

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-8

“Living In The Light Of His Return”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-3 Characteristics of a thief

III.) Vs. 4-8 How Should We Live?

I.) Intro.

Paul wrote this letter to a church that he had founded but was only able to stay with them for three to four weeks, so to encourage them Paul:

A.) Reminds them of their past faith in Christ, which had been clearly seen by all.

B.) Encourages them in the present to have a Christian walk that seeks to please God.

C.) Instructs them concerning their future hope in Jesus.

In each case Paul kept them focused upon the goal of one day being with Jesus for eternity. The goal of the Lord is not to rescue us from judgment it is to bring us to Jesus!

Over the last two weeks Paul addressed two concerns that these young believers had:

1.) Vs. 13 What happens to those Christians who die prior to the 2nd coming?

2.) Vs. 15 What about those who remain alive?

In the first 11 verses of chapter 5 Paul contrasts the believers who he spoke of as being “raptured”; against those non-believers awaiting the “day of the Lord” and how this ought to cause us believers to live today!

II.) Vs. 1-3 Characteristics of a Thief

Vs. 1 There are some today within the church who say that the church should not teach on prophetic passages adopting a “Pan Theology” meaning that it will all “Pan out in the end”. Though it is true that everything will turn out as God has ordained clearly Paul was not a “*Pan-Triber*” as had had already had some discussions concerning the end times. They had been confused as to what happened to believers who died but they had a good grasp of the end times as Paul says that concerning “times and seasons” they had no need to be further instructed. The phrase appears only three times in the Bible and in each case it refers to God’s plans for Israel in the latter days. The context of the words “times and seasons” refers to the “Day of the Lord” (verse 2), so the times and seasons that This young church had an understanding of was the ones centered around the day of the Lord. I think everyone wants to know the time of these events, but Paul is not speaking here of a “day and hour” and we know this for two reasons:

- A.) Jesus told us in Matt. 24: 36 “*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only:* We cannot know what day or hour, but we do know that He is coming again! **As believers we are not focused upon the event when the Lord will come to judge the world, we are focused upon the time when we will be caught up together with those who have died in Christ to meet the Lord in the air, thus always being with Him, (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).** And this can happen at any moment!!!!
- B.) The words, “times and seasons” is two distinct things.
- 1.) “Times”: Refers to a duration or length of time and not a day or hour. God has ordained a length of time in which He will both deal with the nation of

Israel and judge the Gentile nations. We are told of this both in Daniel and Revelation, of a seven year period called the great tribulation. This church knew this this because Paul had spoken to them about it.

- 2.) **“Seasons”**: A season describes certain obvious characteristics of time throughout a year, (Fall is when the leaves change color and drop, spring is when all the grass turns green and the flowers bloom, etc.). So like the changes in the seasons there will be certain signs or characteristics that will **proceed** this duration of time, as well as certain signs **during** the event its self.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 3:1-4 that it would be a time when the people of the church would begin to look more like the people of the world as they would be lovers of themselves and money. They would be proud and arrogant, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. It would be a time when they would not be into the Word of God and instead would follow after false teachers. Jesus to the Pharisees Matt. 16:2-3, ***“You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.”***

The Lord would have us aware of the events that are coming for two reasons:

- 1.) So that we would so live as if Jesus would be taking us to be with Him at any moment.
- 2.) So we could warn those who do not yet know Him of what awaits, in order that they would come to know Him.

Vs. 2 The duration of time known as the ***“Day of the Lord.”***, (or the ***“time of Jacob’s trouble”***) The phrase appears 26 times in 24 verses in the Bible and ***it describes a time when God will judge the nations and will strike those who reject Christ. At the***

same time God will prepare Israel for the return of Jesus and His reign for a thousand years with His saints. There are *three characteristics of this season:*

- 1.) 4: 13-17 “**Caught up (raptured) together**”: Paul told them about the coming of Jesus for His church which will proceed the “*day of the Lord*”. When Paul spoke of the two separate event he used the word “but” drawing a distinction between the rapture and the day of the Lord.
- 2.) Vs. 2 “**Thief in the night**”: This suggests two things:
 - a.) **UNSUSPECTING**: The world will be unsuspecting of Jesus return and judgment. Jesus said in Matt. 24: 37-38 that at “...*the coming of the Son of Man....it will be like...days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark*” When a thief breaks into your house, you don’t expect it. The “*Day of the Lord*” is going to surprise people the way Peter wrote of in 2 Peter 3:4 saying people will mockingly say “*Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.*”
 - b.) **UNPREPARED**: If the power was to go out at night and you need to get up early how would you be able to do so? So to the world will unprepared for His coming. Religious people will be unprepared for His coming because they think they are good enough on their own effort to escape the day of the Lord!
- 3.) Vs. 3 “**A time when people will say peace and safety then sudden destruction comes upon them**”: The signs outwardly will all be looking great. The world will be lulled to sleep by the “*good times*” politically and economically. The word “*destruction*” means utter hopeless ruin.

III.) Vs. 4-8 How Should We Live?

Vs. 4 Paul goes from signs of the times happening upon “**THEM**” to “**You brethren**” as he gives these believers 5 guidelines on how to live in light of the soon return of Jesus.

- 1.) Vs. 4 **Be expectant**: Paul says that we are not in darkness that the Day should overtake us. We ought to be living ready, living for His return for us! We need to be live in the light of His soon return. Titus 2: 11-13 says, “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ”*
- 2.) Vs. 5 **Be you**: Paul calls them here “*Brethren, Sons of the light, Sons of the day.*” Before he tells them what to do he reminds them of “WHO” they are in Christ. He contrasts that with what they are not, “**not of the night or of darkness.**” We should live based upon who we now are in Jesus. Our lives are to be a contrast to that of those in the world as we let His light shine through us.
- 3.) Vs. 6 **Be awake**: There must be a obvious difference between the believer and the non-believer; as they are **asleep** we are **awake**. **As we see the seasons change don’t put your Christian life into neutral put it into overdrive!**
- 4.) Vs. 6-7 **Be steady**: Paul says that they were to a model of consistency and contrasts this with what the world is. They are morally indifferent and careless about spiritual things. We are to heed Heb. 10: 24-25 “*..consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*”

- 5.) Vs. 8 **Be ready**: Literally, “*put your armor on and leave it on!*” Notice the familiar threefold characteristics of a believer, “*faith, hope, and love*”. These are not offensive weapons here because we have already won in Christ and as such we don’t need to advance just stand our ground. The Bible never mentions any protection for your back side because we never retreat!
- a.) **Breastplate of faith and love**: The breastplate protects the heart, which is the center of the emotions, intellect and will. Our faith in Jesus and our love for Him will keep our heart right!
- b.) **Helmet of the hope of salvation**: The helmet protects the head and for the believer we are talking about our thought life. The hope is not the “*I hope that I will be saved.*” It **means the hope that the knowledge of salvation brings to us.** The reality that nothing will keep us from Jesus, therefore we are free to go for it!