

Preparing For Christ's Coming

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1 Thess. 5:1-11

Are we prepared for Christ's coming? Will He find us ready when He comes? Will we be ready should we die before He comes?

In the final chapter in Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, we find him telling how Christians can be "Preparing For Christ's Coming"

1 Thess. 5:1-11, *"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."*

Proper preparation for the coming of Jesus takes into account that...

He shall come as a thief in the night (vs. 1-4)

For some, but not for others.

The Lord's coming will be a surprise for many, as the "*thief in the night*" clearly indicates.

- 1 Thess. 5:2, *"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."*
- 2 Pet. 3:10, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."*

But for those who heed the warnings of Scripture, the “Day” will not overtake them as a thief.

- 1 Thess. 5:1-2, “*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*”
- 1 Thess. 5:4, “*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*”

Why? Because they will be ready for His coming, though we don’t know when it will be. Because they will have taken to heart the admonitions we shall consider momentarily.

For some, it will be an inescapable destruction.

He will come when people are saying “Peace and safety!”

1 Thess. 5:3, “*For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*”

Not in troublesome times, but in peaceful times. Yet, many Christians seem to think He is coming whenever there is tribulation.

When He comes, it will be with “sudden destruction”.

1 Thess. 5:3, “*For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*”

Just as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman. There will be neither time nor way to escape this destruction, which is described in more detail in the second epistle to the Thessalonians.

2 Thess. 1:7-10, “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*”

This “Day” will be one of glory for those who are ready.

2 Thess. 1:10, “*When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*”

For those who now “sleep in Jesus”. 1 Thess. 4:13-16, “*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which*

are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

For those prepared for His coming when He does descend. 1 Thess. 4:17-18, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

What will this “Day” mean for us, when the Lord comes “as a thief in the night”? A day of destruction or a day of delight? It depends upon whether we are prepared for His coming, and proper preparation means...

We should live as sons of the day (vs. 5-11)

Watchful and sober.

We are “children of light” and “children of the day”. 1 Thess. 5:5, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Because we follow Jesus, the “light of the world”.

- John 8:12, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”
- John 12:35-36, “Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

Because we are now in Jesus, and walk in the light.

Christians are the children of light.

- Eph. 5:8, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
- 1 John 1:5-7, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no

darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Because we cast off works of darkness, and seek to walk properly.

- Rom. 13:11-14, “*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*

We are to be watchful for His coming.

1 Thess. 5:6, “*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*”

For no one knows the day nor hour.

- 1 Thess. 5:2, “*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*”
- Matt. 24:36, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*”
- Matt. 24:42, “*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*”

Watchfulness includes prayer. 1 Pet. 4:7, “*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*”

Watchfulness includes repentance, and strengthening what we have. Rev. 3:2-3, “*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*”

On the other hand, “sleep” in our text refers to spiritual laxity. 1 Thess. 5:6-7, “*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*”

We are to be sober.

1 Thess. 5:6-8, *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, ...”*

The word “sober” means to be temperate or abstinent, especially in regards to wine. It is usually used in a more general sense to be sober-minded, watchful.

Note how Jesus relates this to watching for His coming in Luke 21:34-36, *“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”*

We should certainly take the promise of Jesus’ coming seriously, not carelessly.

Armed and waiting.

In all soberness (seriousness), putting on “the armor of God”. 1 Thess. 5:8, *“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”*

Such as the breastplate of faith and love.

Faith and love protect our hearts from much evil. Faith comes from the word of God, and love comes from Him who is the Word.

- Rom. 10:17, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*
- 1 John 3:16, *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*

Such as the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Our hope of salvation protects our mind from much fear and doubt. Hope also comes from the word of God.

- Rom. 15:4, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*
- Eph. 6:11-18, *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not*

against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

Encouraged to wait because God has appointed us to salvation.

1 Thess. 5:9-10, *“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”*

He has not appointed us to wrath. A day of wrath is coming.

Rom. 2:4-11, *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.”*

Yet, Jesus has come to deliver us from that wrath. 1 Thess. 1:10, *“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”*

He has appointed us to salvation through the blood of His Son.

Rom. 5:8-10, *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

So that whether we “wake or sleep” (live or die), we live together with Christ!

- 1 Thess. 4:14, *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”*
- 1 Thess. 4:17, *“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*
- Phil. 1:21-23, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:”*

Comforted and edified.

We are to comfort one another.

1 Thess. 5:11, *“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”*

With the comfort we each receive from God. 2 Cor. 1:3-4, *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”*

With the comfort of our hope we have in Christ. 1 Thess. 4:18, *“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

We are to edify (build up) one another.

1 Thess. 5:11, *“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”*

A goal we are to pursue.

- Rom. 14:19, *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”*
- Rom. 15:2, *“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.”*

The primary work of the church is edification.

- Eph. 4:11-12, *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”*

- Eph. 4:15-16, *“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

Conclusion

Will we be prepared when Christ comes? It all depends...

- Are we watchful? Are we serious about His coming?
- Are we putting on the armor of God? With faith and love as a breastplate protecting our hearts? With the hope of salvation as a helmet protecting our minds?
- Are we actively engaged in comforting and edifying each other?
- If so, then we are truly “sons of light and sons of the day”!

Note what is absolutely necessary for us to be doing these things...

- The Word of God which builds faith and hope; which provides comfort.
- The Church of Christ where love is to be expressed among members; where comfort and edification is to be experienced by members.

“Preparing For Christ’s Coming” cannot happen without diligent application of God’s Word and active participation in the Lord’s church.

Have you been added by the Lord to His church?

- Acts 2:41, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*
- Acts 2:47, *“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

How can a person be added to His church? One must become a Christian. The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 11:18, *“... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life,

or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “for the remission of sins”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been*

planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not become a member of Christ's flock, won't you consider it today?

