

Child of the Day, Be Ready

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bible with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter number 5. I hope you got your handout. It's my first time preaching with a handout.

I'm trying to measure up to the great Bo Carpenter. If an angel came to you and told you that an armed robber would be breaking into your house this evening, would you sleep?

And yet the Bible tells us that something or someone far more dangerous than an armed robber is coming and many of us are asleep and we're not ready for him to come.

We make the mistake of thinking that the way things are right now is the way that they will continue to be. And that's a costly mistake. It's a costly mistake. We've been warned about it many times in the scriptures.

And this time that we are living in is quickly coming to an end and the end will not be pleasant. The end will not be pleasant.

[1 : 11] The end will be painful and violent and deadly for many people. That end will bring judgment and wrath and punishment. The king is coming and he's going to judge what you have done with your life.

The king is coming and he's going to judge you for what you have done with your life, whether you're ready for him or not. So you must make yourself ready for the day of the Lord.

You must make yourself ready for the day of the Lord. Let's read 1 Thessalonians 5 verse number 1 and 2. It says, But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this evening.

We thank you for your word. That you've not left us in the dark. That you've told us about your plan. You've told us about what you're going to do.

[2 : 11] And you've told us how we can be ready for it. So, Lord, I ask that you would help us to look at ourselves and at your word. To examine our lives. And determine whether or not we are ready for you to come back.

Whether or not we are ready for this world to end. And for this time that you've given us to come to a close. Lord, help us to serve you with what we have. Bless us. And be with us.

I ask all these things. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. If you were here last week, you heard about the rapture. And today we're going to be talking about something that could be confused.

You know, at the end times, a lot of things are happening at once. And sometimes the Bible is talking about them kind of all at the same time. But Paul, as he's writing to the Thessalonians, he's told them about the rapture.

And now he's telling them about what will come next. And here in the verse, and throughout much of Scripture, it's referred to as the day of the Lord.

[3 : 12] The day of the Lord. This is a term that's used almost throughout the whole Bible. Especially in the prophets. And it continues on into the New Testament. As we learn that the Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ.

But that day is coming. It's coming quickly. And people aren't going to expect it. People aren't going to expect it. So the rapture is going to happen.

And then God is going to finally pour out His wrath on the world and punish them for their sins. And that's what he's telling the Thessalonians about here.

And the Thessalonians, after they had heard about what Paul said in chapter number 4 about Jesus coming back and rapturing and the church going to meet Him in the air and the dead in Christ rising up in the air, they were wondering, and they had a natural question, and they said, Well, when is that going to happen?

And Paul, he anticipated their question. So he said, About the times and the seasons. About the when. You don't really need to know. He said, But at the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.

[4 : 22] The day is going to be a day of punishment, but you don't need to know when it is going to happen to be ready for it. We need to be ready. The whole passage is about being ready.

And when we're thinking about the thief breaking in, you would really like to know exactly when He's coming, because then you can really be ready. But the Bible tells us that we don't have to know the date.

We don't have to know exactly when it's going to happen to make ourselves ready for the Lord to come back and the Lord to set everything right. The when is not very important. He says, For you yourselves, you know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

When a thief comes, He doesn't tell you when He's coming. He doesn't tell you what He's going to do. He doesn't leave a bill on your door saying, At this time, at this date, I'm going to be coming in.

I'm going to be taking this much of your stuff and I'm going to do all these things. He comes suddenly and He comes unexpectedly. And the coming of the Lord will be sudden and He's going to take the world by surprise.

[5 : 30] Am I not on? It's not on? Oh, man. Wow. What color does my light need to be?

The button on the top. We may have been able to hear you pretty good from here. We're here in Nigeria. That's right. Okay. Everything's good on this side. Yeah, Josh.

Everything's good on this side. Good grief. In Nigeria, we would say I'm a bushman and I'm not familiar with these fancy things. When God comes, people aren't going to expect Him.

