

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Main Idea—Jesus' second coming still matters.

Main Application—Jesus' second coming still matters because it reveals the distinction between Christians and non-Christians.

Main Reflection—How is your Christian life distinct from the life of those of the world?

Outline:

- (1) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- (2) 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10
- (3) 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Introduction

Turn in your copy of God's Word to 1 Thessalonians (page 927 in the Pew Bible).

We are in Week 9 of our sermon series through Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.

- **Background**
 - This NT book is actually a letter written by the Apostle Paul, along with Silvanus and Timothy, to the church at Thessalonica (in northern Greece), which Paul founded during the second of his three missionary journeys.
- We are going to be in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, where we will see a **main idea** that: **Jesus' second coming still matters.**

With this in mind, let's read our main passage.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

Foundation

Outline:

- (1) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- (2) 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10
- (3) 1 Thessalonians 5:11

(1) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

- Paul continues with His instruction concerning the second coming of Jesus.
- In these three verses, Paul reminds the church of the mystery concerning the second coming of Jesus.
- (a) Paul says he doesn't need to write and instruct them concerning the time and season when Jesus will return because it is unknown and "will come like a thief in the night."
 - As we learned last Sunday, the 1st Century Christians were looking for Jesus to come back in their day, as we are continuing to look for Jesus to return in our days.
 - They may have been wondering, "Why has Jesus not come back? Have we missed something or do we need to specifically be looking for something?"
 - Paul reminds them what Jesus taught about His return in the gospel from Matthew 24:43-44—"43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
 - A thief comes when people least expect it and when it is unknown to them, AND Jesus will return in this way as well.
 - Instead of focusing on times and seasons, signs and prophecies, they needed to live as if Jesus could come at anytime and live in light of the fact that Jesus could come at anytime.
 - Now, Jesus provides us with instructions about things that will happen and to look for before He returns, BUT These aren't to be used as a crutch and justification for not living in light of Jesus' return.
 - None of us are guaranteed tomorrow, whether that be death or Jesus' return.

- Church Family, don't wait to live to the fullest for Jesus because it could be too late, and when it is too late, what have you missed out on?
- (b) Also, Jesus' delay in returning is God's longsuffering toward sinners.
 - Don't take this for granted because, as we discussed this past Wednesday, God is longsuffering but this will eventually run out, and when this happens, those who have rejected God will not experience His grace and love BUT His judgement and wrath.
 - How often do we take things for granted and then when we actually get around to them it is too late?
 - III—Home Alone 2
 - One of my family's favorite Christmas movies is Home Alone 1 and 2.
 - Home Alone 2 has a scene with Kevin McAlisster and the Pigeon Lady in the attic of the music hall.
 - Kevin tells the story about his roller blades and how he didn't wear them and then by the time he did he couldn't because he outgrew them.
- (c) "the day of the Lord."
 - This is common language and a common theme found in OT prophecies (Amos, Isaiah, Joel, Obadiah, Jeremiah, Malachi).
 - When used in these contexts, it referred to the time when God would step in and intercede to bring judgement and punishment on the wicked AND bring salvation for His people.
 - The day of the Lord was a day of rejoicing for God's people and a day of terror for those who were not.
 - It is with this understanding that Paul uses this language in connection with Jesus' second coming.
 - Like the day of the Lord in the OT, Jesus's second coming is when God the Son will step

in and intercede to bring judgement and punishment on the wicked and salvation for His people.

- Jesus has already brought spiritual salvation through His death and resurrection, so through His second coming Christians will experience God's salvific plan through Jesus in its fullness as they get to be with Jesus in His presence forevermore.
- Church Family, we don't know when Jesus will return, so let us live each day in light that Jesus could return at anytime, and we want to be found in faithfulness to Jesus if He returns OR if He calls us home.
- Friends who are not Christians, we don't know when Jesus will return, so why not turn to Him today because He could return at anytime, and you don't want to be found rejecting Him if He returns or if He calls you to judgement in death.

