

Always Be Ready for the Return of Jesus

Sunday, July 28, 2024 ▪ Nick Braitto

Jesus will return like a thief in the _____... (vv. 1-3)

...so, we're to live now as children of _____. (vv. 4-5)

Stay _____. (vv. 6-8a)

Stay _____. (vv. 8b-10a)

Stay _____. (vv. 10b-11)

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.

² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 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.

⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ 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. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Would other people describe you as being on time or not? Why do you think you have the approach you do regarding being on time?

Read & Discuss: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1. As you consider the analogies of the "thief in the night" (v. 2) and "labor pains...upon a pregnant woman," what does Paul seem to want us to know about the return of Jesus?
2. What are some of the different reactions people have to the idea of Christ's return? How should we respond to those reactions? How much would you say that Christ's return occupies your daily thoughts and how would you explain why this is an appropriate or inappropriate amount?
3. In verses 4-5, Paul stresses that believers are "of light" and "of the day" and not "of the night" or "of darkness." In what ways are these phrases helpful for describing the differences between believers and unbelievers? Why are these truths something we need to be frequently reminded of?
4. What does it mean to be spiritually "awake" and "sober," as Paul calls us to in verse 6? Can you give an example of a time when, though you were saved, you were not spiritually alert? What led to you losing this alertness? How can we make sure we live in the way Paul calls us to?
5. In verse 8 Paul exhorts us to arm ourselves with "faith," "love," and "hope." How do each of these protect us from spiritual attacks? What would it look like to make sure we're armed with each of these?
6. In verse 10 Paul reminds us that we are to live in relationship with Christ whether we are alive or dead. As we go through this life, why is it essential that we keep both our present relationship with Christ and our future relationship with Christ in mind at all times?
7. Paul concludes this section with the statement, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up." How do the truths of verses 1-10 motivate you to encourage and build up other believers?

Application: From this passage, how would you explain how believers are to live ready for Christ's return? What's one thing you can do this week to either help you look forward to Jesus' Second Coming or to encourage someone else with this truth?

Pray: Pray that we would be people eager and ready for Christ's return. Ask God to fill us with faith, love, and hope in Christ's promises so that we might be well armed to resist Satan's attacks and well equipped to build up Christ's Church.