They're not going to be ready for it. The whole world's not going to be ready for it. And look what the verse says in verse number 3. It says, For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

The world is going to be saying everything's fine. Everything that we're doing is okay. There's peace and safety.

[6 : 44] This was a common saying at the time, even when you would greet someone. They'll be saying peace and safety. And let me warn you about this. Saying that everything's okay.

Saying that sin's not a problem. Saying that there's no punishment. Is a common characteristic of a false prophet. And if you find yourself listening to, and if you find yourself in your own preaching, in your own witnessing, saying everything's going to be okay, you're not in very good company.

Think back to the second Chronicles when Jehoshaphat is going to make an alliance with the king Ahab. They're going to fight the Syrians. And they're going to fight the Syrians. And Jehoshaphat, he loves the Lord.

And so he says, is there someone, a prophet of God, that can tell us what's going to happen? And Ahab gets all his prophets, hundreds of prophets, and they're saying, everything's going to be great. You're going to go, and you're going to be very successful.

And Jehoshaphat, because he knows the Lord, he knows these guys aren't good prophets. So he says, can you bring one, a prophet of the Lord, a prophet of the one true God? And Ahab says, there's this guy, and his name is Micaiah, and he always prophesies badly against me.

[7 : 55] I can't stand him. So he says, but Jehoshaphat says, no, we've got to hear from the Lord. So they bring the guy out of prison. He's been in prison. Ahab hates him so much. He says, Micaiah, we want to go fight these people.

Is God going to be with us? And Micaiah, he knows what Ahab wants to hear. He seems like a funny guy. He says, yes, everything's going to be perfect and great. And Ahab knows him, so he says, just tell me the truth. And he says, if you come back, if you're whole, if you're alive, the Lord hasn't prophesied by me.

And he throws him in jail. The world was saying, everything's fine. The world says that sin's a problem. They say, peace and safety. Everything's going to be okay.

Jesus, He's going to forgive it all. And if you come to Him now, there's this space of grace, there's this time to come to Him. But it's not always going to be that way.

They're going to say, peace and safety, everything's okay. But then, sudden destruction. Sudden destruction. Where does that destruction come from? It comes from Him.

[9 : 02] It comes from the one, He's going to be alright. He's going to forgive it all. Well, the destruction comes from Him. And the lost will not possibly be able to escape the wrath of God.

Look at the end of verse number 3. It says, As travail upon a woman with child, and the word, it says, they shall not escape. The wording there is very strong.

It's saying, there is no possible way for them to escape the destruction that's coming from God. So the world's not ready. They're going to say, everything's fine.

Everything's alright. Everything's going to continue on the way it always has. There's going to be no payment for sin. Sin's fine. But that's not true. That's not true at all.

Well, the day of the Lord, we hear the day of the Lord and that sounds great. But the day of the Lord is a time of great and terrible punishment. In fact, in the book of Amos, chapter 5 and verse number 18, it's incredible what the Bible says.

[10 : 10] It says, Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light.

As if a man did flee from a lion and as he's running from the lion, a bear met him. Or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light?

Even very dark and no brightness in it. We hear the day of the Lord and think, wow, that's going to be great. We love Jesus and we're ready for Him to come. But for most people, it's going to be a terrible time.

It's going to be the worst possible thing that could happen. The day of the Lord is coming. There's all kinds of people that aren't ready for it. But if you're not careful, you won't be ready for it.

The lost won't be able to escape. And we hear, you know, the day of the Lord is coming and we say, I'm saved and so I'm going to go to heaven and everything's going to be alright. Let's look at a few of these verses.

[11 : 18] So, first of all, we need to understand what's going to happen. The second thing is we need to be ready for what's going to happen. We have to understand what's coming and then we need to be ready for what's coming. Let's look at verse number 4.

Verse number 4 says, But you, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. You are children of the light and the children of the day.

We are not of the night nor of darkness. So, Jesus' coming is coming like a thief. He's coming like a thief in the night. This is a simile. It's a comparison that's used all throughout the Bible for God's coming.

