

CITYWEST CHURCH

08.03.2026 - 10 AM

SOUND DOCTRINE, SOUND PRACTICE.

But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another. **10** Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers[e] throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more.

11 Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. **12** Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

The Hope of the Resurrection

13 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died[f] so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

15 We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died.[g] **16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died[h] will rise from their graves. **17** Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. **18** So encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-18 (NLT)

Practical theology

Paul doesn't separate practice from belief. He makes it clear its two sides of the one coin.

The flow of 1 Thess 4 is:

- *Doctrine about love*
- *Doctrine about the return of Christ*
- *Doctrine about resurrection*
- *Doctrine about hope*

And from that doctrine flows:

- *How you love*
- *How you work*
- *How you grieve*
- *How you live publicly*

Right living comes from right doctrine.

What you believe about eternity will shape how you behave on Monday.

1. WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT GOD SHAPES HOW YOU LOVE.

But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another.

1 Thess 4:9 (NLT)

Taught by God.

Their love wasn't personality-driven. It was theology-shaped.

- *God is love.*
- *Christ died for them.*
- *The Spirit lives within them.*

“Your work is produced by faith, your labor is prompted by love, and your endurance is inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NLT)

Faith → Love → Action.

Doctrine → Behaviour.

You don't grow loving by trying harder.

You grow loving by seeing Christ more clearly.

Right doctrine produces right love.

2. WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE FUTURE SHAPES HOW YOU LIVE TODAY.

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. **12** Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

1 Thess 4:11-12 (NLT)

Paul makes this statement, and it's often read in a standalone way, but he dives straight into it after this about resurrection and those who are asleep.

Because what we believe about eternity impacts how we live, what we prioritise today.

John Lennox says the two most attacked narratives are the creation story, because without a past, we struggle with identity, and the other is the eschatology, what happens at the end, if that is wrong, you can lose hope.

Look at the state of the world, the bible says things will get worse, but that's not the end of the story. The throne of God, Rev 21-22, Jesus comes down, and dwells with his people, is the end of the story.

That is happening, scripture teaches us Jesus is coming back, and will make his home amongst us, all that is wrong will be made right.

Since we believe... therefore we live this way.

The Thessalonians were tempted toward panic and speculation about Christ's return. Some even stopped working (see 2 Thessalonians 3).

Paul corrects their doctrine so he can correct their living.

Right eschatology produces responsible living.

N.T. Wright writes:

“Hope is not about escape from the world but about God’s renewal of it.”

If you believe:

- *Jesus is returning,*
- *Resurrection is real,*
- *History is moving somewhere,*

Then you don’t withdraw. You don’t panic. You don’t disengage.

You live faithfully.

Quiet life. Faithful work. Responsible presence.

Presence People are steady because their future is settled.

3. WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE RESURRECTION SHAPES HOW YOU GRIEVE.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. **14** For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

1 THESS 4:13-14 (NLT)

Notice carefully.

He does not say: “Do not grieve.”

He says, “Do not grieve like those without hope.”

Christian grief is different because Christian doctrine is different.

Paul roots comfort not in sentiment but in certainty, the historical death and resurrection of Jesus.

Doctrine comforts.

Because Jesus rose, we rise.

Because He lives, death is temporary.

Hope is not a denial of pain. It is confidence in the ending.

Presence People grieve honestly, but not hopelessly.

CONCLUSION

Love flows from knowing God's love. Steady work flows from knowing Christ is returning. Hope in grief flows from knowing Jesus rose.

Right living flows from right doctrine. And this is crucial in our moment.

If doctrine becomes shallow, discipleship becomes fragile.

But when theology is deep, obedience becomes durable.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

What do I believe about God right now?

How is that belief shaping my behaviour?

Where do I need to anchor myself again in truth?

