

Comfort One Another
I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Consolation for grief is found in the coming Christ.

As Christians, we are often called upon to be a source of comfort to those who are heavy-hearted—particularly when it involves the loss of a loved one. Although we, in and of ourselves, have no comfort to provide, we can point those who come to us to the Word of “the God of all comfort.”

Paul was a caring leader that did not want the Thessalonians to be ignorant concerning the fate of fellow believers who had died. Additionally, he did not want them grieving as those who had no hope because they *did have* hope—the promised return of Jesus Christ.

Paul’s grammar in verse 14 emphasizes that just as certainly as Jesus died and rose again, the dead in Christ would also rise again—they would not be left behind. The Greek construction in verse 15 rules out even the possibility that those who are living at Christ’s return will have an advantage over those who have gone before. Christ’s shout will be a cry of command—the dead in Christ *will rise first*, then they that are alive. Those that had previously died in Christ would not be disadvantaged—instead, they would be leading the way! Those remaining, however, would experience the same privilege; they, too, will be changed and raptured. “So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (vs. 17-18).

God in His goodness saw fit not only to comfort the Thessalonians with these words, He also left them for our comfort as well!

Kevin A. Meinke

Run the Race
Galatians 2:19-21

Sin afflicts us. It is no surprise that we fall. We must not, however, let sin keep us from the purpose God has for us.

The Christian life is often likened to a race. Paul loved the comparison. A runner might fall and hurt his ankle. This is common, yet he is still a runner. He heals and runs again.

Christian, have you fallen? Fallen into sin and despair? You have been hurt and scarred by this sin, and even shamed. Have you forgotten you are still in the race? You are still a runner! The time to run has come. God in His Word promises to forgive our sins and to cleanse us! Let us now get up from the sin, receive forgiveness and healing, and run this race!

There is no perfect Christian. We all have scraped knees and elbows from where we have fallen into sin. Christ is glorified in us when we persist in His calling for us and continue to live for Him. We have been crucified with Christ! It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life now lived in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us. So do not faint! You may become tired, yet your inner strength is renewed day by day. Our trial is light for a moment, but there is an eternal weight of glory.

Do not be tempted to look on the scrapes and scratches of today, but look further down the race track, toward the things eternal. Get up, look to the finish line, and run the race.

Krista Mielke

Found Worthy
Revelation 5:1-11

Christ is able to accomplish what man cannot.

The prophet weeps because no one in heaven is able to open the book in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne. No one can be found who is worthy, so the revelation must remain unknown and unopened. The prophet, however, despairs prematurely. One of the elders says to him, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

Here in Revelation 5 we find an occurrence of one of the most beautiful themes of scripture: Christ as the worthy one. Just as He was at the cross, Christ is revealed as the only one worthy and able to undertake a task that man cannot. Interestingly, this passage reveals two key reasons why Jesus is Worthy. First, He *was* worthy. Before His incarnation He was in heaven as the Second Person of the Godhead. The angels worshiped Him, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in all His glory. Second, after the incarnation, He had been slain to take away the sin of the world and to glorify His Father by His obedience. He is *now* worthy to open the book. Christ will receive the praise in heaven that He should have had on earth.

Christ is worthy! Yet we so often doubt His worth or His ability in our lives. We doubt that we can be forgiven through Him; we doubt that He is able to take care of us; and we doubt that His love is sufficient. We must recognize that Christ is the Savior of men, the one who can do for man what man cannot do for himself.

Hannah R. Pill

To Know Him is to Love Him
Philippians 3:10

Love for God is the product of an insatiable desire to intimately know Christ.

Knowing Christ will change you. Every one of us has friendships and relationships. These friendships collectively contribute to the sum total of who we are. Most of us have things in our lives that we would love to change, but this change cannot happen apart from a passionate relationship with Christ.

Knowing Christ will produce victory. Paul expressed his desire to know the power of the resurrection. This power refers to the power that Jesus displayed over death, which is the result of sin. Paul was not concerned about conquering death nearly as much as he was concerned about conquering sin. The believer who is in a passionate relationship with Christ will experience continual victory over sin.

Knowing Christ will also produce consecration. Paul was very willing to experience the fellowship of Christ's suffering, even if it meant death, so long as he could increase in his knowledge of who Christ was. Paul was willing to do whatever it would take to experience the deep fellowship and satisfaction that can only be found in Christ. The believer who has a passionate relationship with Christ will find no reservations in his heart, but rather a full commitment to do whatever it takes that they might know Christ.

Clearly, to know Christ is to love Him.

Derrick A. Suttles