

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Destruction or Salvation

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Opening: (Joke)

- Jimmy left work one Friday evening.
 - Because it was payday, instead of going home, he stayed out the entire weekend partying with his bros, spending his entire pay check.
 - When he finally appeared at home on Sunday night, he was confronted by his angry wife and was barraged for nearly two hours with a tirade befitting his actions.
 - Finally, his wife stopped and said to him, "How would you like it if you didn't see me for two or three days?"
 - He replied, "That would be fine with me."
 - Monday went by and he didn't see his wife.
 - Tuesday and Wednesday came and went with the same results.
 - But on Thursday, the swelling went down just enough where he could see her a little out of the corner of his left eye.
1. It was pretty dark for Jimmy those couple of days... On a serious note, our passage contrasts those who are in the dark with those who are in the light.

Transition: We are studying an important book that was intended to help give us hope in knowing that Jesus is coming again. That book is... 1 Thessalonians.

1. Key **Themes** and **Topics** in this book include...
 - a) Praying over others.
 - b) The Second Coming of our Lord.
 - c) Hope in knowing the Lord is coming again.
 - d) Our hope should yield holiness.
 - e) The call to Live a God-centered life until He does come again.

Let's read our passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (NKJV)ⁱ

And Pray

1. Last week, we saw Paul teach the believers in Thessalonica that they would be **caught up** or **Raptured** to be with the Lord.
 - a) In today's passage Paul continues to prophetically share what will transpire in the **End Times**.
 - b) President Trump's declaration that Jerusalem is Israel's capital is key to the End Times, for Jesus Himself will return and rule from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4).

The day of the Lord brings destruction to those in the dark, but those in the Light are appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

c) Whether or not you like Pres. Trump, we must remember God's promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**, "I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

i) Pres. Trump just blessed Israel and that's significant.

2. You could **summarize** our passage today with these two words: **Destruction** or **Salvation**.

a) The day of the Lord brings **destruction to those in the dark**, but those in the **Light** are appointed to obtain **salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

1. The beginning of verse 1 indicates that Paul is making a **transition** from speaking on the subject of the Rapture, end of chapter 4, to a new topic here in chapter 5.

a) The believers in Thessalonica had been taught the timing, or the **times and the seasons** of the rapture and resurrection.

b) They all knew that Jesus was going to be returning and they were looking for it. Paul says, no need to **write** anything else on that.

2. So, Paul turns his attentions to what will **happen after the Rapture**.

a) After the Rapture occurs, **the day of the Lord** will come. **What is the day of the Lord?**

b) Throughout the scriptures, in the both Old and New Testament, it was a reference to **God's divine intervention and judgment**.

i) **Isaiah 13:6** Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

ii) **2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

3. In what **manner** will **the day of the Lord** come? As **a thief in the night**.

a) The coming of the Lord **for believers** is **never** referred to in this way. The Lord's coming, when described as **the day of the Lord** is not to get the church, that has already happened.

b) These events should be **no more desired** than one desires a **thief** to come into your house at **night**.

c) **No one wants this to happen** and you **never know** when it's going to happen. Thieves **don't** make appointments!

i) And when that thief does come, it's bad. Anyone's house ever broken into?

What's going on that would prevent the people of the world from seeing what's coming...?

The day of the Lord brings destruction to those in the dark, but those in the Light are appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1. The people remaining in this world will have a false sense of **safety** and security. They will be **content** and at **Peace** with all that they have.
 - a) Then **sudden destruction** will come **upon them**.
2. The reference to **labor pains** speaks of the **inevitable, sudden, and unexpected**.
 - a) When will the baby come? No one knows until the **labor pains** begin!
3. Once the day of the Lord arrives the people remaining on earth **shall not escape** Paul writes.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

