



Why Teach Bible Prophecy: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Pastor JD Farag

1 Thessalonians chapter 5, our text today will be verses 1 through 11. I will have you, if you are able stand, you can follow along as I read. If not, that is all right, where you are seated is fine. The Apostle Paul is writing to this church in Thessalonica.

By the Holy Spirit says, verse 1, Now, brothers and sisters about times and dates, we do not need to write to you for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night while people are saying peace and safety..." Or peace and security, it's the Greek word, "asfaleia", same word.

"...destruction will come on them suddenly as labor pains on a pregnant woman and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness. So, that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, [verse 6] let us not be like others who are asleep.

But let us be awake and sober for those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober. Putting on faith and love as a breastplate. The hope of salvation as a helmet." Interesting, to protect the heart and the mind.

"For God [verse 9] did not appoint us to suffer wrath. But to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him. Therefore, [verse 11] encourage one another. And build each other up just as, in fact, you are doing."

Let's pray, if you would join with me. Loving Heavenly Father, we are so thankful to you for your Word in this portion that we have before us today, here in your Word. But, Lord, we're also keenly aware that unless you, as only you can by the Holy Spirit, get our attention and hold our attention. We're going to miss what it is that you would desire to show to us today, here in your Word.

So, Lord, we want to give you our undivided attention. No distractions. So, you can speak into our lives in and through your Word. So, Lord, will you? Your servants are listening, speak, Lord. We ask in Jesus name. Amen and amen. You can be seated, thank you.

I hope you don't tire of me saying this? But today's text is one that I've really been looking forward to for quite some time now. I know I



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say that about every passage of Scripture, every week. But in particular, this week, this passage that we have before us today is such that I believe God, today, is going to break through, if I can say it that way, into our lives. Speak into our lives concerning the importance of Bible prophecy.

What I want to talk about today is: Why it is that teaching Bible prophecy is of paramount importance even to new believers? Here's why I say that. It's striking to me and we've talked about this before. It's striking to me that Paul writing this letter to this church.

By the way, his first epistle that he ever wrote was to the Thessalonian church. He was only there for, it's believed, maybe about 3 weeks, maybe at the most a month? Before he was run out of town. It seems that while he was there for that short period of time, he taught them Bible prophecy. That's striking to me.

We know this because of the account that we have, the record that we have, in the Book of Acts. We also know that he taught him Bible prophecy in that short period of time as a new church, as new believers. Because he starts by saying, "You already know this." You already know this because I already taught you this.

And you already know this because when I was with you, I taught you about the rapture of the church and Bible prophecy. These were new believers! I point this out because the teaching of Bible prophecy is part of, I would say, a big part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In fact, I would argue that the very first mention of the gospel came by way of a prophecy in the Bible. In the book of Genesis chapter 3:15, often referred to as the "Protoevangelium" meaning it was the gospel in Genesis chapter 3:15. Where God declares that there will come this seed of the woman. That's the virgin birth.

That's a prophecy of the virgin birth. Because women do not have the seed, men do. Women have the egg. The seed of a woman, the virgin birth, a prophecy, will crush the head of the serpent. The serpent will bruise his heel, that's the crucifixion. But He will crush his head.

That is the first mention. For those students of Bible prophecy, it's the principle of the "First Mention". It comes by way of a prophecy. It's the Gospel of Jesus Christ that's Bible prophecy. One of the things as a teacher of God's Word going through the Bible: Book by



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book, chapter by chapter and verse by verse. You're not going to get away with not talking about Bible prophecy.

Because well-nigh 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy. So, I mean, if you're wanting to stay away from teaching Bible prophecy? God forbid! But you have to take your Bible and start ripping pages out of it, like a lot! Because 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy.

I found three reasons in our text today, you might find more. But I found three that, to me, speak to the importance of Bible prophecy. The first one is in verses 1 through 3. It's that of being ready. Here, Paul likens the Lord's return to a thief in the night. Yes, this is an idiom but he says that the Lord's return will be as a thief in the night.

While people are saying two specific words: Peace and security. And while they are saying, "peace and security", then sudden destruction will come upon them as a thief in the night as a woman prevailing in labor. And they will not escape.

We know that verse very well, don't we? Oh, by the way, for today's prophecy update? We're going to be talking about this verse, again today, and for good reason. I know we talk about this verse in our prophecy updates often. But I think we do well to consider the context in which Paul says it. Specifically, that of how the Lord's return will be for them, not us. Them, as a thief in the night.

This is important and here's why. A thief is not going to call you, or text you, or email you, and say to you, "Hey, I'm going to rob you. I'm going to break in and rob you at 2:00 a.m. Is that a good time for you?" It's not going to happen! And because that will never happen you always have to be ready.

You always have to be prepared because you don't know! So, too, is this true when it comes to the Lord's return. It will be for them, because they're not ready, as a thief in the night and they will be caught off guard. But not you.