From 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, as well as what we are going to cover in our application that involves 5:4-11, we see a **main idea** that: **Jesus' second coming still matters.**

Application

How do we apply this passage to our lives?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10
- **Main Application—Jesus' second coming still matters because it reveals the distinction between Christians and non-Christians.**

(2) 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10

- Paul ends 5:3 talking about those who are not Christians and now transitions to talking about those who are Christians.
- Church Family, before we dive in to these seven verses, let us see and be challenged by a biblical theme found throughout these verses: God's people are distinct from those who are not His people.

- And this distinction is not that Christians don't get to sleep in on Sundays.
- What does Paul want the Thessalonians church to know about being a Christian, especially within the context of Jesus' second coming.
- (1) Children of light and day.
 - To be a Christian and one of God's people means the Thessalonians church were children of the light and of the day.
 - Paul expounds upon this within these seven verses, and from this we see four application takeaways on what it means to be a Christian, especially within the context of Jesus' second coming.
 - (1) Being children of light and day means not being children of darkness and night—5:4-5.
 - Paul wants the Thessalonian church to know that being a Christian means they are no longer who they were once and associated with what they once were.
 - Within the Bible, light and day are associated with goodness and God WHILE darkness and night are associated with evil and opposition to God.
 - Simplify:
 - Children of light and day = God
 - Children of darkness and night = world
 - Paul makes it very clear in 5:4-5 that being children of light and day means that they are not children of the darkness and night, AND vice versa . . . There is a distinction.
 - To be one is to not be the other.
 - And since the Thessalonian church were children of the light and day, they would not be surprised by Jesus' second coming like those who were children of the darkness and night.
 - Jesus' second coming is still unknown to them, but not unwelcomed.

- And while the time will surprise them, the event won't.
- They know what it will mean and what it will bring, and they are ready . . .
“Come, Lord Jesus, Come.”
- III—Guests.
 - Think about guests coming to your house.
 - It is different when someone just shows up that you weren't expecting VS. someone surprising you by the time they show up when you already knew they were coming.
- Church Family, what it means to be a Christian is to be a child of light and day and no longer be a child of darkness and night, and while the time of Jesus' second coming will be unknown, it will not be unwelcomed.
- (2) Being children of light and day means not being sleepy or inebriated but awake and sober—5:6-8.
 - Paul wants the Thessalonian church to know that being a Christian means that you are awake, alert, sober minded, thinking clearly, know what is going on, make sound and wise and biblical decisions, on guard, ready.
 - These are things characteristic of the light and done during the day.
 - To be asleep, unaware, irrational, distracted, unprepared, make foolish and poor and unbiblical decisions, careless . . . are not what it means to be a Christian but to be of the world.
 - These are things characteristic of the dark and done during the night.
 - Who you truly are will be revealed by your characteristics and your actions.

- Being awake and sober means putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of hope.
 - Faith, love, and hope.
 - The triad of vital Christian characteristics.
 - Throughout the NT, we see these three characteristics listed together and used to define what it means to be a true and faithful Christian.
 - We must realize, though, that neither of these three we can obtain on our own because they are only found in Jesus and they are only available to us through our relationship with Jesus and the transformation He provides.
 - Faith, love, and hope are not only vital for Christians as it comes to living for Jesus and as children of light and day, but also vital for our persevering in our faith, whether that leads to Jesus' return or Jesus' calling us home through death.
 - Breastplate and helmet.
 - A common metaphor for Paul throughout his letters is comparing Christians to soldiers, and thus he uses soldier imagery and terminology, like he does here with saying the church needs to put on the "breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation."
 - I also appreciate the explanation from the ESV Study Bible.

