

MORE: Jesus from beginning to end.

a study of 1 Thessalonians

Series Intro God is working through the gospel of Jesus Christ for **more** in your life. [Cultivating in you and helping you long for more Jesus is the aim of this series.](#) [To know God is to long for more Jesus.](#)

More, One Hope

1 Thes 4:13-18

MPS: [Jesus is the Christian's one hope who brings more from God by satisfying all of life's demand.](#)

OBJ: [Every person can understand how Jesus anchors our hope by three exhortations.](#)

TRANS The "MORE" from God for which Paul prays (3:11-13), he instructs Christians to walk in "more and more", both faith and love. The practice of these first two serve to strengthen the presence of the third that we will see today, hope. While hope goes hand-in-hand with faith and love, it is not exactly like them.

Faith (4:1-8) demands promise that comes through truth or command. We believe in many things, some more worthy than others. But faith that brings God's MORE is always grounded in the promise of God's truth. **Love** (4:9-12) demands a source, an object to receive from and give itself or act toward. We are beings created for love, to receive and give it. To only give love is to exhaust self. To only receive love is to bloat with self. We must know and show love in healthy ways to establish our identity in love. But the third of what Paul prays for MORE of from God, hope, is not like the first two.

TRANS I want to introduce today's sermon by talking a bit about hope.

As God works MORE in you, and you grow to confront sin at its root instead of its fruit, as we have discussed, whether in what you know (faith) or adore (love), you must address the deep, heart issues of where you have genuinely anchored your hope. You will begin to recognize this because the actions you choose to take in response to the situations or circumstances in which you find yourself always lead to the same place, a lessening of pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction and onward toward the dead-end of increasing pain, shame and guilt.

Hope goes 'with' but is not 'like' faith and love. Hope alone has no outward expression, only internal presence. Hope needs faith and love for expression. Faith and love need hope to hold them steady on the right course. Hope demands something that anchors it, something to hold to that holds you when storms blow or opposition arises. Hope is like a root system that sustains when our supply is deplete. Hope is a firm foundation that holds when storms blow. Hope is an anchor or rudder that steers life to hold us on course. It is this third analogy that I will principally appeal today. Faith, love and hope must go together, meaning they must all find a common point that satisfies the demand of all three. Like an anchor or rudder, hope steers us while love propels us and faith guides us. [Christian hope holds the Christian's life where their faith is grounded and love is sourced, in the eternal nature of Jesus Christ our Lord.](#)

The Principle of Hope: Where you set your hope will always be recognized NOT by what you say or feel, but by where you steer your life in hard times, challenging situations, painful moments or broken relationships. Where your hope rests, and ultimately what holds your life, can only be seen by where you give outward expression of your life in actions that culminates your decisions. When you recognize a lack or loss of hope, you do not find a better hope but place your hope in that which is better. [The Principle of Hope: Hope holds your life by the quality of anchor in which you have set it.](#)

[Jesus is the Christian's one hope who brings more from God by satisfying all of life's demand.](#)

READ 1 Thes 4:13-18

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. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those



who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵For 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. ¹⁶For 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. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then 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. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words. **1 Thes 4:13-18**

The Thessalonians were struggling because they did not fully understand what happens when a believer dies. Some were upset because they were unsure what might happen to those who died before Christ's return. And if they were not present when Christ returned, would they be missed? We understand how troubling this could be for anyone concerned about loved ones who passed away prior to Jesus' return. Paul exhorts them that believers do not grieve as others do because we are never without hope. [Christians are held in life, even in the hardest times and deepest grief, because we always have hope.](#)

OBJ Paul's counsel addresses their concerns and shows how we make sure our hope is anchored in Jesus. [Anchor your hope in Jesus, to strengthen faith and increase love by three exhortations.](#)