I don't know if you noticed as we were reading the text today? But Paul is very clear and delineating between "they" and "we", "them", "you". You are not like them. You are not of the... night; You're of the day. You are aware of this. You are ready for this. Why? Because I taught you about this and I told you about this. I don't even need to write to you about this because you already know this.



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Well, this really, "dovetails" and ties into our second one in verses 4 through 8. It's that of being aware or if you prefer, awake. This is interesting. Here, Paul tells them that, for them, the Lord's return will not be a surprise. Because they're aware. They're awake, not like those who are asleep. Different word than the word that Paul uses when he talks about the "sleep of death". Those who are asleep in death.

Different word here. He's talking about a spiritual sleep. The implication being that there are those who are asleep, spiritually. As such they're not awake, they're not alert, and they're not ready. Instead of being asleep spiritually, the Thessalonians were to be awake and to be alert.

I was thinking about this actually, just this morning when my alarm clock woke me up at 3:30 a.m. I hate alarm clocks. I'm so thankful there will not be alarm clocks in heaven. I try to go to bed on Saturday nights early, knowing that I need to get up early on Sunday mornings and kind of go through everything that I've prepared.

Certainly, when things are really developing for the prophecy update, I've got to get up early in the morning and update, that I already updated yesterday, when I did the update. Today was one of those days, by the way. So, I try to wind down, shut down and I'm wanting to go to bed early. I fell asleep last night by the grace of God, thank you, Lord, about 9:00, 9:30.

Then the alarm clock woke me up at 3:30 this morning. Now, between 9:30 and 3:30, I have no idea of anything that happened while I was sleeping. I was completely unaware of anything except for the two times I got up to use the bathroom. Thank God, it was only 2 and not more. That's another issue we won't talk about that, right now. Sorry, I brought it up! Oh, my goodness.

So, other than those two times, I had no idea what was going on while I was sleeping. Now, I have security cameras. So, in the morning when I wake up? I can look at the cameras and say, "Oh, wow! Oh, my! All of that happened while I was sleeping?" Yeah. I was totally unaware of anything that was happening, because I was sleeping.

You see where I'm going with this, right? In the spiritual sense, a Christian can be sleeping and totally, unaware of anything that is happening around them. That's why they're startled, stunned and surprised.



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This is why, again, I know I say this every week as well. But this is why it is that we do these prophecy updates every week and have since 2006 with the exception of Christmas and Resurrection Sunday.

It's to sound the alarm and to wake up the sleeping Christian of which there are many, sadly to the lateness of the hour, the urgency of the times in which we live. Paul writing to the to the Romans, chapter 13, says basically, "Wake up!" I just woke up a couple of people just now saying it like that. Wake up! From your slumber, you're sleeping.

You're unaware of anything and everything that is happening in the world today. Our salvation draws nearer now than it ever has before and that was 2,000 years ago. Well, come on, Pastor, that was 2,000 years ago. I know that's what I'm saying, that was 2,000 years ago. What are you saying?

I'm saying that for the last 2,000 years, we've been living in the last days for the last 2,000 years. And here's Paul saying, "Hey, we don't know when the Lord's going to return." Don't you find it interesting? We talked about this a little bit last week in chapter 4 where Paul says, "We who are alive and remain, will be caught up [raptured up] to meet the Lord in the air?"

Paul thought it was in his lifetime. "We..." that was Paul talking and writing. "We who are alive..." Us, we". They lived with that expectancy, that anticipation, that the Lord could come at any time. As a thief in the night, at an hour we expect not and they were always ready. By the way that is by God's design. So that we would always be watching, always be ready, always be awake, always be aware.

Lastly, and this is what I want to spend the remainder of our time on. Always be encouraged. Verses 9-11, to me are one of the most compelling proofs of a pre-tribulation rapture. By the way, for those of you who were not here last week, you can go online. The teaching was titled, "Pre-tribulation Rapture Proof". Proof, not a theory. It's a proof of the sound doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture. There are many but just in our text last week we talked about three.

This is one of them. By virtue of how the sound doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture builds us up and encourages us. So, Paul, would not say to them, then and us, now that you can be encouraged, and encourage one another if the rapture were not before the 7-year tribulation. Instead of encouraging them, he would be warning them, "You'd better



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get ready. You'd better buckle up. You'd better plan on surviving until the Lord comes." No, the Lord's going to come.

To the Church of Philadelphia in Revelation chapter 3, Jesus has John, by the Holy Spirit, write a letter to this church, telling them that he is going to keep them from the hour of tribulation. The 7-year tribulation that is coming upon the whole earth and he encourages them to hold on. I know you have little strength. But just hang on, not much longer. You have kept my name. You have not denied my name and you have kept my Word. I'm going to keep you from the hour of tribulation that is coming upon the whole earth.

What's he doing? He's encouraging them. Notice Paul says, "We're not only to be encouraged ourselves but are to encourage one another as well. He commends them and says to them, "Even as you are now doing".

