

I Thessalonians 5: 1-11

Today we are going to be looking the first section of chapter 5:1-11. This is a continuing discussion from chapter 4. There were two things specifically that the church wanted to know:

- 1) What happens when a Christian dies? Specifically, what will take place?
- 2) What will happen when Jesus comes back again?

Paul explains that in death – for the Christian – we don't grieve as those who have no hope. That those who die as believers belong to Jesus and go to be with him when they die. Christ has an eternal home prepared for us when we die. Christians can be assured of that fact (something that right now is a wonderful truth to rest in).

Paul also gives very specific details of what will happen when Christ comes back again – probably the clearest in the NT:

- That He WILL come back again.
- That his second coming will be apparent to all “With a cry of command, with the voice of the archangel.
- That we will meet the Lord face to face (every knee will bow).

Now where we pick things up here in chapter 5, he speaks specifically of WHEN? When will Christ come back again. This is something that the church has always wondered about. If you look back in history, many have tried to make predictions. IE/ Harold Campings

But Paul here reiterates the words of Christ where he said, “no man knows the hour of the day”. Paul here explains that he will come like a thief in the night. In other words – unexpectedly. In many places in the New Testament this is the explanation that we are given – to be ready, because we don't know when Jesus will return. There will be signs of the times (Matt. 24), but the specific hour or date no one knows. But he WILL come again.

Our focus this morning will be the OUR ATTITUDE as a church as we wait for Christ's return. IF this is a reality. If we believe that Jesus really is coming again. How should this affect the way that we live our lives as believers? What does God expect to see in us?

1) The first things that we see in verses 1-3 is that that the DAY OF THE LORD is coming (READ).

--This theme the day of the Lord is one that runs throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament many times it was used in the context of God's judgement on sin – either in the near future or speaking of at the end of times. When Israel strayed from God's paths, God would hold them to account.

- Isaiah 13:6 - “Wail, for the day of the Lord is near!”
- Joel 2:1 “Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand” ([Joel 2:1](#));
- Zephaniah 1:7 “Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near”

In the New Testament we see this same warning:

- ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people

ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

In passage after passage in both the Old and New Testament we see this kind of language used when talking of the day of the Lord. That it will be a day when God's wrath is poured out on all sin and evil, on every injustice, on every abuse, on every wrongdoing done in secret. God is a God of justice that punishes wrong doing.

- Yes, he is patient and kind and long-suffering. As psalm 105 says: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
- But - he is a God of justice. A god that sees everything and know everything. Nothing can be hidden from him. There will be time when his patience comes to an end.
- That it no longer will be the day of salvation
- "When everyone is saying peace and security - he will come again and they will not escape.

What the apostle Paul is doing is reminding the church the reality of this day. That it is a serious thing. That God's judgement is real. That this is a reality out of which we are to live our lives. It is something that we should not and CAN NOT forget.

--This is true for ourselves. It is not light thing.

--This is true for those who do not know Christ (imagine what it will be like!)

--We need to remember that we have been given as a church to speak of this reality. That one day we will meet our maker. That we will be called to give an account.

2) But Paul doesn't just leave us here does he? He goes on in verse 4 to explain WHO WE ARE in JESUS CHRIST. Read 4&5

At first reading this might seem a little strange to us that Paul would state the obvious. If we look at the context of this passage we see in chapter 1 that he had just praised the church for what God was doing in their lives.

But Paul is reminding the church of all that has been accomplished through Christ.

- o That He has called us out of darkness. Out of sin & rebellion. Out of that old way of thinking and living.
- o To a NEW LIFE in Jesus Christ. To a life of walking in the light! To live as sons of the day!
- o John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

In verses 9&10 Paul continues in this same theme (READ). God has not appointed the Christian to wrath (God's punishment) but for the obtaining of salvation through Jesus Christ! How did the Thessalonians come to receive salvation through Jesus?

- o Chapter 1 explains that the it come to them through the preaching of the Word (Acts 17)
- o That it came in the Holy Spirit and in much conviction.
- o That they repented of their sins, left their idols and turned to God.

Now Paul is saying to the church again! This is who you are! You are sons and daughters of God the Father. You have been saved through the washing of your sins - accomplished by Christ's work on the cross. What wonderful news!

- o That the wrath of God has been taken away.

- o That it is not because of what we have done (not your spiritual pedigree, not your perfect record) But only because of what Christ has done on the cross.
- o The day of the Lord - While a reality, we can face with certainty.
- o Isn't that amazing? We can face death without fear!

When Jesus Christ comes into our life and works in this way, he frees us from the power of darkness (something that we love)

--he frees us from our addictions and our vices.

--He free us to be the people that he wants us to be! To shine as lights for His honor and glory.

3) But How does this translate in our everyday life? If the Day of the Lord is coming, if Christ has made us children of the Light. What impact should it have?

Look with me at verses 6-8a. Paul mentions two things: To be awake and to be sober.

1) To be awake (watchful)

- o I'm not sure of how many of you have worked the night shift. It is difficult to stay awake.
- o In Old Testament times, watchmen were placed on the walls to keep guard. They were called to stay away - to protect the city.
- o Here Paul is speaking in a spiritual sense. Our tendency is to be lulled to sleep. Not to be alert.

2) Be sober.

- o Someone is intoxicated with alcohol is not in control of their bodies, not conscious of the danger that they are in, not aware of how others view them.
- o That is true with alcohol, but there are a lot of things you can be drunk with aren't there (success, money, everything material)
- o This is the calling of the Christian. To be reminded that who we belong - not to the darkness, but to the light. Not asleep, but awake. Not drunk, but sober.
- o This is a message we need to hear again and again isn't it? Not to return to the things of the world. Not to play with fire. Admit that our tendency is to return to these things.

Ephesians 4: 20-24 *That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Chapter 5:8 says that we are to put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of hope of salvation.

- o We don't have a lot of time to talk about this, but when love and faith are protecting you. When the hope of salvation is always protecting your mind. That is a safe place to be! You are given great protection!
- o So much to enjoy as believers isn't there? It is a wonderful thing to walk in the light. God's ways are good ways. We need to be reminded of that. There is no better place to be!

So, brothers and sisters, this is the calling that we have been given. Verse 11 says “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

- o Let’s do that as a church – supping each other on!
- o All of us need this. I’d encourage you to do this to 2 or three people this week.

As we conclude:

- 1) Remember the day of the Lord is coming
- 2) Rejoice that Christ has called you out of the darkness into the light
- 3) Stay awake. Be sober.
- 4) Comfort and encourage each other in these things.