

INTRODUCTION

1. Great to be with you. We have heard about you from Nick and Julia. Also from a great friend of mine Alex Ross. They have told us about you all. Looking forward to getting to know you. And serving Jesus Christ alongside you all.
 2. I want to talk to you today about the search for security. It's one of the great cries of the human heart.
Epicurus , the Greek philosopher wrote this "it is possible to provide security against other ills. But as far as death is concerned, we men live in a city without walls.
Douglas MacArthur , American general. World War II and Korean War said this "the more you seek security the less of it you have. But the more you seek opportunity, the more likely it is that you will achieve the security you desire"
 3. we are all looking for security. We need it to live a life that is happy and fruitful. But we will never find it until we find the answers to the great questions of life.
Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? What is going to happen to me when I die.
 4. We have twin sons. Curates at HTB. One of them mentoring 2 Iranian students. He worked in the Middle East. He is an Arabic speaker. He rang me a few weeks ago and asked me whether Basir, who had been a refugee from Iran could stay with us. How did Basir (a Moslem) come to be training in London to become an Anglican vicar? (Read testimony.)
 5. when Basir found Jesus Christ, he found the answer to the QUESTIONS HE HAD ABOUT LIFE.
He found the answer to the meaning of life. We have to find Christ to find the answer to this question. UCL " do you have a satisfying purpose to life "
 6. Basir also found forgiveness. It is not until we find forgiveness that we can find God. We can find forgiveness in Jesus Christ on the cross. But we have to cry out to him. We have to ask him. That is why Jesus claims here in our reading that he is the way, the truth and the life
 7. HE ALSO FOUND AN ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF DEATH.
 - a We are all going to die. Benjamin Franklin great American thinker. Came to France. 1776 to 1778. "There are only two things that are inevitable in life. Death and taxes "George, Bernard Shaw, great, British playwright "death is the ultimate statistic. One out of one dies "one friend of mine in York getting older "I feel I am moving to the front of the queue "another friend said "I feel that I am in Gods waiting room "
 - b what is going to happen to us when we die?
When we lose someone whom we love, our hearts are full of questions. What has happened to them? Are they alright? Will we see them again? These are some of the questions that the Christians in Thessalonica had. If you have your bibles, could you turn with me to the reading that we had from 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4. Paul the great apostle sets out to answer these questions. I want to look at what he says, because I believe if we can understand this, it will give us great security about the future. 4 things.
- 1 HE TELLS THEM ABOUT THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST.
- a v13 " he doesn't want them to be un informed about those who sleep in death He doesn't want them to grieve like the rest who have no hope. Notice what he says v 16." the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command and with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet call of God. "
 - b there are over 90 references to the return of Jesus Christ in the new Testament. 12 of them come in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. We are told in scripture that

the return of Jesus Christ will be public and visible. Every eye will see it. Everyone will know when Jesus Christ returns. Paul, the apostle looked forward with real confidence to the return of Jesus Christ. It's going to happen. No one knows when it is going to happen. Are you looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ?

2 THIS IS FOLLOWED BY THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

- a notice what Paul says, he tells us in verse 16 that the dead in Christ will rise first. So the return of Jesus Christ is followed by the resurrection of the dead. those who have died in Christ. Those with faith in Christ will rise 1st to eternal life. Those who die in their sins will rise to judgement. The Bible is very clear. We either die in Christ. Or we die in our sins. It is one or the other (it's a bit like the story in the old Testament about Israelites dying in the desert. They've been bitten by snakes. God told Moses to put a bronze serpent on a pole. Everyone who looked at the bronze serpent lived Those who didn't look at the bronze serpent perished) Those who look to Christ on the cross are forgiven. Those who don't perish.
- b Paul uses a very vivid phrase to describe death. He says it is like FALLING ASLEEP . Sleep is always temporary. It is always followed by waking up. In the same way, Paul says death is temporary. It is followed by resurrection. We had a great friend Paul Burbridge. He died tragically a few weeks ago. But he died with his faith in Christ. So I know that I will see him again. That is the confidence/ security we can have in Jesus Christ..Do you have this confidence for yourself?

3 THAT IS FOLLOWED BY WHAT IS CALLED THE RAPTURE. v17

- a I have to say. I'm not quite sure how this is going to happen. ! But I am sure that it will happen. If Jesus Christ returns to this earth while I am alive, I will be caught up in the air to meet him. And those he brings with him.
- b Paul tells me in another one of his letters. That, in that moment our bodies will be transformed "in the twinkling of an eye" is how he puts it. WHAT WILL OUR BODIES BE LIKE ?
 - 1 people have often asked me this question. again, we cannot be very precise. Paul answers the question in another one of his letters. He describes what our bodies will be like. He says "the body that is sown in dishonour, will be raised in glory. Perishable./imperishable. Weakness/power. Physical body/spiritual body.
 - 2 as we grow older, our bodies become weak and frail, (story about my mother) but when I next see her, she will be glorious and strong. We are not given the exact details in scripture. But we do know that we will be recognisable. You will be you.! And I will be me.! But our bodies will be different. They will be transformed. (story about Tim Keller. Lady suffering. " nothing that the resurrection will not sort out.")
 - 3 That's the hope we have in Christ. Let me ask you this morning. Do you have this hope ?

4 THAT LEADS FINALLY TO THE REUNION.

a v17 " we will be forever with the Lord" at that time. At the return of Jesus Christ. We will be reunited with all those who have gone before us. John Newton, the converted slave trader put it like this in his hymn, Amazing Grace. "When we've been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the Sun. We know less days to sing his praise. Then when we first begun"

b that's the order.THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST. . We wait for it. We long for it. We pray for it. No one knows the time. We must be alert and ready.He could come at any time. This is followed BY THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will rise to eternal life. Those who have died in their sins will rise to judgement. Jesus will bring with him those who

have died in Him , to the earth. This is followed by THE RAPTURE when those who are alive will be caught up in the air to meet them in the air. Finally this is followed by THE REUNION. when we will be forever with the Lord.

CONCLUSION

a What a hope.! What a glorious future to look forward to. ! This is the source of our security. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

b HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND? notice what Paul says” therefore encourage one another with these words. “Let us pray. STAND

1. For those who do not have this hope. Do you have this hope ? Have you come to Jesus Christ. Prayer. Sorry. Thankyou . Please. Come and see me afterwards if you’ve prayed that prayer for the first time.

2 For those who have this hope. But it’s grown weak. Lord strengthen this hope in your people.

3 For all of us to have the confidence to share this hope with others.