Again, I know I'm repeating myself. But this, to me, is one of the most compelling proofs of a pre-tribulation rapture. The fact that we can be encouraged and encourage one another. Hold on, not that much longer. We saw this in chapter 4, when Paul was writing.

He was writing to a battle-wearied church there, in Thessalonica. They were under severe and intense persecution. They were asking questions, which presumably Timothy brought back, when Paul and Silas sent Timothy to Thessalonica. All because Paul could not go himself, though he longed to.

Apparently, they sent back word with Timothy, "Hey, ask the Apostle Paul, what about our loved ones who have died? That's why Paul says, "We don't want you to be uninformed..." It's stronger in some other translations where he says, "I don't want you to be ignorant concerning those who have died."

If they died in Christ, guess what? They are going to rise first, in the bodily resurrection. "And then we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." Be encouraged. Be encouraged.

How encouraging is that? Especially, for those of us who have lost loved one. I think about my daughter, Noelle. I cannot wait for her to rise first and be given her new body, her glorified body. She put off the diseased body that took her life on this earth.



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But she's going to be raised again and given her new body first! And then I'm going to get to see her again, in the air. Can't wait. That really encourages me. That really comforts me.

My mom, same thing. 1995, she died in my arms and it was really intense. It was like the Lord knew that I needed for this to happen this way. So, she's in a coma, I'm holding her hand and I'm reading out of the Psalms. And all of a sudden, the machine goes, "beep, beep...", I hate that thing.

All of a sudden it went beeeeeep [flat lined] And her hands lifted up and her eyes opened up as if to be ushered into the presence of the Lord. In her spirit, not her body. "To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord."

That was 1995. Here we are in the year, 2020. Who would have ever "thunk"? I know "thunk" is not a word, don't email me. Who would have ever imagined? 2020, and it is so encouraging to me to know that my mom is going to get her new body. I hope my dad, too.

I don't know for sure. That was in 1994. Then I think about and you'll forgive me I don't want a wax emotional here but I think about all of those that were a part of this precious and amazing church fellowship who went home to be with the Lord. We're going to see them again, too. They're going to rise first. How encouraging is that?

You might be here today or watching online and going through a very, very difficult trial. A very painful trial. It's so intense for you that there are days that you think, "There's is not way I'm going to get through this." "There's no way I'm ever going to know joy on the other side of this."

One of the things I'm learning is that the enemy will always try to convince you that it's worse than it really is. Or that it will last longer than it really will. You will get through it because God's going to get you through it. Yeah, but, Pastor, this is really hard. This is really painful; This is really difficult. I don't know how I'm going to get through it.

You will. You'll see. You just wait on the Lord. I think about Psalm 27:13-14 where David so passionately, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, writes that he had almost lost heart. He had almost given up. He had almost thrown in the towel, "I'm not going to make it through this!"



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And then he says, "I would have lost heart had it not been, for my confidence remaining in the Lord. That I was to wait on the Lord, be strong and courageous and wait for the Lord. Because I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Do you know what he was saying? This side of heaven, I'm going to see God's goodness, even in this as hard as it is.

I mean, it's bad. But God, as only he can, can take whatever is bad and he can work it for good. Only he can do that. You will get through it. You be encouraged. Be courageous. Be strong and wait for the Lord. I think about what Jesus said in John's Gospel chapter 16:33. One of my favorite verses, along with all the other verses, in the Gospel of John.

He says, "In this world you will have tribulation, trials." Oh, I wish he would have not said it that way. I wish he would have said it like this, "In this world there's a good chance that you might, possibly, have some difficulty." That's much better, much more plausible and palatable.

No, he doesn't say that. He says, "You will". Guaranteed. You will have tribulation, trials, difficulty, pain, sorrow, grief. But! Cheer up. Be encouraged. Why? Because I have overcome the world.

If you hear nothing else that I say in closing, hear this today. No matter how bad it is? It can never change how good God always is. He will bring good and ultimately, in the end the suffering of this world? Is not even worthy to be compared with the glory that awaits! Can you imagine? It's unfathomable.

Paul even struggles and virtually says, "It would be criminal to try to even describe what awaits." The glory that awaits! I mean, we get a glimpse in the Book of Revelation. There's no more sorrow. There's no more death - that alone! There's no more night. There's no more pain.

I think about those that live daily in chronic and consistent pain, debilitating pain. In heaven? No more pain. No more cockroaches either. I just wanted to throw that in there. Maybe they will be but they'll be glorified. Anyway, I don't know why I brought that up. You know how we always say that when we get to heaven, we want to ask God? I'm going to God, "Why did you make mosquitoes?" I don't know.

Be encouraged. Not much longer. Hold on. He's coming.



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Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you. Lord, I thank you for this truth, this promise, this Word.

Lord, I pray for anyone here today, who is really struggling and going through a difficult time that you would just strengthen and encourage their hearts with the good news. The Gospel: That you came the first time, you were crucified, you were buried, and you rose again from the dead. And that you're coming back again, soon and very soon.

So, Lord, thank you. Come quickly. In Jesus name.
Amen