

"WAKE UP AND BUILD UP"

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

Theme: Knowing that Jesus is coming ought to stimulate us to righteous living.

Introduction:

I. THE INVINCIBILITY OF BEING LIGHT - 5:4-5A

A. The Assurances of Salvation - v. 4

1. Paul immediately contrasts the believer with the unbeliever upon whom the *"day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night"* during which the unbeliever will be oblivious.
2. He assures them *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness ..."*
 - a) *"darkness"* [σκότος] - describes that state of being in which the lost are morally corrupted and intellectually blinded to the truth - **John 3:19-20; Ephesians 4:17-18; 6:12.**
 - b) *"brethren"* [ἀδελφός] - contrasts those who *"are not in darkness"* because we have been delivered by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ - cp. **Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13.**
3. This contrast assures us that our "fate" is not the fate of the godless - we are not oblivious to the future that awaits both the godly and the ungodly.
4. The reason *"that day"* will not *"overtake you like a thief ..."* is because prior to that day, the church will be raptured - as Paul assures us in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**
5. Again, he is assuring them that they don't have to fret being caught up in the day of the Lord - they thought they had missed the rapture and were entering the "day of the Lord" - cp. **1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 3:10.**

B. The Attributes in Salvation - 5A

1. Again, the reason is given to us why they will not suffer in the "day of the Lord" - *"... for you are all sons of light and sons of day."*
2. The idea of being *"sons of ..."* something refers to the nature one possesses.
3. Hence, Jesus being the *"Son of God"* indicates that He possesses the very nature of God, and in His case, God very God - cp. **Romans 1:4; 2**

Corinthians 1:19.

4. In other cases, when a person reflects the nature of another, the phrase “*son of ...*” is used to emphasize it - cp. **Matthew 13:38; Mark 3:17; Acts 4:36.**
5. Given that we are “*sons of light*” indicates that righteousness characterizes them as opposed to “darkness” - cp. **John 12:36; 1 Peter 2:9.**
6. Our lives are no longer dominated by sin, corruption, and blindness - cp. **Ephesians 5:8-14.**
7. Being “*sons of day*” is a reinforcement of the nature - “*light*” belongs to “*day*” even as “*darkness*” belongs to “*night.*” - cp. **Romans 13:13.**
8. Because these things are true of the believer - a clear demonstration of contrast to those who are unsaved - we are assured that we will not enter the “day of the Lord” - it will not overtake us!

II. THE INCUMBENCY OF BEING LIGHT - 5:5B-8

A. Maintain a Contrast to the Unsaved - vv. 5B-6

1. Lest we believe that godliness is something that automatically happens, we are admonished to assume responsibility for the demonstration of who we are in Christ Jesus.
2. He declares our identity in Christ with the opposite emphasis - “*We are not of night nor of darkness.*”
3. Clearly, the state of being wherein people are oblivious to the impending judgment of God is what being “*of night*” refers to - cp. **Romans 13:11-14.**
4. Our lives are lived in contrast with “*night*” and “*darkness*” - cp. **1 John 1:5-7.**
5. Paul emphasizes these truths by saying: “*So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.*”
 - a) “*alert*” [γρηγορέω] - “awake,” “watchful,” - in a constant state of readiness” - specifically to the certainty of Jesus coming.
 - b) “*sober*” [νήφω] - “free from excess, passion, or confusion” - clear-headed and self-controlled.
6. When a person is living in light of the imminent return of Christ, he will

conduct his life in a way that demonstrates his expectation – cp. **2 Peter 3:13-14**.

B. Manifest the Character of the Saved - vv. 7-8

1. He continues to emphasize our responsibility or the incumbency of being born again produces – *“For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.”*
2. These are the contrasts to those who are “alert” and “sober” – and that ought never characterize our lives.
3. Rather, *“since we are of the day, let us be sober ...”* – a condition particularly required of a soldier:
 - a) *“... having put on the breastplate of faith and love ...”* – that which covers the vital organs of a man – often referred to as one’s heart or “seat of emotions”
 - (1) *“faith”* [πίστις] – a reference to how trust in God’s power and promises provides assurance to those who would otherwise be fretful of what they were experiencing and the fears it produces.
 - (2) *“love”* [ἀγάπη] – a reference to how heartfelt devotion to the Lord and willingness to sacrifice for him provides the affection needed to remain true and faithful even in times of distress, temptation, and peril.
 - b) *“... and as a helmet, the hope of salvation”* – that which covers the brain or the thoughts of the believer – emphasizing how *“hope”* [ἐλπίς] – enables the believer to remain confident in the fulfillment of God’s plan – regardless of how dark things may seem, the prospect of God fulfilling His promises are certain.
4. Let us not be lured into intoxication by our circumstances but remain confident that God will do as He says and our *“salvation”* is coming – **Luke 21:34-36**.

III. THE IMMUNITY IN BEING LIGHT - 5:9-11

A. The Guarantee of Grace - vv. 9-10

1. In reinforcement of our faith, love, and hope, Paul provides the guarantee of God fulfilling His promises – *“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

2. Believers will not experience the *“wrath”* that those who are of the night and commit the deeds of darkness are facing.
3. *“wrath”* [ὀργή] - refers to the settled decision of God to execute His justice against all that had opposed Him - not a fitful outburst, but a settled, decisive, and planned exercise of the divine right to avenge Himself against sin and those who embrace it instead of Him.
4. This *“wrath”* includes the planned destruction of those opposing Him in “the day of the Lord” - something that believers will not know because our future is guaranteed through the rapture of the Church.
5. Our “destiny” is contrasted to the wicked’s - *“... but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
6. “salvation” here refers specifically to the final aspect - glorification (justification and sanctification being the earlier aspects of salvation already gained and consummated by glorification) - cp. **Romans 8:28-30**.
7. That which guarantees this for us is the work of Christ - *“... who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.”*
8. *“asleep”* [καθεύδω] - takes us back not to those who are of the night, but to those who are dead in Christ - cp. **John 11:25-26**.
9. *“We will live together with Him”* - because He will return and take us to be with Him before the “day of the Lord” begins - **John 14:1-3**.

B. The Guidance in Grace - v. 11

1. What difference ought these truths make in our lives?
2. Paul states: *“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”*
3. They are to enable the anxieties that their fear that the “day of the Lord” had come upon them to bring comfort and the motivation for holy living to increase.
4. The encouragement to *“comfort [encourage] one another”* is the purpose for his explanation of the rapture of the church - and the conclusion of his assurances that they will not face the “day of the Lord” here.

Knowing that Jesus is coming ought to stimulate us to righteous living.