

Model Identity

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[0 : 00] So 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, let's pray. Now Father, we come to your word. We do pray that you would speak to us loudly and clearly. And as we hear your word, we would stand on the promises in it, that we might live to your praise and glory.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, beginning at verse 1. Now considering the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying there's peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they'll not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

So then, let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

[1 : 21] For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. One thing that grabs the attention of most people would be talking about the end of the world.

Now, sometimes, I think that climate change activists believe the things that are important to them more than we do.

They are somehow more passionate about their truth than Christians are about their truth. The world is going to end, that's guaranteed. But it won't be a mad made end, it won't come about in man's timing, it will come about in God's timing, in God's way, in God's power, that's how the world will end.

And rest assured, with the end of this world and all that's in it, there will come about a world that is far, far better than this one. Now, last week, we saw that when the Lord Jesus comes in glory, no believer will miss out on that day and being part of it.

[2 : 42] Whether the believer is dead or alive on that last day, they will be part of it when Jesus returns. Every follower of Jesus will be part of that day.

We will see the new creation as it unfolds and that will be the major defining event in the history of the universe.

Now, we may not have been there when Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, risen and ascended to heaven, but we will all see him come in the clouds. That's the promise there in chapter 4, chapter 4 verse 13.

See there, chapter 4 verse 13. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, and that you may not grieve as others do, have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[3 : 49] So we'll all be there on that day. Every follower will be part of that day. Now, when you get to chapter 5, the Thessalonians don't need to be informed about what's going on here.

See, chapter 5. Now, as you see in the times and seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you, for yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. They know this.

They've been taught this already. I wonder how you feel about the coming of Jesus and the arrival of Jesus, the parousia.

Is that something that you doubt? You know, not quite sure whether it's going to actually happen. Or is that something you care little about? It doesn't rate on the radar, as Dara was saying.

Is it something that you look forward to? Say, wow, I just can't wait for that day to come. It might scare you, that day.

[4 : 53] Or does it fill you with hope and joy, looking forward to that day coming? I'm sure that we don't have this day in our mindset enough.

I'm pretty sure that's how it is for us. But it's that day which shaped the Apostle Paul's life. And it's that day that shaped all of Jesus' mission.

And it's that day that really should have a massive shaping of our lives. And so Paul writes to the Thessalonians about this day and the implications that this day is to have on the way that we would live.

So let's spend a bit of time at it now, particularly looking at the day of the Lord. First of all, it's an event. That's important to get a hold of. It's an event. And so we're getting information about this right now.

And this is to inform our minds. It's knowledge, right? But I don't want this knowledge just to be knowledge for knowledge's sake. That's the last thing I want this to be. This needs to be knowledge that actually moves us to change us, to live differently, to have different hearts.

[6 : 04] That's what this knowledge is for. So first, it's an event. And second, it's an era. Let me talk about the event first. The Old Testament teaches us about the day of the Lord.

Every time in the Old Testament when it's mentioned, it's in reference to the Lord God coming and when he comes, he brings division. He brings judgment upon the living people and those who are living and rebelling against him people.

It's not a pretty day. Isaiah chapter 13 speaks about the day of wailing and fierce anger and destruction. Ezekiel chapter 39 speaks about it in terms of doom for the nations.

Joel chapter 2 verse 1 says, Blow a trumpet in Zion, sound alarm on my holy mountain. Let the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord is coming. It's near. Amos chapter 5 verse 18 says, When it comes, it's decisive, it's calamitous, it's cataclysmic because it introduces a new era. It's a time frame. It's a time when the Lord reigns. That's what it is. In the Old Testament, there were times when there was a day when it was all about Abraham, in the days of Abraham, in the days of Isaac, in the days of Jacob.

[7 : 26] You have this idea of in the day of. There was a time in the day of David when David reigned. We've had it recently, haven't we? There's the Victorian era.

There's the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Elizabethan eras, that kind of stuff. It's an expression that the kingdom of God we've restored to Israel and we'd have the reign of God.

The new creation will come. The one promise when the lion would lay down with the lamb. In the glorious day when God creates the new heavens and the new earth in the new creation, Isaiah speaks about it in Isaiah chapter 65.

Chapter 65 verse 17. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. And then come down a bit further, verse 25. The wolf and the lamb will graze together.

The lion will eat straw like the ox. The dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy my holy mountain, says the Lord. The kingdom of God comes.

[8 : 31] It will be an era. The days when the Lord God reigns, unopposed in all righteousness forever, that will be the era on the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord reigns. And the reality is, though, that the day of the Lord has come, right? At the same time, the day of the Lord is yet to come, fully and finally.

So with the coming of Jesus into the world in the Gospels, right, we speak about a description of the cross and the events of the cross as the day of the Lord.

