

**Focused on the Future**  
**Series: E-100 - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**  
**March 26, 2017 Pastor Bill Bump**

The books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians reference the return of Jesus more than the other letters of Paul.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Paul talks about what happens to believers who are still alive when Jesus returns.

Paul's instructions:

1. Avoid false hope.

*1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 <sup>1</sup> Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. <sup>2</sup> For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.*

Paul says the day of Jesus' return will come unexpectedly. Jesus made the same point to the disciples.

*Acts 1:6-7 <sup>6</sup> So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"*

*<sup>7</sup> He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know."*

The "day of the Lord's return" is going to be a day of intervention and is discussed much in the New Testament.

*2 Corinthians 1:13b-14 <sup>13</sup> I hope someday you will fully understand us, <sup>14</sup> even if you don't understand us now. Then on the day when the Lord Jesus returns, you will be proud of us in the same way we are proud of you.*

*Ephesians 4:30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

Philippians 1:6 *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

Paul says Jesus' return will come like a thief in the night, just as Jesus did.

Matthew 24:42-43 <sup>42</sup> *So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup> *Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into.*

Paul warns that if you're looking in the wrong place for peace and security, you're not going to find what you want.

## 2. Live a different way.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 <sup>4</sup> *But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief.* <sup>5</sup> *For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night.* <sup>6</sup> *So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.* <sup>7</sup> *Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk.* <sup>8</sup> *But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.*

Paul draws a contrast between those without faith who are in darkness and those with faith who are of the light.

Paul gives a picture of how they react to the reality that Jesus is going to return.

Christians should understand they are children of the light, knowing that Jesus is returning.

Acts 1:11 *"Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"*

Philippians 3:20 *But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.*

Hebrews 10:37 *For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.*

Paul implies that knowing this truth should prompt us to live as if we are going into battle and we need to get ready (verse 8).

3. Eagerly anticipate the day of Jesus' return.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 <sup>9</sup> *For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.* <sup>10</sup> *Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.* <sup>11</sup> *So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*

When Jesus returns, we who believe in Him are going to live with Him forever.

### Conclusion

For some, it may be hard to wait and plan when they don't know when something is coming.

Matthew 25:13 *So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.*

Once we're focused on Jesus' return as the object of our hope, we can live toward that day.

We can know something good is in our future.