

Theme: Holy waiting is not passive — it is the wide-awake, sober, light-filled life of those who know Christ is coming, live in light of that Day, and encourage one another to do the same.

I. Preparing for Marriage – 5 Recently!

- A. For many others, preparations for a beautiful ceremony
- B. Amazingly elaborate now – average wedding over \$30k!
- C. Many do no pre-marriage counseling – wrong focus!
- D. We can do this with preparing for the return of Christ!

II. The Day of the Lord for Unbelievers

A. Paul is writing about the Day of the Lord

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night. ¹ Thessalonians 5:1-2

- 1. He had been talking about the return of Christ and the resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 2. 'Times and seasons' refers to eschatology
- 3. He specifically refers to the 'day of the Lord' in v2

B. The Day of the Lord

- 1. The Day of the Lord in the prophets was a coming day of judgement and salvation

Woe to you who desire **the day of the LORD!** Why would you have **the day of the LORD?** **It is darkness, and not light,** ¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. ²⁰ **Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light,** and gloom with no brightness in it? Amos 5:18-20

- a. This is the first use of the phrase in Israel's history
- b. The people wanted the Day of the Lord – the Day Yahweh would judge the Gentiles.
- c. Amos says they misunderstand – on the Day of the Lord God will judge the wicked, not just Gentiles!
- d. The Day of the Lord will be dark, like night, for it will bring judgment on the wicked.

2. The day of the Lord in Jesus' teaching

But concerning **that day** and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be **the coming of the Son of Man...** 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. Matthew 24:36-37, 43-44

- a. Jesus shifts from 70AD to the final Day of the Lord, His Second Coming at the end of days.
- b. The coming of Yahweh is now **the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man!** This is another pointer to the Deity of Christ!
- c. Jesus picked up on the idea of night and spoke of a **'thief in the night'**. Also, Luke 12:39; Rev 3:3; 16:15.

3. The day of the Lord in the Epistles

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 1 Th. 5:2
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief... 2 Peter 3:10

- a. Paul & Peter draw from Jesus' teaching about the day of the Lord being like a thief in the night.

- b. It is Jesus' teaching that shapes the rest of this passage.

C. The Day of the Lord for unbelievers

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then **sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.** ¹ Thessalonians 5:2-3

1. The day of the Lord comes like a thief – and it brings loss and destruction, not blessing and life, for those who are not ready.
2. Paul is clear that this refers to unbelievers who reject the Gospel, and many of whom are persecuting believers who **killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out**, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by **hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved**—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But **wrath has come upon them at last!** ¹ Thessalonians 2:15-16
 - a. We look at this earlier – these people were part of a long line from Cain to the present, who reject and oppose God, His grace, and His Gospel.
 - b. He writes the same thing in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.
3. These people live in great deception and danger, thinking "There is peace and security" when sudden destruction looms.
4. This is true not only for those alive when the Day of the Lord arrives, but for every person when death arrives – this will be a personal "day of the Lord" for each of us!

5. For those who persistently reject God, His grace, and His Gospel, the Day of the Lord, the return of Jesus, will come like a thief in the night and will bring eternal judgement and loss.
6. Do not persist in rejecting the grace of God offered to you through Jesus Christ! Embrace Him today!

III. The Day of the Lord for Believers

- A. Believers will not be surprised by the Day of the Lord
But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ¹ Thessalonians 5:4
 1. Believers have no idea of what is coming, but Jesus has taught the Church to know that He will return!
 2. This does not mean we know when Jesus will return, but THAT He will return.
"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. Matthew 24:36
 - a. Jesus taught that NO ONE knows the date for the day of the Lord – NO ONE
 - b. Believers don't know when it will happen, but we know that it WILL happen, so we can prepare.
- B. A chain of metaphors
But you are not in **darkness**, brothers, for that **day** to **surprise you like a thief.** ⁵ For you are all children of **light**, children of the **day**. We are not of the **night** or of the **darkness.** ⁶ So then let us not **sleep**, as others do, but let us keep **awake** and be **sober.** ⁷ For those who **sleep, sleep** at night, and those who get **drunk**, are **drunk** at **night.** ⁸ But since we belong to the **day**, let us be **sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.** ¹ Thessalonians 5:4-8

1. Paul strings together 2 contrasting groups of words/metaphors related to two groups regarding the coming of Jesus.

Day	Night
Light	Darkness
Awake	Sleep
Sober	Drunk
PREPARED	SURPRISED

- Jesus linked the day of the Lord with a thief in the night.
 - Paul then runs to a related idea for each.
 - Instead of being awake in the day, unbelievers are asleep because they were drunk the night before.
 - But believers are awake and sober!
 - The goal is the bottom – being prepared for the Day!
2. All the terms in the Day column are related to holy living in the New Testament

a. Light

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for **at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light** ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), Ephesians 5:6-9

- God's wrath is coming on the sons of disobedience** (they refuse to obey God and His Word)
- We were darkness but now are light, so we must live as children of light.**
- The light produces works that are good, right, & true**

4. 1 John 1:5-2:2 teaches this in similar terms

b. Awake

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to **wake** from **sleep**. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The **night** is far gone; the **day** is at hand. So then let us cast off **the works of darkness** and put on **the armor of light.** ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the **daytime**, **not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.** ¹⁴ But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the **flesh**, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:11-14

- The passage that led to St. Augustine's conversion
- The same contrasting metaphors, including armor
- Darkness is associated with immoral behavior, light with opposing behaviors.
- This is how we are prepared & put on armor of light.

c. Sober

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being **sober-minded**, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but **as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,** ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:13-16

- Sober-minded is the same Greek word as "sober"
- Used 6x in NT – always as a metaphor for self-controlled behavior, holiness
- One who is sober recognizes that Jesus will return and so wants to hear "well done" that it governs their conduct now!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Keeping a proper focus regarding Christ's return

1. Many today focus on endless charts, complex schemes, and looking for signs – but the NT NEVER encourages this! (After Hours for more)
2. Rather, we are called to holy waiting – being awake, alert, and prepared by walking in holiness rather than living in the sin encouraged by our culture.
3. Because of the wrong approach, many shy away from eschatology, but the NT encourages thinking about it – but we must do it the right way!
4. Satan, the world, and the flesh want to lull us to sleep and lure us into a life of sin, but a consistent focus on the return of Christ and eternity wakes us from slumber and prompts us to live in holiness!
5. We are called to encourage each other to live in light of Christ's return and our eternal reward
For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11
 - a. The focus – this will be salvation for us!
 - b. The time does not matter – we may be alive or dead (back to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
 - c. We encourage each other regarding this, like runners spurring one another toward the finish line.
6. This race can seem long, but the reward awaiting us far outweighs the momentary pains we experience now!

7. Live in light of that Day, of eternity, of hearing “Well Done!” and enjoying eternal reward!

B. The Table of Holy Waiting

1. This Table reminds us of our status as the children of God!
2. This Table reminds us of the great reward that awaits us in eternity!
3. This Table strengthens us for Holy Waiting – empowering us to be more like Jesus now!
4. Come to the Table of Holy Waiting!

Holy Waiting

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

August 30, 2026

Communion

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Teaching keywords: Second coming; eschatology; holiness

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24