Mark chapter 13 speaks about the day of the Lord being when the climatic day of Jesus on the cross, right? Massive stuff happens. God's wrath, God's penalty for sin is reached down onto Jesus, is poured out onto him and then he rises triumphantly from the grave and then God's new day reigns where Jesus is raised to eternal rule and all authority.

However, the problem is that we don't fully experience that new creation just yet, do we?

[9 : 55] We don't experience that. Things still go on. Things still go wrong. Life can be messy and messed up. It doesn't look sometimes like God is doing much in this world.

I mean, if God's reigning, why does bad stuff happen? Why are there still people opposed to him? Things seem to limp on from bad to worse. Where is this glorious new kingdom, this new reign of this new era?

Where's new creation gone to? It seems like it's harder to make ends meet. Every time we go, the bills keep coming in and life gets harder. There's wars and there's rumours of wars still.

Famines and earthquakes and floods and pandemics and crime and corruption. Right now, we are looking forward to the day of the Lord and the unopposed kingdom of God.

That's what we're looking forward to. The day when the Lord Jesus reigns and all opposition is put away. Now, it took the disciples a bit of work to understand this.

[10:55] Right? But it's clear enough for Paul and it's clear enough for the Thessalonians they understood it. Right? And it can be for us as well now.

2 Peter chapter 3 speaks about this, the days coming when the Lord Jesus will return. And so right now, we're living between two days. The day of the Lord on the cross and the day, the big capital of the day, when the Lord Jesus returns to bring ultimate judgment and the kingdom, the new heavens, the new earth, the new creation.

That's what we're living in between those times now. So this is the era, the day of the Lord, right? Of the Lord's reign. It's anodomini, the year of the Lord's reign.

That's the only Latin I know. That's why we have it on our bulletins, AD, the year of the Lord. But we're still waiting for the parousia, the arrival of Jesus in ultimate glory and the new creation to come fully and finally.

And so these days we live in now are the last days. We don't know how many last days there will be before Jesus finally comes on the clouds.

[12:09] So let me try and just give a bit of a diagram just to clarify things. I'm not quite sure how it will work but we'll see how it goes. Oh, here we go. So next slide please.

Here we go. Excuse me. So here we go. Here is, here's how you would kind of think it would work at the cross. Jesus comes, the cross is there and in Acts chapter 1 the disciples are going, hang on a second Jesus, is this now the time we're going to bring up the new creation right now?

You know, you've come, you've lived, you've died, you've risen again. Is that going to be the new creation now? Are now we're going to be in the day of the Lord now? That's what, the picture, all happening at once at the cross but no, not quite.

So next slide. Oh, didn't play fancy games for me. Oh well, there you go.

On the PowerPoint I had it all set up so it nicely sort of moved along and everything went. Anyway, what happened was that black line, that black line there goes from the last day out to the new creation, gets pushed out there and then Jesus actually comes from the clouds on that green line just there before the new creation starts and that event, the day of the Lord happens then and we're currently in the last days right now and the blue line there is when the Holy Spirit comes and God, the Lord Jesus is present with us by his Holy Spirit now, right now and we're living in that time now, the last days, looking forward to the coming of Jesus in the clouds and that's the era that we're in right now, the day of the Lord.

[14:03] Okay, that's the day of the Lord stuff. Now, what difference then should that make to us?

Well, let me tell you every difference in the world. Let's think about the timing verses 2 to 5. The day of the Lord will come and will certainly come and will come by surprise, will come like a thief in the night.

You don't expect a thief to come, right, you don't expect a thief to come but you know when he has, right, and he also talks about it being like a pregnant woman.

Now, one thing is sure, there is a baby to come, right, there's no denying that's going to happen but you're not quite sure when that child will be born and before the days of ultrasound even had less chance of knowing whether it's going to be this month or next month when that child is going to be born but the day does come when the child is born, it does come.

However, the Christian shouldn't be surprised when it does for we are all children of light, we're all children of the day so we belong to the day, the day of the Lord, we belong to that day, that era, that time, we belong to the day of the Lord and we live in the light, we're not going to be ashamed when he returns as the light reveals our lives.

[15:35] We are citizens of the new heavens and the new earth, the new creation. We belong to Jesus who died and rose again and lives as our king. We have bent the knee to him as Lord and we will rejoice in that day.

The unbeliever gives no thought to that day, no idea that Jesus reigns as Lord. They're not thinking he's going to come in judgment. They're thinking all's well, it's okay, life goes on just like it always has, unaware of the peril, unaware of the absolute failure to recognise the reality of the situation that's coming, the danger that's coming.

there's only two alternatives, right? Life with the Lord for eternity or life in eternal loss shut out from the presence of God for all eternity.

