

AUTHENTIC: REAL FAITH IN REAL LIFE

1 Thessalonians – Lesson 8



Just as believers in the first century had questions and concerns about when and how Jesus would return; even so, we also have questions about the end of this age. We have questions about eternal life, about judgment, and about the coming of the ultimate Kingdom of God. When will it be? What will it be like? How must I live in preparation? Paul addresses these questions in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

Examine the text: Authentic faith fosters a focus on Christ

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

- a. What two metaphors does Paul use to describe the coming of the Day of the Lord? What do these metaphors tell you about this time of God's judgment? (5:1-3)

The Day of the Lord is a future period of time when God will intervene in the events of this world in order to bring judgment on God's enemies and salvation for God's people. The Day of the Lord begins with the return of Christ to gather His people to Himself.

- b. What will this time of judgment bring for those who live in spiritual darkness and denial? (5:3; see also 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

- c. How are believers to live in anticipation of the return of Christ? (5:6-8)

- d. What important truths should encourage us as we contemplate the coming of this day when God's wrath against sin will be made evident? (5:9-10)

Note: In the Bible, the concept of "the wrath of God" refers to God's settled, uncompromising opposition to evil, an attribute which is an essential characteristic of His holiness and justice.

Explore the concepts:

2. Paul describes the people who live according to the limited perspective of this world as living *in darkness* (v.4-5). They are *asleep* (v.6). They are *drunk* (v.7). How would you explain these metaphorical images? Explain what the Bible is saying about those who live in spiritual indifference—those who live by the values of this world.
- a. *in darkness:*
 - b. *asleep:*
 - c. *drunk:*
3. *For deeper thought:* How does an authentic Christ-centered focus shape our lives and prepare us for the coming of this day? (5:5-6)
4. The fact that there will be a coming day of judgment should awaken in us a sense of urgency, for we have life-changing truth that our darkened world desperately needs. Think about how you can bring the light of the gospel into your relationships. Be prepared to share your ideas with your group.
5. *For deeper thought:* In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul metaphorically describes aspects of the Christian life as spiritual *armor* that provides protection for us as we wait for the return of Christ.

In the first century, the Roman soldier wore two crucial items of armor for protection in battle. He wore a bronze and leather breastplate over his torso in order to protect the soldier's vital organs. He also wore a bronze helmet, designed to protect the head.

Exalt the Savior

It is a fearful thing to know that death is at work in our world. Death is a monstrous enemy—a tragedy that threatens to strip each of us, one-by-one, of our most precious relationships. But Jesus has conquered death; Jesus has risen victorious from the grave. Because Jesus has risen, so will we.

It is a fearful thing to realize that we are hopelessly sinful, and there is a holy God to whom we must give account. But Jesus, our Savior, has paid the penalty for sin so that we may be forgiven and we will live with Him forever.

It is a fearful thing to observe our world in the grip of sin and sorrow. But Jesus will return and establish His Kingdom—a Kingdom where there will be no sin or sorrow or pain.

- Read Revelation 21:1-6 and Revelation 22:1-5.

Take a moment to think deeply about this future hope that Jesus has secured for you. Think about the cost of this salvation. Think about the beauty of this glorious Kingdom. Think about the steadfast love of the One who died for you. Come before Him in prayer as you think on these things.

Meekness and Majesty *lyrics by Graham Kendrick*

*Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity;
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.*

*Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence—
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify, prays Father, forgive.*

*Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.*

*O what a mystery, meekness and majesty!
Bow down and worship, for this is your God!
This is your God!*

The Gospel brings the assurance of eternal glory