The thief comes in the night. But the thing about saved people is we don't live in the night. And so His coming should not surprise us.

And you say, well, I'm saved and so I'm ready. But that's not an assumption that the Bible makes. That's not an assumption the Bible makes.

[12 : 19] We assume I'm saved and so I'm ready for that day. But the Bible doesn't assume that. This verse says there, that day, it shouldn't take you by surprise. If it shouldn't take you by surprise, does that mean that it's possible that it could?

He's saying, Jesus is coming back. Don't let it take you by surprise. He says, You, brethren, you're not in darkness. He's coming like a thief in the night. But in order to be ready for Him, we can't live in the night.

So believer, we don't live in the night. And the night, there's this, unless we understand the terms that the Bible is using right here, we're going to miss it. There's a lot in this passage, but in this comparison that He's making, He's using a lot of different words.

Night, darkness, day, light. The night. When you live in the night, it's just, you have no concern. It's complete unconcerned for God or for the truth.

The night is wherever there is quiet, unconcerned for God or the truth. Most people are content living the life they have and not allowing God into it at all.

[13 : 26] There's no concern for what God has to say. There's no concern for the truth. And if we're not careful, even though we live in the day, even though we don't belong to the night, even though we don't belong to darkness, darkness, we could live as if we're in the night.

Sleep is a worldly apathy towards spiritual things. A worldly apathy towards spiritual things. So the world is just going on throughout its business.

It's everything that's going on in the world. That's the only thing that they care about. That's the only thing they care about. They're sleeping in the night. It's great. Sleep's great. It's a great time to sleep in the night.

But we don't live in the night and we don't belong to the darkness, but we can still be asleep. We don't live in the night, but we can still be unaware of and unconcerned with what God is doing.

We can be unaware of and unconcerned with what God is doing. You will only be ready if you make yourself ready. You will only be ready for the return of the Lord if you make yourself ready.

[14 : 34] You may assume, like we've already said, that if you're saved, you're automatically ready for Christ's return. But when we're talking about being ready for Christ's return, what is it that the Bible means?

When we talk about being ready for Jesus to come back, because we know we can't know exactly when. The Bible says no one knows the hour or the day when He's coming back. So what does it mean to be ready for Jesus to come back?

What does it mean that we should not allow ourselves to be caught like a thief in the night when we don't know exactly which day He's going to come? The Bible says, the other passages of the Scripture shed some light on this topic.

First of all, we need to understand that even as Christians, our works on this earth and how we use our life for God is going to be judged by Christ.

Go to 1 Corinthians 3, verse 13 through 15. 1 Corinthians 3, 13 through 15. The Bible says, every man's work shall be made manifest.

[15 : 39] For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

But if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. The Bible clearly teaches that a believer will not be judged for their sin.

Your sins are completely forgiven in Jesus' work on the cross. You can never be judged for them because all the punishment and all the wrath was poured on Jesus Christ. You won't be tried for those again.

But the Bible does teach that when Jesus comes, he'll bring his reward with him. When Jesus comes, he's going to judge his servants according to what they used this gift of life to do.

And he says he's going to try our life like fire. And the works that we did, as they're tried, the things that were done for ourselves, that were done for the things of this world, they're like, everything that's going to be burned up.

[16 : 52] And as he's burning through our lives, the only things that are going to be left is what we did for him. But it's possible that we could live this life in such a way that after he's burned through everything and he's exposed everything and it's all made manifest before him, there's nothing left.

That this, however many years, 70, 60, 50 years that he blessed me with to serve him, however long it is, I have nothing to show for it when he comes back.

That when he comes back, that when I stand before him and he judges my life and how I served him, I've got nothing. And when I have nothing, how am I going to feel about that?

You know, the Bible says that some Christians will be ashamed it is coming. 1 John 2, 28, the Bible says, and now little children, abide in him.

