

Signs of the End?

1 Thess 5:1-11



Background: The coronavirus has shaken people’s sense of peace and security, arousing fear and uncertainty. Some have asked if the pandemic is a sign of the End Times. And now the fires that rage all around us have turned the sun into darkness and the moon into blood. Is the Day of the Lord upon us? The Thessalonian Christians were wondering about “times and dates” of the end and were worried about how they would fare. What word of comfort does Paul give them? And how should we live today in such unsettling times?

Sermon Text: 1 Thess 5:1-11 (NIV)

¹Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions (pick 3)

- a. Verse 3: Do you have any history with the saying, "Like a thief in the night?" (ie. with the movie or with the theology, etc). Has your view changed through Bernard's sermons? Why or why not? How does your view impact how you live everyday?
- b. At this time, do you feel "at peace and secure" (either spiritually or physically)? Why or why not?
- c. What are practical things you can do for those who do not feel at peace and secure in your neighborhood (ie. neighbors struggling with the pandemic, our black brothers and sisters, people affected by the fires, homeless, etc)? Name one specific thing you can do this week.
- d. Bernard described Christians as "people of the day, clothed in faith, love and hope." Name practical ways you can be more of a "day person." How can your small group encourage you be more of a "day person?"
- e. Liminal time is that time of being in-between something. It's an uncomfortable place to be because it is an unsettled place. However, it is in the uncomfortable that God works, and we change. How might you be in liminal space right now, and how might God be working in your life? Continue to reflect on this in the upcoming week, being aware of what God might be doing with you.