

- b. The light and darkness of which Paul speaks refers to the cosmic battle between God and the evil one. This armor is used in that battle.

Because we belong to the Day, all of our decisions regarding obedience to Jesus and love of neighbor are either military operations on behalf of our King, or are subversive to Jesus reign and in favor of darkness!

- ii. “Whether we are awake or asleep...” (10)

IV. What We are to Do with These Truths (11)

- A. Encourage one another and build each other up!

Paul wants this teaching to result in building one another up toward love and good deeds, not arguing about times and dates!

- B. We can be confident of Christ's Coming, but cannot predict it.

When we set out to do battle with deeds of faithful obedience and love on the side of God's kingdom, we will be ready. No need to fear.

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What theme is repeatedly emphasized in the New Testament in texts which speak about the 2nd Coming? *They call us to be _____.*
- Why do you think it is important for us not to divorce eschatology from the gospel which we proclaim?
- How might comparing *cryptic pregnancies vs. parents in waiting* show two different kinds of surprise at the Jesus' 2nd Coming?
- Discuss the meaning of the phrase “already/not-yet” in regard to Jesus' reign and the dangers of emphasizing one over the other.
- What are ways in which the world seduces people and tempts the church into thinking that we have peace and security apart from Jesus?
- How should the truth about “end-times” spur us on toward love and good deeds?

Dissident Disciples – Part 9

Ready or Not

Jerry Cisar — August 26, 2018

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Introduction

Paul tells us what we need to know about the Day of the Lord, why we don't need to fear that Day, and how we must prepare for it.

I. What We Need to Know About that Day (5:1-3)

- A. Paul has already covered this material with the Thessalonians.
 - i. How much is eschatology a part of our gospel presentation?
 - ii. What did Paul tell the Thessalonians about the Coming of the Lord on his visit?
 - a) That predicting times and dates is a futile exercise.
 - Acts 1:7
 - b) Jesus return will be unexpected ... like a thief.
 - 2 Peter 3:10
 - Matthew 24:42-44

Paul is reminding the Thessalonians that as believers they do not need to fear the Lord's coming, but they do need to be ready when He comes by living in that new day now!

- B. The truth of Jesus' coming confronts a lie of the world!
 - i. Rome promoted itself as provider of “peace” and “security.”
 - a) Monuments & literature.
 - b) The peace and security which Rome promises to give you is a myth.

- ii. Do governments or political parties promise peace and security today?

II. Why We Don't Have to Fear that Day (5:4-5)

- A. Not because of knowledge, but because of readiness!
 - i. They will not be surprised because they will be ready!
 - ii. How does Paul know they will be ready?
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 1:3

 - b) They have been living in light of that day (see 1:9-10).

 - c) This aligns with what Jesus said.
 - Matthew 24:42-44

We don't have the benefit of knowing what time the thief is coming; we have to be ready all the time! He is coming... ready or not!

- B. How does the fact that we are *of the Day* and *not the night* keep us from being surprised?
 - i. Cryptic pregnancies

 - ii. Parents in Waiting
 - a) 2 Corinthians 5:17

 - b) As children belonging to the future Day, we live in the light now!

III. How We Must Prepare for that Day (5:6-10)

- A. Be alert and sober! (6-7)
 - i. What is sleep?
 - ii. Who are “the others who are asleep”?
 - a) Matthew 25:5 To be “wise,” we have to have faith!

 - b) Awake
 - Matthew 24:42-43

If we are going to be ready, we must not find peace and security in the false sources of peace and security that the world offers.

- c) Today we must watch out for the enemy's attacks that play on our desire to be thought well of by the world.
 - Luke 6:26
 - 1 Peter 2:12

The church must not be addicted to winning in the court of public opinion for that is like being addicted to sleeping pills!

Eugene Peterson: “Crowds lie. The more people, the less truth. ... In crowds the truth is flattened to fit a slogan. Not only the truth spoken, but the truth that is lived is reduced and distorted by the crowd.”¹

- iii. What does it mean to be *sober*?
 - B. Putting on the Weapons of Our Warfare (8-10)!
 - i. How does Paul get from a day/night contrast to a military metaphor about battle armor?
 - a) Romans 13:12

¹ Quoted in Mark Sayers, *Disappearing Church: From Cultural Relevance to Gospel Resilience*, 116-117.