Who are children? Who are the children of God? Who can abide in Jesus Christ? Only save people. That when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

[18 : 08] When he burns through my life and then there's nothing left, how am I going to feel about that? I'll be ashamed that I won't be ready for Jesus to come back. That I was not ready, that he came at a time when I wasn't ready for him to come.

This truth of Jesus Christ coming, the day of the Lord happening, and him setting up his kingdom, if we realize that what we do in this life matters, it will help us to understand much that the Bible has to say about Christ and his kingdom.

Maybe you read some of the parables and the gospels and you said, that doesn't quite make sense. I don't understand all the things that are going on here. But we understand what he has to say about his kingdom. It opens up a lot of those things.

But if you're not careful, you will not be ready. Believer, Christian, what you do matters.

You've been given this space, this time. And if you don't use it, you'll have nothing. If you don't use it correctly, you'll have nothing. So you need to be ready.

[19 : 16] So how do we get ready? How do we get ready for the Lord to come back? Good thing this passage doesn't leave us in the dark. In order for us to be ready, we have to wake up to the truth and be sober.

In verse 6 through 11. Let's read verse number 6. It says, Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

For they that sleep, sleep in the night. And they that be drunken are drunk in the night. So, this comparison of the Christian life and of Jesus' coming to night to night and dark continues.

And the Bible says that you and I, we're not even in the night. It's broad daylight. It makes sense for lost people to be asleep to the truth. They're living in nighttime.

That's when you sleep. It makes sense for lost people to be drunken, to not be concerned with the truth, to just live life for everything that this life has to offer, for all the pleasures that are here.

[20 : 21] It makes sense. They're living in the night. That's when you get drunk. That's when you sleep. What do you think about someone that's drunk at noon? What do you think about someone that sleeps through the day?

You and I can sleep. We can be drunk. We can be unaware of the truth. We can live as if He's not coming back. It's possible. All kinds of Christians are doing it. He says, those that sleep, they sleep in the night.

And when they're drunken, they're drunk in the night. But we don't live in the night. That's not us. So wake up and sober up. Get ready. He's coming. And He's coming quickly.

So wake up and stop sleeping. Wake up and stop sleeping. When we live like a lost person, we're asleep when we know the thief is coming.

I know he's coming tonight. The thief is coming from my house. He's armed. He's dangerous. And he wants everything that I have. And I'm sleeping. And my alarm's not on. And that's what you and I are doing.

[21 : 30] When we live as if he's not coming back. We're asleep when the thief is coming. When there's danger right at the door. The Bible says that we can get so weighed down by this life and everything that's in this life that you aren't prepared for the day of the Lord.

Go with me to Luke 21 verse 34 through 36. These verses, they really struck me. I'm sure I've read them dozens of times. but maybe because of some of the language and because I didn't take time, I didn't realize exactly what he's saying.

But in Luke 21 verse 34, the Bible says, take heed to yourselves. Watch yourself. Be careful with yourself. Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life so that day come upon you unawares.

What's he saying there? The word, we don't use those words anymore. Surfeiting. It's like you're lit, it's a drunken revelry. You're just living like tonight's the night. It's the only night.

Get what you can tonight. And drunkenness. And then it says the cares of this life, everything that's going on in this world, that's the job, the money, the family, even the good things.

[22 : 54] All those things. My heart can get overcharged. That means overburdened. Those things can weigh me down so much that I'm not ready for Jesus to come back.

The affairs, the concerns, the worries, the anxieties of this life can weigh my heart down so much I'm not ready for Jesus to come back and He's going to catch me sleeping. This is a question to ask yourself.

Does my life make sense to someone who doesn't believe the Bible? Not the day-to-day things, not, you know, did I fill my gas tank up today because I was on empty.

Not that. I hope you're doing that. But, when I think about, when, if I told someone the goals of my life, what I want to accomplish, if I told someone how I measure success, if I told someone what I do with my money, if I told someone how I want to raise my children and what I want them to do with their life, if I told all those things to a lost person, someone who doesn't believe the Bible, would they say, yeah, that makes sense to me, I'd probably do the same thing in your position.

