

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 14TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

CHILDREN OF LIGHT (1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-5)

TIMES AND SEASONS

The phrase "times and seasons" that Paul uses refers to the time period and conditions of "the day of the Lord."

- The "day of the Lord" is more of a season than an actual day. It signifies the day when God intervenes in history to judge His enemies, deliver His people, and establish His kingdom.

Paul states that there is no need to write them because they know very well that the day of the Lord will come as a "thief in the night."

- While Paul was with them, he taught the imagery of Luke 12:39-40. "If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into."

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

Paul taught that the day of Christ's return would remain unknown. Jesus said of that day and hour, no one knows (Matt. 24:36).

- God wants this day to be unexpected, but as the people of people of God, we are to be ready for the unexpected. "Watch! Be alert! For you don't know when the time is coming." (Mark 13:33)

PEACE AND SECURITY

Paul tells the Thessalonians that the surrounding unbelievers will be lulled to sleep with a false sense of peace and security at the day of the Lord.

- Whatever the source of this false sense of peace and security, the façade will be shattered as unavoidable destruction falls upon them.

LABOR PAINS

Like a woman in labor, judgement comes upon the unbelieving world suddenly, inevitably, and with pain. There is nothing that can be done to reverse or stop what is about to take place.

- This idea is both of giving birth to a new age as well as an increase of intensity and frequency of calamities.

"BUT YOU ARE NOT IN THE DARK"

In the Bible, "the dark" or "darkness" typically refers to moral or spiritual blindness, disobedience, or separation.

- As believers, we should not be caught off guard or surprised because we are all "children of light and children of the day." This means we are alert and ready for the return of Jesus.

HOPE OF SALVATION (1 THESSALONIANS 5:8-11)

"LET US NOT SLEEP"

We do not belong to the night or darkness, so our spiritual walk should not be marked by a lackadaisical slumber.

- The word Paul used here is different than the sleep mentioned in 1Thess. 4:13. This sleep was meant to reflect a heart of indifference to spiritual realities on the part of believers.

The sleep Paul refers to is one that belongs to much of the world but should not be part of a life claiming to follow Jesus.

- Traits contained within this type of sleep will be ignorance, insensibility, lack of defense, and inactivity. Instead, we should be awake and self-controlled.

DRAWING A COMPARISON

Paul points back to his analogy of night and day to say that sleepiness and drunkenness are habits of those who are of the night and should not characterize those who are of the day.

- The opposite of being alert or awake is sleepiness and the opposite of clarity and sober mindedness is drunkenness.

Paul, like in Ephesians 6, urges those who belong to the light to put on the armor of faith and love, and a helmet of the hope of salvation.

- As a soldier's armor protects their vital organs, faith and love are vital to Christians. A helmet provides confidence to a soldier in battle the same as our hope of salvation.

CANCELLED APPOINTMENT

Before we had the "hope of salvation" we were all appointed to the wrath of God. Thankfully, we have the opportunity to cancel our appointment and "obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- Jesus stood in our place as a substitute to God's appointed wrath so "that whether awake or asleep we live with Him."

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

Notice once again Paul does not tell us to be encouraged, but to give encouragement. It is to be understood that we should be encouraged, simply because we must possess something in order to share it.

- Every gift we receive from God is meant to be shared for the edification of the body and His Glory.

EXHORTATIONS (1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-22)

RESPECT FOR LEADERS

Paul urges this young church to do three things regarding their leaders: 1) recognize those who labor (lead and admonish) among you, 2) regard the very highly in love because of their work, 3) be at peace among yourselves.

- The implications for leaders are to work hard and earn, not demand, this love

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

Paul then exhorts them in how to deal with three different types of people within the church who presented concerns for him.

- To exhort is to develop relationships with other believers with the purpose of encouraging them in their spiritual growth. (Paraklésis - "to call to one's side; to summon, encourage, admonish, entreat.")

Paul instructs the church to warn those who are idle. The young church may have become lazy in their daily living and neglected contributing to the general welfare of the church.

- We view the return of Christ as a far-off event and lose the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel.

Paul instructs the church to comfort the discouraged. Whether through difficult situations or because of the strain of walking out their faith, some people required comforting.

- Within the body there will be seasons where we need comforting and times when we are to provide comforting.

Paul instructs the church to help the weak. Here Paul is referring to those who are weak in spirit, possibly lacking in knowledge, struggling with sin, or having difficulty trusting God.

- We can all identify with this group of people at some point in our lives as we were once there ourselves (Titus 3:3).

Finally, Paul says to be patient with everyone. Despite differences in personalities, backgrounds, likes, dislikes, and habits, we should strive, as much as it depends on us, to live peaceably with one another.

- Only when we recognize God's patience with us and receive His love can we then display love towards one another.

After telling the church how to deal with people, he encourages them to look inward at their attitudes and personal responsibility.

- Pursue what is good for everyone, rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything, don't stifle the spirit, don't despise prophecies, test all things, hold to what is good, and stay away from evil.

BLESSINGS (1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28)

THE WORK OF THE GOD OF PEACE

Paul makes it clear that our sanctification (being set apart for the purpose of God) is the work of God in us and He is faithful to complete that work.

- "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" (Phil 1:6). We were never intended to do these things on our own power!

IN CLOSING

Paul asks this young church to pray from them, to partner with them in the work they were doing through prayer.

- He also asked the ones receiving the letter to greet every Christian around them with genuine love and affection (holy kiss) on their behalf.

PEACE AND SECURITY

- **In what do we find our peace and security?**
- If we find it in anything but Christ, that false sense of peace and security will inevitably be shattered.
- **Does the return of Christ bring about hope or does it stir up anxiety or fear?**

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

- **Are we in darkness? Perhaps we are caught up in the sins Paul warned about in his letter.**
- If so, then we are not ready, and need to make ourselves ready for the return of Jesus.
- **Do we bear fruit of someone of the light or of the darkness?**