

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 13TH - 14TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

**WHEN? (1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11)**

**PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHEN HE'S COMING!**

Since the time Jesus ascended back into heaven, Christians have anticipated His return. That Jesus is coming again is without debate. When will He return is the question. Paul had covered this topic with the church when he was with them but now kindly reminds them of his teachings concerning "The Day of the Lord."

**THE DAY OF THE LORD**

In the OT, prophets spoke of the terrible "Day of the Lord" when God will come and bring an end to all His enemies (those who transgress His laws and oppose His people) and will bring salvation and deliverance to His people.

- This is a day filled with terror for unbelievers but with joy and anticipation for all who love Jesus and await His return.

**WHO WILL BE READY?**

Paul says that the return of Jesus will be like a thief in the night. But for whom? The answer is for unbelievers. Paul makes this clear by saying there will be people who believe all is well with them (peace and security) when in reality everything they put their hope in (money, health, government, happiness, etc.) will be of no use to them on that day.

**PEOPLE PURSUE THE WRONG THINGS.**

If people know a thief is coming they change their behaviors to prepare for that event. Those who do not anticipate a thief will live as if they are safe. Security is not on their minds because they have no clue of the upcoming danger.

- **Our culture exists to maximize each individual's pursuit of personal desires.**

**THAT DAY WILL BE SUDDEN.**

Paul uses the picture of labor pains as another description of the unexpectant return of Jesus and the Day of the Lord. As the mother's labor comes upon her and there is no escaping it, so the coming of Jesus will be to unbelievers.

- **The return of Jesus will be an awful day for unbelievers who will face judgment.**

**BUT NOT FOR YOU!**

There are some wonderful "buts" in the Bible and this is one of them. Paul encourages the church with the hope of Christ's return, that it won't be unwelcome nor catch them off-guard. Why? Because they belong to the light and day of God's kingdom, not to the kingdom of darkness.

- **We look forward to the Jesus' return!**

**HOW DO WE SHOW OUR ANTICIPATION?**

Our theology/beliefs should always impact how we live. James says that our theology (faith) is always demonstrated by our works. Unlike unbelievers, we don't live lazy, despondent lives (sleep) but we live fully awake and under the control of the Holy Spirit Who keeps us self-controlled.

- **Believers submit to His Spirit & Word.**

**THESE 3 REMAIN: FAITH, HOPE, & LOVE**

Paul often links faith, hope and love together as 3 qualities found within Christians (i.e. 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3). Living self-controlled lives means the world, the devil, and our flesh don't rule us but Jesus does.

- **When these 3 qualities are at work we fight sin with Spirit-drenched tools.**

**OUR FAITH IN JESUS OVERCOMES THE WORLD.**

The world wants us to live either as if there is no afterlife or as if all people go to heaven no matter their lifestyles. Either way, "do what you will" is the motto of this world system. Our faith in the promises of God and His Word fuels an ability to see through the world's lies.

- **Faith is never the gift, the object of our faith is the real gift...Jesus!**

**OUR LOVE FOR JESUS OVERCOMES OUR FLESH.**

Our flesh wants to magnify our desires fooling us to believe that maximizing those desires will bring greater satisfaction to our lives. When we love and live for our fleshly desires, we are unable to love the Lord with all our hearts, mind, soul, and strength.

- **We fight our flesh's love for the desires of this world by a greater love...Jesus!**

**OUR HOPE IN JESUS OVERCOMES THE DEVIL.**

Our hope in salvation isn't a "wishful thinking" hope, but a hope in all that Jesus has accomplished for us through His life, death, resurrection, and soon return. The blood of the lamb and the word of my testimony (Rev. 12:11) fight the accusations of the devil.

- **Our hope in all Jesus has won for us disarms the accusations of the devil.**

**THE GOSPEL IS FOR THE LIVING AND DEAD.**

For the dead in Christ, they are with the Lord and waiting His return. For the living in Christ, they are indwelt with the Lord and also waiting for His return. The gospel of the finished work of Jesus fuels our encouragement and hope. Whether we live or die, we live or die to the Lord.

- **Do others see this radical hope in us?**

**COMMUNITY (1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-22)**

**PAUL URGES RESPECT FOR CHURCH LEADERS.**

There seems to be an issue with the young church concerning how they viewed their leaders. Paul recognized the difficult work of pastors as they labor, lead, and admonish the people. Love should be the encouraging characteristic of the congregation towards the leaders. This brings peace and honor to the church.

**EXHORTATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Paul then gives a series of commands for the congregation to follow:

- Warn the idle (lazy)
- Comfort the discouraged
- Help the weak
- Be patient with everyone
- Don't repay evil with evil but pursue what is good for all
- Rejoice always
- Pray constantly
- Give thanks in everything
- Don't stifle (quench) the Spirit
- Don't despise prophecies
- Instead test all things and hold on to what is good
- Stay away from every kind of evil

**FINISH WELL (1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28)**

**THE WORK OF GOD IN US CONTINUES...**

The sanctifying work of God in us through His Spirit is how God makes us more and more like Jesus. We are being changed in every area of our lives as we live sound lives according to the Scriptures and live blameless lives doing what is right, even when it's not popular. Knowing Jesus is coming we want our lives to reflect Him when we see Him.

**WE HAVE GOD'S HELP TO GROW.**

God called us, gave us new life in Jesus and sent the Holy Spirit to live in us and empower us daily as we depend on Him. God is faithful to keep all His promises. **If He says it, we believe it!**

- The Christian life can sometimes be 3 steps forward, 2 steps back. But the trend should be towards living like Jesus.

**WE DON'T GROW AS CHRISTIANS ALONE.**

Christianity isn't an individual sport. We are called to live in community with other believers, not go it alone. We pray for one another, we live in fellowship with one another, we study the Scriptures together, all as means of the grace of God extended to us through Jesus.

- **We live as a community of believers.**

**PRACTICAL IMPACTS OF HIS RETURN**

- Do I cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus!?" (Revelation 22:20)
- Do I maximize my pleasure or pursue faith, hope, and love?
- **Do I only know the Scriptures, or do I live out the Scriptures?**
- Do I worship God for who He is and what He's done, or go through the motions?

**PRACTICAL IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY**

- Do I honor my leaders by loving them, praying for them, & serving with them?
- Do I welcome accountability in my life as I seek to follow Jesus?
- **Do I display hopelessness, or do I display joyful thanksgiving in all things?**
- **Have I ever quenched the Spirit by denying His work in and around me?**

**PRACTICAL IMPACTS ON ME**

- Do I have a greater desire to read the Scriptures and let them shape my life?
- While not perfect, do I see a general trend of growth in me as a follower of Jesus?
- **Do I rest in the promise that Jesus is faithful to me and will finish His work in me?**
- **Do I love gathering in community?**