

The Times and the Seasons

by Aaron Hurst

The sermon emphasizes the importance of watchfulness and vigilance in preparation for the coming of the Lord, and the need to resist the devil and his temptations.

Duration: 1:30:06

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:1

Topics: "Seasons"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being vigilant and watchful in the face of spiritual dangers. He uses metaphors of lions and serpents to illustrate the need for strict attention and caution. The preacher warns against being distracted by worldly temptations and urges believers to be prepared for the return of Jesus. He references biblical passages, such as Revelation 16:15 and Luke 12, to emphasize the blessings that come to those who are found watching and ready for the Lord's coming.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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God is so good. His mercies are new every morning. What a privilege to be in the house of the Lord on the day that belongs to the Lord with brothers and sisters of like precious faith.

I thought of the boat people this morning, Brother Paul, and was blessed by that message. We can all identify. Once I was lost, but hallelujah, now I'm found.

Thank you, Jesus. I thought also of the depth of the riches. A little course I had learned, oh, quite a way back.

Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways as finding out. How many know that little course? Oh, just a few.

All right. I was blessed with the children's class this morning. Is it our turn now? But I know some mothers with babies sit in the back with their little ones.

But I thought of it already, even before this morning's lesson. Maybe we should just do that sometime. All the front row just goes to the back and all the back row just comes to the front.

But now don't you all sit in the back next Sunday. It's a blessing to have the front rows filled for the preacher. And you're not feeling like you're preaching to empty benches.

Oh, it's a joy to be here. I'm just, oh, my heart's just full of blessings, reminiscence over the past years that we've been at Charity Christian Fellowship. I was to share, according to schedule next Sunday, the last Sunday that we're all together before the new church plant.

But due to some changes in schedule, I get to share today. I was just meditating this morning, just reflecting on the goodness of God upon my life. And when I remember you all, I remember you with joy.

You know, church multiplication, it's bittersweet. It's sweet in that the kingdom of God is going to be advanced in another place. We get to share in that.

We're humbled by that. Who are we? Who am I? But it's God. It's God who add us to the church.

One waters, one plants, but it's God who give us the increase. And so it's to God be the glory. Hallelujah.

So, I'd like to share a message this morning to the new church and the old. Open your Bibles with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, beginning in verse 1. For those who conveniently can stand, let's stand at the reading of the Holy Word of God. But of the times and 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. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward

all men, see that none render evil for evil unto any man.

But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing.

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesying.

Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray, God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we bow before you, Lord. We acknowledge, Father, that all that we are and who we are, we owe it all to you, Lord. Father, we acknowledge that you created man in your image.

You created man to have fellowship with God. You created man in your likeness. We acknowledge also, Lord, that then sin entered into the world and that fellowship was broken and death passed upon all men.

But, Father, we also acknowledge, Lord, that Jesus Christ came and He took upon Himself our sins. He that knew no sin was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God. Oh, Father, we thank you for that this morning, Lord.

No other argument, no other plea, but that thy blood was shed for me. Father, this morning we do ask in Jesus' name, Lord, that you would visit us in this next hour here together. Oh, God, have mercy upon me, your servant, Lord.

Touch these lips, Father. For, Father, accept you by your Spirit. Anoint your word, Lord.

Very little would be accomplished, but thy word is truth. So, Father, we thank you that we preach not ourselves, but we preach the word of God and Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected and coming again. Oh, God, do settle down upon this place this morning.

Thank you that you're here. Thank you, Father, for what you have done already here today, Lord. And, Father, now we pray that you would take your seat upon the throne of our hearts.

Give us ears to hear and hearts to receive, hearts that are open to learn of Jesus, to be made like thee. Stamp thy image deep upon our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. The times and the seasons. He said, I have no need to write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

This was written nearly 2,000 years ago. And as we look at the times and the seasons, we were discussing the other day together how that the early Christians, as they were living down in the catacombs and were chased and hunted like sheep for the slaughter, they thought, surely the Lord is coming at any

moment. But we know the Scriptures say that He that shall come will come and shall not tarry.

The day of the Lord will come. There are scoffers who say, well, when will He come? Everything just continues on. But we know that the Lord Jesus, the same as He ascended up into heaven again, shall in like manner come again.

He that shall come will come. The manner in which He will come, He says, ye know that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. And we find this recorded in many different places in Scripture of the Lord's return.

It tells us over in 2 Peter that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise to usward, as some men count slackness, meaning that God is not slack to fulfill His promise. Whatever the Lord has spoken shall come to pass. But the Lord is longsuffering to usward.

He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Then He says, but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. He says those same words again.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. And then He says in which the heavens they shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The works of the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

And then He says, now you, seeing that all of these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation in godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God that we as God's people would be looking for with expectation the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking for His coming and hastening the day of God in which Jesus shall return. I'm not sure what all is tucked in those verses, but I believe the people of God should be living in expectancy of the Lord Jesus Christ's return.

And when we live in the expectancy of His return and of His intimate return at any time, it will have a sanctifying effect in our hearts because the Lord Jesus may come today before I finish this sermon. He can do that. No man knows the day nor the hour.

The Father holds all these things in His own hand. Are we looking for? Are we watching? In Revelation, it tells us, in the church of Sardis, in Revelation 3, He says these things. He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, I know thy works.

Thou hast the name that thou livest and art dead. 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 the hour, what hour I will come upon thee. Speaking to the church, speaking to the church that has a form as if she were living and alive, but is dead. Yet He does say that be watchful and strengthen the things that remain.

So apparently there was a few there who still had some God in His in them and were still looking for Jesus' return and were watching and waiting. But there were those by in large number who were not watchful and they were not looking for His return and hastening unto the day of God. And so He says, repent.