1. [Clarify the gospel to make sure you believe in Jesus.](#) .14

The answer to their fear is found in the truth of the gospel. Paul directs them to remember the truth of the gospel; we believe Jesus died and rose again. And because we believe in Him, so through Him God will take care not only of those who are still alive but also those who have fallen asleep. [The gospel of Jesus Christ is only answer that is able to fully satisfy your fear.](#)

HERE the Christian faith rests in truth, that Jesus died and rose again. God's grace only comes by faith through Jesus Christ. This is a settled matter, friend. Exercise with utmost care that you do not sell the gospel short, that you do not discount its true value or castrate its power for your life, that you do not regard it with less importance than the morning forecast before you move on with your day. [The truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is like nothing else; it IS the power of God for salvation for all who believe.](#) Rom1:16

The gospel's power is chimerical for you unless you believe; unreal, imaginary, wildly fanciful, highly unrealistic. But when you believe, Paul says, "*For since we believe*", he begins, then concludes, "*even so*". Check yourself, that you do not know the gospel but fail to believe it. THIS is why the gospel is SO potent for us. [The gospel of Jesus Christ is truth to meet faith's demand, the One who is truth the only worthy object of our love's demand to both supply and receive, and therefore an able anchor for hope's demand.](#)

[Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.](#) **Hebrews 10:23**

Jesus Christ is the crux of Christian faith, love and hope, the all-worthy One who alone satisfies our every demand for life. When you clarify the gospel you strengthen your confession to deepen your hope. [Christians are never without hope because what we know to be true of Jesus becomes true for all who believe.](#)

You must understand what the gospel proclaims, that the grace of God ONLY comes by faith through Jesus Christ. [Clarify the truth of the gospel to make sure you believe in Jesus.](#)

2. [Apply the gospel faithfully to set your hope fully on Jesus.](#) .15-17

TRANS Next, Paul applies the gospel to their situation with instruction received from the Lord.

The Lord Jesus will return. Paul clarifies an order of events that will occur. He wants them to understand how those who have died, or sleep in Christ, will share in Jesus' return. But while he describes the event, he points them to the person of the event, "*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven*". Our hope is not found in an event with a perfect escape plan



from the world's broken reality. [Christian hope is anchored in a person, Jesus Christ the perfect Savior who is Lord over all and will return to usher in the restoration of His perfect Kingdom as ruling and reigning King.](#)

When Jesus himself descends He will not be ignorable or avoidable. Jesus conquered death, hell, the grave, and Satan. When He returns nothing will thwart or stop Him. Paul establishes his teaching as true because of the gospel. In that moment your belief will be immortalized. Those who believed and died in Christ will rise first. Then those who are alive will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord. Paul comforts the fears, anxieties and hope-absent grieving of the Thessalonians by clarifying and applying the gospel for them. They were looking for an event and worried some might miss it. Paul pointed them to the person, Jesus Christ.

Christian hope is anchored in Jesus. It is not the amount or strength of our hope, but the quality of our anchor. **Hebrews 6:19** states, *"We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain."* Jesus is the one who holds us when our faith is weak and faltering. Jesus is the one who pours God's love upon us and multiplies our love to bless us continually. [Jesus is the only One who satisfies the demand of our faith, love and hope, and never fails nor forsakes us.](#)

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 1:13**

APPL When Peter says (1:13), *"set your hope fully"*, he applies what Paul declares by a word from the Lord. He exhorts us in how we steward the volition of our life because of the One who IS our life. Because of Jesus, we choose by an intentional act of the will to "steer our life" by the certain and specified instruction of God's Word.

You may "say" you've believed, but have you failed to "set your hope"? In other words, you've read the compass to know what direction you need to go but have you set the "rudder / anchor" to steer your life in that direction. The compass can only tell us which direction we need to travel. The rudder must steer us in that direction. [Faith always falters when we fail to fully set our hope.](#)

When your soul is anchored in Jesus, your mind clear to chart the direction His Word is leading, and your heart is clean to propel life out of His love. Jesus leads by Holy Spirit in this way because the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of our whole being! [Apply the gospel faithfully to set your hope fully on Jesus.](#)

TRANS Paul tells of how those believers who are still living will be caught up *together* with those who have died. He reminds us how important it is to [Live together with God's people now, Christian, because together with the Lord Jesus is how we will live eternally!](#) *Together*-ness forms his final appeal.

