

# Why Funerals Should be Victory Celebrations

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

Intro:

1. The grieving process suggested by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross: denial, anger, bargaining, depression & acceptance.
2. The funeral is important to give closure to the loss.
  - a. The Egyptians embalmed mummies & placed royalty in pyramids.
  - b. When Jesus raised the little girl, the family hired professional mourners (**Matt 9:23**).
  - c. When Jesus raised the widow's son, mourners were carrying a stretcher out of the town (**Lk 7:12**).
  - d. When Jesus raised Lazarus, his sisters were weeping as they went to the tomb (**Jn 11:33**).
  - e. When Jesus was entombed, the women planned to anoint His body with spices (**Lk 24:1**).
3. The funeral can be a terrible time of depression & grief (wailing, screaming, fainting).
4. But for those in Christ Jesus, it can also be a time of celebration & victory. WHY?

## I. v14 - Because Jesus Died - But Rose Again

- A. His resurrection gives us hope that eternal resurrection is possible.
  1. Except for the Lord, all the Bible people who were resurrected eventually died again.
  2. Lord Jesus rose to die no more!
- B. His death on the cross makes it possible for us to be His children.

## II. v16 - Because the Resurrected Lord is Returning With His Children

- A. When the Lord comes again, it will be a bit noisy.
  1. The archangel will shout commands.
  2. Trumpets will blare out.
- B. The Second Coming will be very sudden, like the lightning flashing across the sky (**Matt 24:27**).
- C. No one knows when He is coming. **Matt 24:36 - No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**
- D. The last verses of the Bible say He is coming soon. **Rev 22:20 - He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- E. The dead in Christ will rise first to meet Him in the air. **1 Thess 4:16 - For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**
  1. What happens when you die?
    - a. The Second Coming here appears to be a specific time in history - but . . .
    - b. **II Cor 5:8 - We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**
    - c. We will live & reign with Him. **II Tim 2:11-12 - If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.**
    - c. The Lord said to the thief on the cross, **I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise. - Lk 23:43.**
    - d. This seems to indicate that the moment you die, you go to heaven with Jesus.
  2. **ILL: We slip out of time into timelessness (the terrarium idea).**

### III. v17 - Because We Who Are Alive Will Join Them Forever!

#### A. What a comfort to know you will see loved ones again!

1. We will all be in glorious resurrection bodies.
2. These bodies will never experience pain nor tears & will never wear out.
3. Even though different from these earthly bodies, we will recognize one another.

#### B. We will be together forever!

1. **Jn 14:2-3 - In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**
2. **Jn 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

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