

**Week 18 | “Living In Light Of Jesus’ Second Coming”**

**I. INTRODUCTION (1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:1-11)**

- A. Two weeks ago, we looked at Paul’s pastoral address about the Christian’s hope in death. Paul’s intention wasn’t to give them a lesson in eschatology in those final verses of **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4**, but rather to use eschatology to make practical application to both their lives, and their concern about fellow followers of Jesus that had passed away prior to Christ’ return.
- B. Paul’s major point in that sermon two weeks ago, was that in Christ, we are never separated either from Jesus, or one another. Paul was driving home the point that the separation was temporary, because in the resurrection there is a massive, eternal reunion as we are all gathered together in the air to meet the Lord at His appearing.
- C. In the verse’s tonight Paul is going to continue his discussion regarding the Lord’s return, speaking more specifically to the season of His return, the timing of His return, and the pursuit of holiness that God’s called His family to pursue in light of His return.

**II. AWAKE AND PREPARED (1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:1-3)**

- 1. **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:1-3** *“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in a night. For when they say, peace and safety!, then sudden destruction comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant women. And they shall not escape.*
- B. Throughout history there’s been two things that have plagued humans, not to mention disciples of Jesus. The first is what happens after death (bereavement), and the second is what happens at the end of this world/age (judgment/reckoning). Paul addressed the first question (*what happens after death*) in the previous verses (**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-17**), and he’s now going to address the second question in the verses at hand.
- C. It seems that the Church wasn’t asking this question out of idle curiosity, but for the purpose of, if they knew when the Lord’s return was, they could make adequate preparations for the day of judgment.
- D. To this 3month old Church plant, Paul makes clear that he previously taught them enough about the times and the seasons of Jesus’ return, that they have, *“...no need that I (he) should write to them (about the season of Jesus’ return)...”* Something that much of the body of Christ says is unknowable, Paul makes clear that it’s totally knowable, and that we should know it.
- E. Paul shares two different analogies regarding the coming of Jesus that we need to look at;
  - 1. **The Lord So Comes As A Thief In The Night**—In the majority of Christian circles, this is code for, *“we can’t know when the Lord is coming, or even the SEASON of His return.”* The idea here is that the thief, satan, will appear when the nights work is complete, the windows are open, when the kitchen’s clean, and you’ve fallen off to sleep.
    - a. But this analogy is given, not primarily for the Church, but for the unbeliever to wake them up.

2. Like Labor Pains Upon A Pregnant Women—It's not that the pregnant women doesn't know she's having a baby, it's that she doesn't know the specific moment that labor will begin.
- F. The idea behind both of these analogies is that the believer, based on the Bible, knows that the season of Jesus' return is nearing. And this knowing isn't a feeling, or ethereal, but rooted in the teachings of the Bible, what the prophetic scriptures have to say about it.
- G. Paul is making clear, the moment of Jesus' return will happen suddenly, like a house being broken into, or a woman in the final moments of her pregnancy as she goes into labor. It's not that you don't know when these things are coming, it's that if you won't watch, or aren't watching, they will catch you off guard (**Matthew 24:42-44**).
- H. Many make the word imminent to mean that His return will happen at any second, or any moment. But the word imminent, in relation to Bible prophecy is used as an adjective, meaning *it's about to happen, it's impending, it's close, it's at hand, it's overhanging, it's forthcoming, it's on the way, it's in the pipeline, it's on the horizon, it's in the air or it's around the corner*.
- I. Unfortunately, we live in a day today, where much of the prophetic witness in the Church is saying to us, "...peace and safety..." when clearly, there is no peace and safety (**Jeremiah 6:14**).

