For those who sleep, sleep at night, those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day or the light, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

What's Paul's point here? Paul's point is he's not against people having fun or having a party or enjoying themselves. He's against the seduction of indulgence and extravagance rather than being alert, focused and disciplined.

And so Paul here uses the language of military uniform, right? He says, let us be sober minded, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

These are the kinds of things that a Roman soldier would wear as they are guarding Caesar's palace or they're standing in the watchtower that have a helmet, that have breastplate, keeping themselves safe.

They are defensive armor, military wear as they stand on watch. But what does the watchman do? A watchman's got to be alert, attentive, awake. If a watchman is drunk in the tower, that's not a great watchman.

[26 : 48] If he's fast asleep, the enemy's going to take him out and take out Caesar. A watchman's got to be alert, awake, attentive, purposeful, watching to see what's going on.

And Paul here says, therefore, that's how we should live. Watchful and attentive, purposeful, knowing that we don't have much time. Christ is coming. Soon we will meet our maker. So let's live with purpose and conviction and intentionality.

Does anybody remember what happened at 7.55 a.m. on the 7th of December, 1941? Anyone was there? Pearl Harbor, right?

Pearl Harbor. Anyone seen the movie of Pearl Harbor? I can't remember. It was Ben Affleck and someone else. They're kind of in their Hawaii t-shirts, lying on the beach, kicking it up.

Just, you know, what better place to be posted in the military than Hawaii? And suddenly, the Japanese bombers came and took them by surprise. And everyone starts scrambling and trying to get the aircraft in the air and dive for bunkers caught unaware.

[27 : 51] Paul says, don't live like that. No, no, no, no. Be alert. Be attentive. Be purposeful. Live with conviction. Know who it is that Christ has called us to. John Piper puts it like this.

There is a war going on. All talk of a Christian's right to live luxuriously as a child of the king in this atmosphere sounds hollow, especially since the king himself is strapped up for battle.

Almost nobody lives as if life is war. Almost all of us live as if it's peacetime. In peacetime, life goes on. You're concerned about your own comforts and your own securities.

In wartime, everything changes. Friends, if you're a follower of Jesus, you're living in wartime. There's a battle. And Christ is going to come victoriously. He's going to destroy the enemy. But don't be sleeping in the watchtower. Don't be inebriated just by the seduced and drunk on the luxuries of life. Let's be aware. So how should we live?

[28:49] Well, this passage calls us to live attentively. Look at what he says. With faith, hope, and love. Did you see that? Verse 8. Let us be sober having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Faith, hope, and love. The three things we found in chapter 1. When Paul says, as you hold on to Jesus, this is what the gospel is going to produce in you. A life of faith and hope and love.

Friends, as Christians, we get to be vigilant and sober-minded rather than lazy and apathetic. It means living with purpose and intentionality rather than indulgence and extravagance. It means being attentive and purposeful for the things of Jesus rather than living for the things of this world. Because Christians know this world is not our home. We are temporary residents here. And soon, very soon, Jesus is coming back again. So, how should we live this week?

What should we do differently? Well, three very quick things. Firstly, if you're here this morning and you're not a follower of Jesus, you're not yet a Christian. Friends, you see what the Bible is saying here?

[29:53] At the heart of the Christian faith is the message that Jesus of Nazareth died and rose again. And the apostles and the disciples, the people that wrote the scriptures, they saw him with their own eyes.

They felt his hands with their own hands. They witnessed it. Jesus died and rose again. And that same Jesus is the divine son of God. And he is coming again in power and glory.

At his first coming, Jesus came in vulnerability and weakness. He's born in a manger. He's an unread teenage mom. The backwaters of Israel somewhere. In humility and weakness.

At his second coming, he will come with power and authority and glory. Friends, don't remain as you are. Don't remain in the dark.

Don't remain oblivious to who Christ is and what he's calling you to. Jesus Christ this morning, the risen living God is looking you in the eye and saying, come, let me help you move from the kingdom of darkness into the light.

[30:54] Let me show you who I am. Come and discover my grace. Friends, all you need to do is come to him and say, Jesus, forgive me of my sin. I need you. I don't even know what that means exactly, but I want to follow you.

Friends, don't leave this place without doing that. Come and know the living Lord Jesus. He wants to save you and forgive you. If you're not a Christian, do that today. For those of us who are Christians, what might this look like to live with intentionality and purpose?

What might it look like for your goals, your dreams, your ambitions in life? Friends, what are your goals and dreams? Is it to be successful, to be famous, to be wealthy by Hong Kong standards? Why don't you aim a little higher for that? Christ, the living God, has given you his spirit to make a difference in this world, to live for him. How would Jesus Christ want you to steward your gifts, your talents, your resources for his glory?

What might it mean for the way that you raise your kids? Are we raising our kids to be champions of the darkness, champions of the night, A-grade students who are ignorant of Jesus and his coming?

[31:58] The headmaster of the school that we send our kids to, at one parent's day, he once said, we are raising your kids and preparing them to die, which is not something that most headmasters tell parents, right?

Your little Johnny, we're preparing to help him die. But actually, he's absolutely right. And what he meant by that is, we want to help your kids to know Jesus so that one day they will not meet him face to face and not know him.

Friends, what might it mean for our parenting? Are we helping our kids to love the light, to love the truth, to anticipate Jesus' return? Friends, what might it mean for the way that we steward our finances?

Are we living in excess indulgence, spending money only on ourselves as if this life is all there is? Or are we using this to glorify God and encourage one another? And then here's the last thing.

Look at the last two verses of our sections. Four verse 18. Therefore, encourage one another with these words. Look at five verse 11. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up just

as you are doing.

[33:00] Friends, what might this mean if you're a follower of Jesus? How can you encourage one another, build one another up, point each other to the risen Christ and help us to live with purpose and conviction?

What should we do with this? Those of us who know the Lord Jesus, we get to live encouraging, strengthening each other, urging each other to hold to Jesus, to not give up the fight, to live purposeful, attentive, intentional lives as we wait with hope, live by faith, serve others in love in the name of Christ, our risen and returning King.

Let's pray together as we come to Him now. Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding us in your word that you are not just a relic of history, not just a good man who died many years ago.

God, thank you that the hope of Christianity is not like the letter that that Egyptian lady, Irene, wrote to her friends. Beyond this, we have nothing to offer you. Comfort yourselves. Farewell.

No, friends. No, Lord Jesus, you give us the gospel. You give us the hope. You remind us that you are coming again and you will take us with you and we will be with you forever and ever. I pray, God, help us as a church to live in light of that, to face death in view of your coming and to live life in view of your coming as well with purpose, conviction, and hope.

[34:21] In your great name, I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.