

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (dead in Christ), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 KJV



Death is the absence of life. When we think of sleep, we think of peace and rest. God calls the death of believers, sleep, because they are never absent from God who is Life. Their body is without life, but they will never be, for they are at peace, resting in God's presence! Many of us have friends and loved ones that have died. The soul is eternal. It leaves the body at death, but does not cease to be. The soul is immortal. It will be forever WITH God or forever WITHOUT God! I have loved ones who are with the Lord at this moment whom I look forward to seeing again, and might I add, very soon! Those of whose destiny which we are unsure, we can only hope they made peace with God before death. *“The Lord is not willing that any should perish [and] the goodness of God leadeth [men] to repentance.”* The Lord looks on the heart and a cry for salvation need not be audible to human ears for God to answer. *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Jesus said, *“Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”* Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” By grace through faith in God's Word we can choose to be with God, forever. David put it this way: *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me!”* This earthly sojourn is “the valley” where “the shadow of death” exists for believers as they are compelled to deal with sinful flesh, their own included, until Christ's return. It's as close as believers will ever be to death for to be *“absent from the body (of this death) is to be present with the Lord!”* God is omnipresent; there is nowhere He is not! None of us were present when Dad stepped into the Light of Glory. He had been comatose for weeks. Mom had gone home to shower and eat and called me in Ohio to say it wouldn't be long before Dad passed. While she was talking to me, Dad graduated! The nurse with him when he died told mom, when she got back, he suddenly sat up wide awake, tried to sit up, reached out, and his body fell back upon the pillows. Dad went for a walk with God and is waiting for us to catch up!

Peace and rest for aye in Christ,
Death fades away in Heav'nly Light,
Never again will there be night,
No sorrow, pain, and all is right! ~CGP

Those with God do not sorrow! God is here all the time. We must depend on the spiritual senses of faith and love, if we are to perceive God. God awaits every believer! *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Henceforth there is laid up...a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give....unto all them...that love His appearing.”* Believers don't close their eyes in death; they go from sin and death to Righteousness and Life with their eyes wide open. I believe God's presence just gets brighter and brighter until all else disappears in His ever-present brilliance! Yes we miss them here, but I could never wish the curse of this vale of death back on any one of my loved ones! They are at rest in Christ, forever, as all believers shall soon be also!

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:54-56, 57 KJV