They're the only two options when the Jesus comes on the clouds. Only one of two outcomes. One or the other is inevitable.

there is no third option. And so then we're told in verses 6-10 how we're to live.

[16:55] So being children of the day, children of God, children of the kingdom of God, we will live for him. We're always needing to be reminded of how to live.

See then verse 6, so then let us not sleep as others do but let us keep awake and sober for those who sleep sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

Since we belong to the day let us be sober having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation. There's to be a real reason to be different.

The temptation though as we live in this day is to forget that that day is coming and to just go on and be sidelined and the temptation is to live like the unbelievers of this world and to have the same goals and aspirations of those who do not know about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

evil is equated with darkness and when the sun shines there is light and wicked deeds are done in darkness that's when they're done but we belong to not just the lightness of day but to the era of the reign of the Lord Jesus and so we're to live life differently not a life lived in sleepiness thinking oh Jesus is not going to return and not consider the things that matter of eternity we're to live a life fully aware of that reality a life lived in opposition to Jesus would bring us down it's not a time now to live with our senses dulled by alcohol and lack of self control over our bodies it's not the time to be living like that but it's a time for buckling up and taking this breastplate this armour of faith and love and to take full advantage of all that God has won for us in Jesus death the helmet of salvation the hope of salvation faith and love and hope are the three favourite words that

[19:29] Paul uses faith in the Lord Jesus love for the Lord Jesus love for our brothers and sisters in Christ not to mention love for the lost those who are facing a future shut out from the glory of God are lost and we need to have a love for the lost not to mention a love for brothers and sisters in Christ the breastplate think about the breastplate guards the heart yeah and the helmet guards the head so I know that my heart can grow cold can grow hard can become blocked to the things of

God and that can lead to a heart attack you know that's what it can do and faith and love will guard our hearts against that the danger is to love with our hearts the things that we shouldn't love that is a great danger and faith will save us from becoming Pharisees thinking that we can do enough for God thinking that we are capable of achieving things in our own strength and pleasing God in our own ways we need to keep reminding ourselves and trusting the promise that Jesus is returning that day is coming and so we must not deny that the

Lord Jesus will judge the helmet guards the head our minds and our head is to inform our hearts not our hearts inform our heads see my heart can want all kinds of things right that are contrary to the things of God's word but my knowledge of his word will rule my heart and say you know what even though you'd rather God be like this his scriptures tell me that he's not and he's like this so align your heart with the truth that's important the helmet guards our heads and our minds and our head is to inform our heart and then our heart is then to actually drive us in passion and love to live for God's world and God's people and the lost our head will hang on to the hope of salvation through the finished work of

Jesus the hope is the certain reality that we have been saved from the wrath of God see verse 9 and verse 10 for God has not destined us for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us so that whether we're awake or asleep we might live with him and so these words are to be the encouragement really this is this it's called eschatology this eschatology this understanding of the end times is the thing to go on encouraging ourselves with in the light of this we're to build one another it's not that they're not doing this already notice they're already doing this therefore verse 11 this is the punch line encourage one another and build one another up just as you were doing they're already doing it keep doing so more and more now how might that look in reality well one thing that springs to my mind is this when you see a brother or sister in

Christ who is in need of encouragement right what will you encourage them with well 1
Thessalonians chapter 5 that's what we would do we'd come and say look Jesus is the one who has died for you to rescue from the wrath to come you are one of God's special people you will be with him in glory forever whether you're awake or asleep at the time look to that reality look to that truth you are a child of the day not a child of the night you're not destined to wrath you're destined for salvation and that will change the perspective we can remind each other that no matter what happens when Jesus returns we will live with him in the new creation that is a massive encouragement we'd encourage one another to keep pressing on knowing that we've been destined from the beginning of time to be one of God's chosen people and he has planned for us to be part of his future for all eternity and so we can welcome that day with great hope and anticipation and not be surprised when it comes that is awesome now it's very tempting for me to go on and say a whole lot of things that we could be doing right in light of that day but let me just remind us to being encouraged by that day coming let's pray our father in heaven we thank you in your great mercy that you've made these truths clear to us and we ask that you help us to continue to keep these things front and centre in our minds as we ponder how to live in this world for your glory we long for the day when

[26 : 03] Jesus returns in power and might and majesty to bring about the new creation salvation and we praise you that we are not destined for wrath but destined for mercy and salvation please have mercy upon us we pray help us to encourage one another in the light of that day and that we might see many many many thousands and millions of people gathered with us and some that we have seen come to faith in Christ as well pray for mercy upon our suburb here in St.

Lucia we pray for mercy upon those around about us that we live with and work with and in our families who do not know you yet that as we live for Jesus that others might want to know about him as well we pray in Jesus name Amen