

But that we don't sorrow like others do, he says. Like those that have no hope. There's nothing for them but sorrow. There's no hope beyond. But for us there's a tremendous hope. That's what Paul is going to tell us about. We're not to sorrow like others do when their loved ones die who have no hope. No our sorrow is to be far less than theirs because we have a great hope.

Well now most Christians, I fear, when somebody dies they say We'll all be together in heaven some day. Isn't it wonderful they have gone to heaven. Well, that's grand. But is that the hope Paul is talking about here? What is the reason Paul says why we are not to sorrow the way others do?? It's the rapture. Heaven is important but the rapture is what gets the central place in Paul's statement that Christians are not to sorrow the same way others have who have no hope. We have a hope. What is it?

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again. . . . even so those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." There's our hope. When our loved ones die we know that if they have died in Christ, if they have been saved through His precious blood, if they have looked to Him for salvation and turned away from their sin and been born again, then we know that when they die our parting is only for a time. Because when Jesus comes back He is going to bring them with Him. Isn't that a wonderful thing? That's our great hope. The hope of the Christian is not heaven. It is the resurrection. That's the Christians' hope. Heaven is wonderful, but the resurrection is the great hope. Here we have the resurrection when Jesus comes those who sleep in Jesus God is going to bring with Jesus.

Then he continues: For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord. What's he mean by the word of the God. He means God has revealed this to me. This is a great message that no man could have known by any guessing, by any philosophy, by any human speculation. By any human thinking. The only way to know it is because God has revealed it.

You know people often think: Isn't this crazy the way Christians talk about revelation. We're not interested in revelation, some old mideaval idea like this - revelation. We're interested in what we can see, what we can touch, what we can experiment with. Well, how much do you know you have learned through experimenting through seeing and through touching? A few things yes, but mighty little. The greatest scientiest in the world has learned at least 80% of what he knows not by his experiments, not by his study, not by his investigation, but by a revelation from some other personality, by a communication from someone who knows it. And the average high school science teacher has learned 97% of everything he knows by revelation, by communication, by what someone has told him in advance, or by what he's read someone has written in a book. If you've never been to China how do you know anything aabout China? Somebody who has been there has told you. Or has written it in a book and you're read it. And if you've never ~~been~~ been to heaven, if you've never lived in the future time and seen what's going to be there, the only way you can know anything about it is a revelation, a communication from One who knows. There is only One who knows - that's God. So God revealed it to Paul and Paul tells us. "By the Word of the Lord" he says we say that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede those who are asleep.