- Once they were children of darkness and night, with condemnation as their present reality and future hopelessness.
 - The Bible says that sin leads to death AND that sin leads to condemnation and the wrath of God.
 - The allure and enticement of sin never produces the results we hope for.
 - Ill—workout equipment fads.
 - There have been workout equipment fads that have promised results by doing all the work for you.
 - Reality, you are not going to look like the people in the commercials, much less like Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, by only using those products, not matter how alluring and enticing they may seem.
 - Famous bodybuilder and 8x Mr. Olympia winner Ronnie Coleman is known for saying, “Everybody wants to be a bodybuilder but nobody wants to lift heavy weights.”
 - We can rephrase it as so, “Everybody of the world wants joy and salvation but nobody of the world wants Jesus.”
 - The allure and enticement of sin never produces the results we hope for.
 - Living as children of darkness and night only leads to one result: the wrath of God.
 - Don’t fall for the lie of the evil one that he told Eve in the Garden, “Did God really say . . .”

- Yes, God has really said AND the Bible really says and is true, not matter what the evil one and the world might suggest otherwise.
- However, living as children of light and day is counter because it provides salvation as the present reality and future hope.
 - The Bible says that Jesus leads to life and that Jesus leads to the salvation and redemption of God.
 - And the salvation and redemption of God found through Jesus is in the here and now, the future, and for all eternity.
 - Jesus ALWAYS produces the results we hope for.
- Paul yet again makes it clear in 5:9 that being children of light and day means they are not children of darkness and night, and vice versa . . . There is a distinction.
- And since the Thessalonian church were children of light and day, they would be ready and welcoming and rejoicing at Jesus' second coming because it brings salvation and not wrath.
- Church Family, what it means to be a Christian is to be a child of light and day and experience salvation at Jesus' second coming.
- (4) Being children of light and day means not being separated from Jesus but united with Him—5:10.

- Paul wants the Thessalonian church to know that being a Christian means that they not only get salvation but also the Savior.
 - The Bible says that while on Earth we have God the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives us to indwell within us, and then one day while in Heaven we will have the presence of Jesus face-to-face.
 - What makes Heaven so amazing and awesome is not just the streets of gold and the lack of sorrow and evil and pain and goodbyes and the reuniting with saints gone before, BUT that along with these, there is Jesus and His presence and there always will be.
 - Permanent union with our Creator and permanent union with joy, love, peace, and grace.
 - Children of darkness and light have no presence of Jesus in their lives now and one day will have no presence of Jesus for all eternity, with no hope of ever getting it.
 - What makes Hell so terrifying and awful is not the weeping and mourning and torment and agony, BUT that along with all of this, there is no presence of Jesus and there never will be.
 - Permanent separation from the Creator AND permanent separation from joy, love, peace, hope, and grace.
- Paul concludes and still makes clear in 5:10 that being children of light and day means that they are not children of darkness and night, and vice versa . . . There is a distinction.

- And since the Thessalonians church were children of light and day, Jesus' second coming was a welcomed and long-awaited event because they get to experience what their hearts and souls have yearned for and what they were created for: to live with Jesus in His presence.
- Church Family, what it means to be a Christian is to be a child of light and day who is destined to live with Jesus for all eternity, whether He returns to get us or whether He calls us home in death.

(3) 1 Thessalonians 5:11

- What was the Thessalonian church, and what are we today, to do with this section of instruction from Paul in 5:1-10?
 - We are to be encouraged by it, and we are to encourage and build up our fellow brothers and sisters with it.
 - We need Jesus, we need His word, and we need our fellow brothers and sisters of the light and day.
 - Be encouraged and be an encouragement.

Challenge/Conclusion

Friends, Jesus' second coming still matters, especially as it reveals the distinction of Christians as being children of the light and day, being awake and sober, being destined for salvation, and being with Jesus now and forevermore.

As we conclude this morning, during our invitation time and your quiet time this week with God, I want us to pray and ponder this reflection question:

- Main Reflection—How is your Christian life distinct from the life of those of the world?
 - Be encouraged by the ways that it is.
 - Be challenged by the way that it isn't.