3. Take courage in the gospel; Jesus is better. .18

"Therefore" Paul concludes, *"encourage one another with these words."* Because of what we know to be true of Jesus, and because we live *together* in Him, we labor to cultivate our hope in Jesus. Here is where our understanding of hope that we began with becomes most applicable for us. The best way to have courage when you need it is to be constantly giving it to others. [Put your life together with other Christ-followers and encourage others with the gospel to set your hope in Jesus.](#)

Q? Do you want to know where you have rested your hope? Look at what continues to increase more and more in your life.

ILLUS Hope misplaced & Social Media Algo-rhythms Social Media sites capture our digital "click" patterns to propagate more and more of what they think we are interested in, determined by the patterns of what you have clicked on. They also use their "listening" technology to do the same.



What you participate in more and more is propagating increasing opportunity for you to immerse yourself ever-more deeply into personal preference. The more and more you practice holiness by faith and the more and more you practice love by living to serve and encourage others, the more you will grow and mature in godliness. And, the more your hope will rest deeply into the waters of the gospel of Jesus to steer your life more and more toward God.

As the principle of hope is applied, we are reminded: hope is not about quantity, but quality. Comparing the law to Jesus, Hebrews 7:19 states, “*a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*” **Jesus is a better hope, a sure anchor for our soul in any storm.**

TRANS I want you to understand how hope works alongside faith and love to hold us in Jesus. Nothing has the capacity to steal hope like that which is beyond our understanding or control, that which causes us grief. Debilitating fear arises where hope is absent, so that we wither, drift or simply get washed away. **But hope is never stolen from us, only the anchor holding our hope destroyed.**

APPL **What steals hope in life is that which destroys your “anchor”, or what you’ve set your hope on.** When problems or issues arise that weaken the “anchor”, our hope is shaken and stolen. When hope is “set” in money, life is shaken by its absence. When hope is “set” in a relationship, life is shaken problems. When hope is “set” in success or accomplishment, we are shaken and even destroyed by failure.

Hear me, friend: you don’t need a stronger hope; your hope needs a better anchor. When Jesus “anchors” of your soul, storms will blow and problems will crash against you, people will hurt you and wounds may mark you, but Jesus will not forsake nor leave you. He will remain faithful to hold you. **Only Jesus is the better anchor for our soul.**

ILLUS **Job had no visible reason to remain faithful to God.** He lost all objects to receive and show love, first in things and then in people. And not only that, but the people who remained around him worked actively to destroy his faith. Now maybe you could argue that Job survived because of his faith. Surely, these three do work together. Even Job had questions about his own faith. **What strengthened Job’s faith to hold to the Lord? What held Job?**

Listen to the confession of our hope when Jesus anchors our soul.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

My heart faints within me! **Job 19:25-27**

When Job’s heart was gone his life was still held by hope in God. Hope gives eyes to know the One by which we are held until our eyes see what God has promised in His Word. **Job held to the Lord in faith because His hope in the Lord held Him.**

Take and give courage in this, Christian, Jesus is better. Jesus is better than that drink, that next dollar, that next trophy or win, that next mountaintop. Jesus is even better than that next pleasure. **When the uncontrollable and unimaginable, the incomprehensible strikes, what will you turn to, to hold you?**

When faith is challenged or love is threatened, take courage in the gospel and know that Jesus is better.

Is your hope anchored in Jesus, set fully in the only One who is sufficient to hold your life at all times?

Jesus is the Christian’s one hope who brings more from God by satisfying all of life’s demand.