If that's true about you, you're asleep. If that's true about you, you're asleep. The lost people, they sleep.

[24 : 20] They're drunken. They don't care if He's coming back. They don't believe He's coming back. They make fun of Him. It's been all these years and He's not coming back, according to 2 Peter. They mock Him. You and I, we know He's coming.

We've been awakened by the Spirit. We know what the Bible has to say, but we live the same way. We know the thief's coming, but it doesn't matter. We don't have to make ready for Him.

Does my life make sense to someone who doesn't believe the Bible? Ask yourself that. Examine your life. So you need to be awake. Be awake to the truth.

Be sober. Be sober. Sober means, in the Bible, it means to be self-controlled. If this life is the only life, if this life is all that matters, if there's no eternal reward, if the only reward is the pleasures of sin, if the only reward is the pleasures of sin, it doesn't make sense to control yourself, discipline yourself, and not indulge your sinful desires.

So when I, as a believer, indulge my sinful desires, I'm living like someone who doesn't believe he's coming back and I'm asleep.

[25 : 36] I'm living like someone who doesn't believe he's coming back. We know that his coming, he's going to bring a reward. And that reward can be taken away. It can't be burnt up.

It can't be stolen. It doesn't rust. It doesn't corrupt. But when we indulge sin because of how pleasurable it is and how wonderful everything feels, we're saying the reward of Jesus is not as good as the reward of sin.

I would rather have this than that. To a sinful person, the sin is their reward. To the lost, the sin is their reward. So what do we do? What are we supposed to do?

How does this verse tell us to get ready? What are we supposed to do? Let's continue on. Verse number 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

We need to replace worldliness with faith, love, and hope. I need to believe he's coming back. I need to have faith in him. I need to love him and others, warning them, encouraging believers that he's coming back.

[26 : 49] And I need to have hope that I can endure this life because he's coming back. That this life, even though I suffer, even though I take loss, I have hope that it matters because Jesus is coming back.

Jesus is coming back. So wake up. Sober up. And the third and the last thing, how do I get ready? I encourage others. This should remind you of the end of chapter number 4.

The Bible says in verse number 9, For God has not, God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the good news. Even if you're not ready, you're not going to experience the wrath.

The day of the Lord that we read about in Amos where it's going to be so terrible, you won't be there for that. So we have hope. Look what verse 10 says. Who died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

I hope this sleep is not the same sleep that we've been talking about. It goes back to chapter number 4. Whether I'm alive or I'm dead in Christ, whether I've died and I'm waiting for him to come back, one day I will live with him.

[27 : 59] So what do I do? Verse number 11. Wherefore, comfort yourselves together and edify one another even as you also do. I've got this message.

Jesus is coming back. I need to comfort other believers. This word comfort is not just cheer up. I know life's bad, but it's okay. I need to encourage others to do the right thing.

I need to encourage and I need to strengthen the weary with hope. There are people who, they're getting tired. They say, I've been waiting for him. I've been dealing with all this junk in my life.

I'm suffering. We need to remind them that he is coming back and he has his reward. It seems like in 1 Thessalonians, based on what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, there are some people who hear about how he's coming back and they think, I'm just going to wait.

He's coming back so I don't need to do anything. And they weren't doing anything. They were busy bodies. They were just sitting around. They weren't accomplishing anything. They were being lazy. So we need to motivate the lazy with urgency.

[29 : 05] He's coming back. Your life matters. We can't just sit around and do anything. And then the last thing, we need to warn the lost while there's still time.

Because they can't escape. They can't escape when he comes. There's no way to get out of it. The only way is now. So comfort others and warn them, Jesus is coming back.

Your life matters. What you do in this life matters. So make yourself ready for his return. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day and for this warning to us and to the lost that you are coming back.

So God, help us to be ready to know what you're doing, to live this life like it matters, to serve you so that when you come, we will have something, not nothing. And we'll be able to hear you say, well done.

I thank you and I ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.