

Paul implies that knowing this truth should prompt us to live as if we are going into battle and we need to get ready (See 1 Thessalonians 5:8 from **Page 2**).

3. Eagerly anticipate the day of Jesus' return.

READ 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 **Mark what stands out to you.**

⁹For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out His anger on us. ¹⁰Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when He returns, we can live with Him forever. ¹¹So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

REFLECT What does the above passage say about WHY God chose you – and what your response should be? _____

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

Conclusion

For some, it may be hard to wait & 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.

RESPOND (Application for this week) **WHAT** were the most significant scriptures for you this week? (Write them out and highlight key words or phrases.) _____

WHY are those scriptures *significant to you at this time in your life?*

HOW can you practically apply what God spoke to you about? (Give specifics/ action steps)

WHAT will be the time frame for your application?
(1) Start Date _____ (2) Progress Check Date(s) _____ (3) Finish Date _____

WHO I can ask to hold me accountable for my application: _____

Sermon-Based Devotional

Lawrence Free Methodist Church
(Based on a Sermon by Pastor Bill Bump on March 26th, 2017)

FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

Series: E-100 – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

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 – "How and when all this will happen" (v. 1) refers to the knowledge of what will happen in the future, specifically at the return of Christ. Efforts to determine the date of Christ's return are foolish. Don't be misled by anyone who claims to know. We are told here that *no one knows* and that even believers will be surprised. The Lord will return suddenly and unexpectedly, warns Paul, so we are encouraged to be ready! Because no one knows when Jesus will come back to earth, we should be prepared at all times. Suppose He were to return today. – How would He find you living? If this were in your thoughts moment-by-moment, would it affect your spur-of-the-moment choices and decisions?

1 Thessalonians 5:2 – "The day of the Lord's return" is a future time when God will intervene directly and dramatically in world affairs. Predicted and discussed in the Old Testament (Isaiah 13:6-12; Joel 2:28-32; Zephaniah 1:14-18), *the day of the Lord* will include both punishment and blessing. Christ will judge sin and set up His eternal Kingdom.

Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,673

READ 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 **Mark what stands out to you.**

¹Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers & sisters, we don't really need to write you. ²For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. ³When 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.

REFLECT How does the above passage describe what the world will be like on the day of the Lord's return? _____

Paul says the day of Jesus' return will come unexpectedly.

Jesus made the same point to the disciples.

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

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

REFLECT WHY do you think "those dates and times" are not for us 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.

READ the following passages. **Mark what stands out to you in each passage.**

You will then record your thoughts in the **REFLECT** section provided below.

2 Corinthians 1:13b-14 ¹³ *I hope someday you will fully understand us, ¹⁴ 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 ⁴² *So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ 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.*

REFLECT Write your observations and thoughts from the above passages.

I.E. If I truly believe in the imminent return of Christ, my life will reflect that by living in such a way so as to glorify Him.

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.

READ 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 **Mark what stands out to you.**

⁴ *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. ⁵ For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don’t belong to darkness and night. ⁶ So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. ⁷ Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. ⁸ 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.*

REFLECT What does the above passage say about WHO YOU ARE in Christ and HOW YOU SHOULD LIVE? I.E. I am to be a “child of the light and of the day” – & I don’t “belong to darkness & night” – meaning I am to live my life in light of what God’s Word says & I should not need to cover up or hide anything.

^a **1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5** – It is good that we don’t know exactly when Christ will return. If we knew the precise date, we might be tempted to live an undisciplined life and according to our sinful desires. Or, we may not sense the urgency to share the gospel with others. Worse yet, we might plan to put off surrendering our life to Him and then turn to God right at the end. Heaven is not our only goal; we have responsibilities that have been delegated to by Christ to us – until He returns. God has called us to partner with Him and to be His ambassadors and representatives while we are living here on earth. Jesus invites His disciples to be involved in the work of reconciling the world to Himself.

^b *“Come, follow Me, & I will show you how to fish for people.”* [Jesus, Matthew 4:19] When Jesus called his disciples, they knew what kind of man He was and they were willing to follow Him. In this passage, Jesus told Peter and Andrew to leave their fishing business and to begin to “fish for people,”—helping others find God. We need to fish for souls. If we practice Christ’s teachings and share the Good News with others, we will be able to draw those around us to Christ like a fisherman who pulls fish into his boat with nets.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 – For more about the Christian’s armor, see Ephesians 6:13-17.

Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, pp. ^a 2,673; ^b 2002

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.

READ the following passages. **Mark what stands out to you.** You will then record your thoughts in the **REFLECT** section provided below.

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 & not delay.*

REFLECT Considering some of the passages you have looked at earlier in this devotional, what are some thoughts you can glean from the above passages?

I.E. (Acts 1:11) Jesus WILL return—someday—and, because of that, I should not just be standing around doing nothing. If I truly believe He will return—I should be concerned for others to come to know Him, so they can spend eternity with Him as well.

In anticipation of Christ’s imminent return, what could you do to help others to be ready for that? _____

What do you need to do in order to become better equipped to help others with what you wrote above? _____
