



Sermon Discussion Questions

May 19, 2024

Like a Thief in the Night

STAY ...

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1. **Opening Discussion Questions** (in a group setting you may only want to do one of these)

- a. Have you ever been the honoree at a surprise party when you had absolutely no idea it was going to happen? What was it like to be taken completely by surprise for an event that was designed to make you feel good? Would you have prepared differently if you had known the event was coming? How would things have changed if someone had “spilled the beans” shortly before the event?
- b. If you have ever had the unfortunate experience of being pulled over by a policeman what were the emotions, you felt when you saw the flashing lights in your mirror? When talking to the officer did you attempt to justify what you had been doing or did you accept that he/she had a valid reason for stopping you? If you were fortunate enough to be told “I’m not going to give you a ticket this time” how did your attitude change?

2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**

- a. Stay Prepared for the Day of the Lord.
 - i. The Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly.
 - ii. Be prepared and stay prepared!
- b. Stay Spiritually Strong and Encouraged.
 - i. Protect your heart and soul with faith and love.
 - ii. Protect your mind and thoughts with the certainty of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - iii. Encourage each other.
- c. Stay Concerned for Nonbelievers.
 - i. Revisiting verse 3 - sudden destruction for nonbelievers.
 - ii. What do you need to change to increase your personal concern for nonbelievers?
 - iii. What do we need to change as a church to increase our urgent concern for nonbelievers?

3. **Study/Discussion Points:**

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?

- iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
- iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday – Stay Prepared for the Day of the Lord

- i. When Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, he did not provide chapter and verse divisions – they were added much later. So, when we come to this week’s focal passage there is a debate about whether 5:1-11 is a continuation of the same subject presented in 4:13-18 or if Paul is writing about a different event. Start this week by reading 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 – in several different translations if possible (if you have an app that allows you to read without chapter and verse marking use it).
 - 1. Based on your reading, do you think the “rapture” (4:13-18) and the “day of the Lord” (5:1-11) are the same subject or two different ones?
 - 2. How does the first verse of each passage suggest they are different topics?
 - 3. How does the final verse in each suggest they may be the same? How is the ending of both passages similar?
- ii. What different pictures did Paul use in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 to describe the “day of the Lord”? What do these illustrations emphasize about the “day of the Lord”? What will characterize it?

c. Tuesday – Stay Prepared for the Day of the Lord

- i. Read the focal passage (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) in your favorite translation. As you read note the many connective words (“for”, “but”, “therefore”, etc.) – you may want to underline or highlight them. What relationship between verses do these connectors show you?
- ii. Read these passages that talk about the “day of the Lord”. What insight do they provide about the term Paul uses?
 - 1. Amos 5:18-20
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 1:7-9
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5
 - 4. Philippians 1:6-11
 - 5. Philippians 2:14-18
- iii. Paul says that the “day of the Lord” will come as a “thief in the night”. How does Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24:42-44 and Luke 12:39-40 relate? How does Jesus say we should live in view of our ignorance about the time of His coming?

d. Wednesday – Stay Prepared for the Day of the Lord

- i. While the Bible is clear that we cannot know when Christ will return there are nonetheless many passages that tell us about the event. Read these dozen passages. What do you learn about how you should stay prepared or about the actual event?

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| 1. Matthew 24:23-27 | 7. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 |
| 2. Matthew 26:64 & Mark 14:62 | 8. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 |
| 3. Mark 13:32-37 | 9. 1 Timothy 6:11-16 |
| 4. Luke 21:25-28 | 10. Titus 2:11-15 |
| 5. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 | 11. James 5:7-9 |
| 6. Philippians 3:17-21 | 12. 1 John 2:28-3:2 |

- ii. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 why should we have great hope? What is God's plan for us?

e. Thursday – Stay Spiritually Strong and Encouraged

- i. Read the focal passage once again but this time look carefully for any commands or instructions that Paul gives.

1. In verses 6-8 what two groups does Paul describe? In your own words what do you think he meant by each?
2. What are we specifically told to do? What are we told not to do?
3. Read Matthew 24:37-39 and Mark 13:35-37. How do you think these passages relate to what Paul is writing?
4. Clearly Paul cannot be talking about the physical sleep we all must have, so what would you understand "sleep" to mean in this passage?

- ii. Verse 8 provides instructions of how we are to accomplish this; it sounds quite similar to the armor of God passage in Ephesians 6:10-18. Read these verses comparing them to the focal passage.

1. Both Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians tell us to "put on" the armor. What does that imply to you?
2. In Ephesians the breastplate is "righteousness" and in the focal passage "faith and love". How are the two descriptions similar? Different? Would it be possible to have one without the other?
3. The helmet is described as the "hope of salvation." We know that Paul is writing to saved Christians so what is meant by "hope"?

f. Friday – Stay Spiritually Strong and Encouraged

- i. Read and meditate on 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

1. How do these two verses really foster our "hope of salvation"?

2. The “wrath” of God is not a popular subject in American churches where we tend to think of God only as love and view wrath mainly as an Old Testament issue, but the reality of God’s wrath is evident in the New Testament too. Consider these passages:
 - a. John 3:36
 - b. Romans 1:18-23
 - c. Hebrews 10:26-31
 - d. Revelation 20:11-15
 3. How do you think the Thessalonians felt when reminded that the “children of darkness” who were persecuting them were destined for God’s “wrath”?
 4. How do you feel when you think of unbelievers you know suffering wrath when the Lord comes? Are you glad that they will receive justice or are you panicked (highly motivated) by the need to do something?
 - ii. Paul ends by telling us to “encourage one another” and to “build one another up”. What are some practical ways you can do this in our society?
- g. *Saturday – Stay concerned for Nonbelievers*
- i. On this final day read the focal passage (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) one more time – paying particular attention to whom the pronouns are referring to.
 1. What shift takes place as Paul goes from verse 2 into verse 3?
 2. What is different about the people Paul is talking about in verse 3? What is their response to God’s warning? What is their fate (see 2 Thessalonians 1:9)?
 - ii. Verse 3 concludes by saying that once the labor pains start “they will not escape”. Given that warning, when is escape possible? What is the implication to us Christians when we consider the fallen world around us?

4. Application:

- a. People we know and love are going to suffer the wrath of God if they do not repent and accept Christ as their Savior. It is our responsibility to share the Good News with them so that they will have an opportunity to do so. If we are not doing so, we are most definitely what Paul would call “asleep”, not “sober”.
- b. We are commanded to encourage and build-up one another. We cannot possibly do so if we are not actively a part of the local fellowship of believers. We need to be diligent about spending time in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

5. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19