### III. THE RIGHT WAY OF LIVING, IN LIGHT OF JESUS' RETURN (1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:4-11)

1. **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:4-11** "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort one another, just as you also are doing."
- B. These verse's underscore Paul's intention to call the Church to a specific way of living in light of the Day of the Lord. Paul's underlying issue though not stated expressly is to make clear that the Day of the Lord divides humanity into two groups; those that are ready and those that aren't.
- C. But You Brethren Are Not In Darkness So That This Day (the Day of the Lord) Should Overtake You As A Thief—The coming of the Lord like a thief is being addressed to non-believers and those that refuse to watch, but not the prayerful, watching, and waiting Church. To the Church that's awake, aware, and watching, Jesus' return won't overtake them.
  1. Remember, we're like the homeowner who knew when our enemy was coming (**Matthew 24:42-44**), and the pregnant women who's prepared for labor, though we don't know the specifics of when the water will break, we have a known window.
- D. Let Us Not Sleep As Other's Do, But Let Us Watch And Be Sober—Paul's calling the Church to walk in the opposite spirit of the world. Instead of sleeping, we are to be awake. Instead of being drunk with the spirit of this age, we are to be sober. We are to be living in such a way that our life is anticipating Christ's return.

1. I think that a measure of our dullness, and our sleepy culture within the Church is due to the lack of clear teaching about the season of Jesus' return. One of the great fruits of studying eschatology (*Jesus' second coming*) is that we become acquainted with positive and negative dynamics surrounding/preceding His return, which causes our hearts to become awakened.
- E. For Those That Sleep, Sleep At Night, And Those Who Get Drunk Are Drunk At Night—These are both speaking about the same type of people. Either they are fast asleep in their houses, totally unprepared for the reality that something is coming, or they are drunk, drinking at night, partying and living a careless life.
1. **Matthew 24:37-39** *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the Ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*
- F. But Let Us Who Are Of The Day Be Sober, Putting On The Breastplate Of Faith, And Love, And As A Helmet The Hope of Salvation—Paul is now making clear, how the family of God should live; counter culturally. As followers of Jesus, we are to be a prophetic signpost pointing in a totally different direction, walking an entirely different path, living a completely different way.
1. It's a life that's awake, it's a life aware that a thief is coming, that the baby is due soon, a life that's not drunk with the spirit of this age, but sober and looking for Christ and His return.
  2. Paul makes clear that the follower of Jesus is preparing for Christ's return, by living in the day to day with faith (in Christ/Word), hope (in His soon return) and love (for Jesus and others).
- G. For God Did Not Appoint Us To Wrath, But To Obtain Salvation Through Our Lord Jesus Christ—This is often used as a proof text, against a post-tribulation rapture. It's said like this, *“God would never beat up His bride. He's not destined her to wrath, but glory.”* Paul's not saying that we won't suffer hardship, pain, potential death and martyrdom, he's simply saying that we aren't the subjects of Gods' wrath.
1. As followers of Jesus, God's wrath, which was once over our lives, was satisfied in the substitutionary death of Jesus. Jesus drank the full cup of God's wrath, and when surrender to His Lordship, we are atoned on behalf of Jesus' labor on Calvary.
  2. So no, as God's wrath is being poured out upon the earth, we aren't the subjects of that wrath, but it also doesn't mean that we aren't here while it's happening. And yes, the good Shepherd of **Psalm 23**, will continue to lead us through the valley of the shadow of death (**Hebrews 13:20-21; Revelation 7:9-17**).
- H. Therefore Comfort Each Other And Edify One Another, Just As You Also Are Doing—This is a call to live within a community of mutual support. The world is a rough place, where we are torn apart, hurt and deeply wounded. But God's family, the Church, Christian community is a place of mutual support.
1. The questions being asked by the Thessalonians needed love, tenderness, a patient ear, but also good theology. Good Pastoral work helps to take good theology and apply it skillfully to life circumstances and situations.
- I. The essence of the Good news is that Christ lived our lives, suffered for us, was rejected for us, died for us and rose for us that we might be joined together with Him so that whether we live for die, we are with Him.

- J. Our coming King is none other than our crucified Lord; He's one and the same. Therefore, we have nothing to fear related to His coming. We can also be assured that neither life, nor death nor any other thing can separate us from Him (**Romans 8:35-39**). Therefore, comfort one another with these words. What are these words; they are the words that He who is coming, is the One who died and rose again, that we might be joined together with Him forever.
1. Are you living soberly? Are you living righteously? Are you awake? Are you watching? Do you know the signs of the times?
  2. Or are you living like those people in the days of Noah; carless, carefree, without restraint, living like there's no tomorrow.