



Series: Be Encouraged
1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:28

This is the final installment in our study of 1 Thessalonians. You may want to take some time and allow the group to share some meaningful insights they have gleaned from this study.

We cover a lot of scripture so you may have to pick and choose or let the group know we might go a little long during this meeting. 😊

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who 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. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Remembering that the Thessalonians had been constantly facing unsound doctrine from their detractors and even facing persecution, Paul is once again encouraging them. This time however Paul is encouraging them with the things to come. He covers those who have died who may have not heard about Christ after His earthly ministry, but died anticipating His coming and being faithful to God. Paul tries to clear up some of the confusion. And Paul talks about the certainty that Christ will come again and take His children home to heaven. Paul says not only understand this for yourselves, but encourage others with this same truth.

Ask, how often do you seriously consider or think about Christ coming again? How might you bring this more to the forefront of your thinking on a more regular basis?

We need to find strong encouragement and courage to live in this promise. No matter how busy, overwhelmed, afflicted and down we may get in the present, there is a day when Christ will come. This is a certain future. This gives us courage to face the day. He will come again.

Read this CS Lewis quote - If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

5:1-2 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
Jesus will show up unannounced - no one knows when. There are many who say they know, will try to predict and make outlandish statements, but Scripture is clear that only God knows when Christ will return.

“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

5:3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. – There will be no escape for those who have rejected Christ. Whether someone believes that Christ is the Messiah or not will not excuse them from judgment.

So, How are we to live in the darkness -

5:4-11 *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. 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.*

Great encouragement - live in the light that Christ is going to come. The great thing that Christ has done demands our response of soberness and focus. This living in the light is in stark contrast to living in the darkness.

- Remember that we are not destined for wrath.
- Do not live as the world with no thought of Christ and eternity. We are best fit for eternity and not for earth.
- Notice that Paul reminds them that they belong to the day and not the night.
- Put on faith and love and put on hope that is in Christ Jesus. A huge contrast to those who have no hope outside of Christ.
- We build one another up rather than fight and gossip with one another.

5:12-28 *We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, "but test everything; hold fast what is good." Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."*

Commands for living in the light - lots of things to do as a result of the spiritual fruit in your life

- respect those in authority and ministry
- changes internally show up externally
- Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, don't repay evil for evil, do good to one another, give thanks, test everything and hold fast to what is true (these are just a few mentioned by Paul)

Benediction - v. 23-28

Sanctified

Blameless – because of Christ we are now blameless in God’s sight and it is all due to Him. Because He Himself is faithful. The focus is on His faithfulness not on our good works.

What are we to do now?

- Only God the Father knows when Christ is to return.
- Self-control is a mark of the HS in our lives
- People who care about the return of Jesus on earth will live expectantly for His return.
- Believers are to live in love and grace to others

Application

- Studying prophecy and end times is okay but it is better to live in obedience in Christ’s love. Live in the freedom of Christ.
- Live with habits that can withstand the daylight of the glory of Christ. Don’t live compartmentalized- hiding sin in the darkness rather than allowing it to be exposed in the light and
- Show respect for your Christian Leaders is honoring God.
- Trust God to do His part in my life. To sanctify/set you apart. The light shows all the flaws.

We are not bodies with souls, but souls with bodies. CS Lewis

The grace of Christ be with you.

So much here but take time to share prayer concerns and pray together.