1. Notice that **day** is associate with **light**, and **night** as **darkness**. This should be no surprise.
 - a) Evil is often associated with darkness and it often occurs at night.
 - i) *Joke: A curious man who once waited and stayed up all night to try to figure out where the sun was... Then it dawned on him.*
 - b) My **Colonel** back in the Marine Corps always said, "*Nothing good ever happens after midnight.*"
 - c) Also notice that there is **no gray**, there is just light and darkness, day and night. There is **no in between**.
 - i) You either belong to Christ and are in the light or you are in the darkness of the world.
 2. Those who are in the light **will not** be **overtaken** by **this Day**, that is, the day of the Lord, or judgment!
 - a) There is a clear distinction in this passage between followers of Christ and those who are in the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:6-7 ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

1. There are two different actions in view here, **sleeping** and **getting drunk**.
 - a) Those who **sleep** are stuck in **passive indifference**. They are not hostile toward the faith, but it is not important to them either.
 - i) They are **not looking** for the Lord and they are certainly **not walking** with the Lord.
 - ii) I fear that many more **Americans** than we realize fit into this category.
 - b) Then there are those who are **drunk**. This is **insensible, active sin** in their lives.
 - i) They know it's **contrary** to God's ways and **they don't care**.

The day of the Lord brings destruction to those in the dark, but those in the Light are appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1) These are the people who **enjoy and remain in their sin**.

ii) This is **not just** an **alcohol thing**, people can be **drunk** with their **possessions, positions, pride**, or any other **passions** outside of a relationship with God.

2. Instead of sleeping and being drunk, we are to **watch and be sober**.

a) We find a present tense verb here meaning we are to be **continuously sober and watching**.

b) **Watching** for the **Lord's return** and **warning** others of the **judgment** that will fall upon unforgiven sin.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 ⁸ 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.

1. Again, an emphasis on being **sober** or being able to **think clearly** and to **act responsibly**.

a) Of course, the most important thing anyone could do is to **place their trust and faith in Jesus** Christ alone.

i) This is what we need to be **sharing with others**.

b) And *as believers* we act responsibly by **protecting ourselves** with our gospel armor.

i) **Ephesians 6:13-18** outlines the entire outfit, but here Paul emphasizes **two key pieces** of the armor, the **breastplate** and the **helmet**.

ii) These two pieces guard our **hearts and minds** and that is so important.

(1) **Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)** Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

(2) **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

iii) We protect our **hearts** with faith for that's where faith must be in order for it to be **real**.

iv) We protect our **minds** with the **hope of salvation**.

(1) Our mind is where fear and anxiety reside and hope helps to overcome them.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

1. Remember that this is **one continuous letter** with the hope of the Rapture (chapter 4) restated here.

a) While we will experience tribulations in this world, believers will not go through the Great Tribulation.

b) Tribulations in this world help to produce **perseverance** in the life of the believer.

c) While the Great Tribulation is a period of **God's wrath and judgment** upon a Christ-rejecting sin-filled world.

The day of the Lord brings destruction to those in the dark, but those in the Light are appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

d) But as for believers, those of the light and day, we are **not** appointed **to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

2. Whether a believer has already died and moved on to heaven or we are raptured, notice **where ALL believers**, are during the day of the Lord... [living] **together with Him.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11

¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

1. We are to **comfort** one another with this news! This means to come along side another, like when you put your arm around someone to encourage them.
2. Read: **Isaiah 9:2, 6-7.**
 - a) This is what we celebrate at Christmas time, that Jesus is God's gift to us!
 - b) To bring us out of darkness and into the light.

Conclusion: What's the big take away from this passage?

1. **John 8:12** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
2. The day of the Lord brings destruction to those in the dark, but those in the Light are appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a) Christmas is not just about how the Light came to dwell among us, but how we have hope as followers in the Light in knowing we aren't appointed to obtain wrath, but salvation in Christ.
 - b) The day of the Lord is rapidly approaching... So strap on your breastplate of faith and love and your helmet of hope of salvation and let's go share this hope with the world around us!

Invitation: Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

ⁱ All scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from The New King James Version. (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.