

Hope: Why Does the Second Advent of Christ Matter?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We start Advent season by talking about hope. But we're going to do it a little differently this year—today we're going to talk about Christ's second advent (coming). For we are waiting in hope for his return.

The difference between hopelessness and hope is described by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

[1] Hopelessness. *It's a death before death.*

- The question is "about those who are asleep" (4:13)

- "that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (4:13)
 - Hopelessness includes grieving—and a certain kind of grieving.

[2] Hope!

- The future is hopeful and secure because of two events: "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again..." (4:14)

- So what is the future hope? "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven..." (4:16)
 - "...so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." (Hebrews 9:28)

How does Jesus' second coming impact you now?

- In *Future Grace*, John Piper says many of us only look back to the cross and *past* grace. But there's so much more for us in the future! And this should motivate our lives *today*.

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Can you remember a time when you were hopeless? What did you learn from this experience?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
 - a. How do a person's beliefs about the future of the world practically matter?
 - b. Out of all the things that will happen in the future, why is the event noted in 4:16 so crucial and central?
3. Read Hebrews 9:28. Do you know the joy of "eagerly waiting for him"? Why or why not?