

6.14.20 ~ 1Thessalonians 5:4-11, Night and Day...

God recognizes two groups of people in the world: believers and unbelievers, the saved and the lost, those in darkness and those in the Light, children of the devil and children of God, Christians and nonChristians.

John 8:12, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Read 1Thessalonians 5:1-3... The Day of the Lord is a time of judgement and wrath for unbelievers; it will come like a thief in the night, and will be a time of destruction, gloom, and darkness (cf. **Zephaniah 1:15; Amos 5:18**).

Read 1Thessalonians 5:4-5... Christians won't be overtaken by the Day of the Lord because they are of the day and not of the night; but Satan's kingdom is one of darkness and all who reject Christ live in disobedience and spiritual darkness.

John 3:19-20, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

Ephesians 4:17-18, "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God..."

Ephesians 5:6-14, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'"

2Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

2Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"

All who believe in and belong to Christ are children of the Light, citizens of God's kingdom of Light (where it is always day), for there is no darkness there and there will never be any night.

Since the very beginning, God has been separating Light from Darkness: **Genesis 1:1-4**, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness."

After the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation, the Return of Christ, the Millennial Kingdom, the White Throne Judgement, the Destruction of the Old Heavens and Earth, and the Creation of the New Heavens and New earth, the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, and we are told (**Revelation 21:23-25**), "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light...(for there will be no night there)."

Revelation 22:5, "And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever."

At the end of all things, as we now know them, there will no longer be darkness. **Read 1Thessalonians 5:6-8...** Because Christians are people of the day (having the Light of God), we are to remain alert and sober, i.e., we are not to be unaware or indifferent to what is going on in the world spiritually and morally, like someone who is non-responsive, as if in a coma.

Do true believers at times act like unbelievers? Absolutely, but Paul admonishes us not to act like "night" people who are either sleeping or getting drunk. The word in **verse 7** translated "sleep" is from a different Greek word than the one that is often used to refer to the sleep of death (cf. **1Thessalonians 4:14**).

Paul uses a word here that refers to cognitive, moral, or spiritual sleep, i.e., passive cluelessness as to what is going on around you, as if you were sitting in an extremely dark room with noise cancelling headphones on; while at the very same time, you were purposely and actively participating in the sin of getting drunk.

Paul exhorts us that this should never be said of a child of God, because children of the day and of the Light, have figuratively (**1Thessalonians 5:8**) put on certain pieces of spiritual armor provided by God; here, the breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Notice the adjectives used to describe this breastplate (faith and love), and this helmet (the hope of salvation)? Faith, love, and hope are the top three virtues of Christianity, and in fact, Paul referenced them in the first chapter of his letter to these believers (cf. **1Thessalonians 1:3**).

So, our faith is likened to a breastplate (which was meant to protect the heart of the wearer); in **Ephesians 6**, we are told to put on the armor of God, verse **14** describes the *Breastplate of Righteousness*. It is called this because our faith (our complete trust, belief, and confidence) is in the death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ, for He is our righteousness; He guards our heart.

2Corinthians 5:21, "God made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." **3**, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." **6**, "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

The substance of our faith (which protects our heart, like a breastplate) is God's gracious, merciful, unconditional, eternal, and sacrificial love for us.

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

In **Ephesians 6:17**, Paul talks about a piece of armor he calls the *Helmet of Salvation*. But what is the hope of salvation (**1Thessalonians 5:8**) that Paul attributes to this helmet?

The Bible is very clear that when we repent and believe in Christ we are saved, i.e., we have salvation, so why would we hope for something we already have? I don't believe Paul is speaking about the moment of our salvation, when we confess Christ as Lord, repenting of our sins; but instead, Paul is speaking of a future event when our salvation will be full realized, as Paul wrote in **Romans 13:11**, "our salvation is nearer to us now than when we [first] believed."

Clearly, Paul is speaking about a future event when the Lord (**Philippians 3:21**), "will transform [our lowly] body into conformity with [His glorious body]," i.e., this is a time in the future when our earthly mortal bodies will put on heavenly immortality, the glory of eternal life will be fully realized.

There are other passages of Scripture that help us have clarity on this:

1John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

1Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."

1Corinthians 15:47-49, "The first man [Adam] is from the earth, [he is] earthy [Lit. made of dust]; the second man [Jesus] is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."

When we see Christ face to face, we will be like Him, with full knowledge, but we will also have a heavenly, eternal, glorified body. What a glorious day that will be!

Read 1Thessalonians 5:9-11... What a great and marvelous God! He loves us so much that He is not willing that we should go through the time of His wrath known as the Day of the Lord, when He will bring judgment upon all those on the earth who continue to reject Christ as Lord. "God has not destined us for wrath."

Earlier I read **Romans 5:8**, let me read that again, adding **verse 9**.

Romans 5:8-9, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

2Peter 3:7, "The present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men."

It is very sad indeed, and yet it is an absolute reality, that although our Lord made full payment for the sins of all people, for all time, His death and resurrection will provide salvation only for those who repent of their sins and trust in Him to forgive them.

For those who repent and genuinely believe in Christ, God will pour out His blessings, not His wrath:

2Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." **13**, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

Matthew 25:34, "Come you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

In **1Thessalonians 4:13-17**, Paul makes it clear that none of those who belong to the Lord will miss the Rapture, we will all be caught up in the air with Him.

In **1Thessalonians 5:4-5**, Paul makes it clear that the day of the Lord (a day of wrath) will come upon those who are in darkness, those who reject God; where as, (**1Thessalonians 5:9**) God has determined that we who belong to Him, sons and daughters of the Light, are not destined for wrath; and in fact (**1Thessalonians 5:10**) we will be caught up to be with the Lord long before the Day of the Lord comes upon the unbelieving inhabitants of the earth [earth dwellers].

God has granted us everything we need to know Him, to be loved by Him, to love and serve Him while we are on this earth, and to trust Him to care for us, to guide, lead and strengthen us, until He comes back to take us to be with Him forever, and too enjoy the new heavens and new earth, like it was meant to be in the beginning, before the curse of sin entered our world, bringing conflict, chaos, sickness and death.

Glory be to God, for He will make all things new (cf. **Revelation 21:4-5**) and in God's Kingdom of Light where we will live for eternity, there will never again be any death, or mourning, or crying, or pain, for those things would have passed away and will have ceased to exist.

Glory be to God in the highest, Who was and Who is and Who is yet to come, the Almighty; the Alpha and the Omega, worthy is He, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and worship and praise, forever and ever. Amen.

Pastor Mike

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