If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief. Now here in Thessalonians it says, But ye, ye children of the light, ye are not in darkness, and that day should overtake you as a thief. But to the lukewarm and the fat-slidden, worldly-minded, carnal church.

God says in Revelation, I will come on you as a thief. Because you are not watching. You are not looking and hastening unto the day of God.

Strong warnings to us. Therefore, if thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief. Jesus, when He was asked, at when shall these things be, what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world? In Luke 12 He said, verse 35, Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning.

And ye yourselves, like unto men, that wait for their Lord. For when He shall return from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.

Verily I say unto you that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meet and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch or the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants. Are we in the second watch? Are we in the third watch? Is it 1155? Is it 1159? And the midnight cry is about to sound? And the trump of God will sound? And the Lord will return with His angels, a multitude of heavenly hosts, in flaming fire.

It will be something like the world has never seen. And every eye shall see Him. Watch.

Oh, blessed are those servants whom when the Lord returns He finds them watching. And we live in a world that is contrary to the Christians watching. The world is flashing up all of their billboards and all of their advertisements and all of their allurements.

Come and watch this. Come and enjoy this. Come and feast on this.

Enjoy life. Live it up. Eat.

Drink. Be merry. Have a good time.

And forget that the Lord is coming. Are you ready? Know this, Jesus said, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

And then Jesus gives us these words in Revelation 16, verse 15, Behold, I come as a thief. When does the thief come? He comes at an hour when men look not for the thief. They are not expecting him.

Oh, then Jesus says these beautiful words. Blessed is he that watches and keepeth his garments. Why? Lest he be found unprepared and he walk naked, spiritually destitute, and everybody will see his shame.

Self-righteous rags will not do. Pretended righteousness will not do. A little bit of sewing together of fig leaves will not do.

It takes the sacrifice of the blood of the Lamb applied to your heart and life and mind when they shall say, Peace and safety. We're getting a Palestinian state established. Israel and the Palestinians are going to dwell together in peace.

We have peace in the Mideast. The Cold War is past. The superpowers of the nations are aligning in peace.

So they say. The churches. Watch it.

The churches. We are going to lay down our differences and we are uniting for the sake of peace. Catholic and Muslim.

We worship the same God. Protestants making league with the Catholics. Making peace.

We will dwell together in peace. Toleration. Toleration.

We accept each other. Oh! But if you don't accept our toleration of one another and you say there is only one way to God and it's Jesus Christ and Him alone. Oh! Toleration.

Will there be toleration in the end? I don't think so. Those who steadfastly through patience, endurance, hold fast to the head of the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone and Him only with nothing added, nothing taken away, the day will come that they that kill you think they do God's service because you are hindering this process of this world peace. The one true church.

The world church. We were discussing that just a little the other day. It was interesting, you know, to sort of note how maybe this thing is going to shape up.

It's toleration. You don't have to. You don't have to become a Catholic.

You can be Muslim too because there is such a large number. We can't get them all converted over to Catholicism so we'll just accept them as they are and bring them along and now we unite. My dear brethren, the times and the seasons, what do you see as you look around of the signs of the times? Jesus said when you see the fig tree budding and you see these different things begin to come to pass, know that it is nigh even at the door.

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. No matter how clever, no matter how much money in the bank, no matter how many societies and what level of mason you are and how you can just slip money under the table and bribe your way through, you're not going to escape this one. They shall not escape.

There is only one way of escape and that's through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we may die for our faith. This body may die.

Jesus said don't be afraid of those that kill the body but can't touch the soul. But I'm burdened this morning. I'm concerned, you know, realizing in my own heart the need of watchfulness.

Watchfulness. Let us not sleep as to others. What is he talking about? You mean you can't sleep? You get pretty tired pretty quick.

He's not talking about taking sleep for the rest of the body. But I believe he's talking about a spiritual slumber that comes upon the people of God and they slumber and they sleep and they yield to sloth, to ease and enjoyment of life and just relax and just settle down and just be quiet. Don't make so much fuss.

Just be quiet. Calm. Just be still.

But I'm glad there's those that will not be still. They will not hold their peace until Zion be made a praise upon the earth and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is preached and holiness and sanctification is preached and there's a people that have not yet turned their ears away and are not yet so lulled to sleep by the teachers and having itching ears, but that they want to hear and they'll hear the sound of the trumpet and they'll respond. Oh, I'm so grateful to God for that.

But what about us? What about me? Is there areas I need to be awakened up in that I've somehow slipped into a slumber and a sleep and a slothfulness and an indifference? Watch, he says. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. Oh, I don't like this sober business.

Come on, let's just laugh and have fun. Maybe if we knew what was around the corner, we might be sobered up. But would to God we get sober now and watchful now before trials and tribulation come upon this earth such as has never been seen.

And Jesus says those days I will shorten them for the elect's sake. Now maybe you believe you're going to be raptured out and you're not going to suffer anything. But I can't assure you that this morning.

I believe that the people of God are going to face some trials and sufferings, but they will not experience the wrath of God. As it says here, you are not appointed to wrath. God will not pour His wrath against ungodly sinners on His own people.

But I believe the people of God will suffer in the last days. The Bible says in Revelation, some of you He will cause to be put to death and some of you to be put in prison. And some of you will suffer for my name's sake.

But hallelujah, He that endures unto the end shall be saved, shall be ransomed, shall be with Him in glory forever. Watch. Be vigilant.

Keep awake. It has a metaphoric meaning of give strict attention. Give strict attention.

How do you give attention when the lion is near? How do you give attention when this old serpent is near, about to bite as you're walking on that trail through the woods and there's serpents in the woods? How do you give attention? Do you just go merrily on your way? Let your children just run off and play when the lion is near and the cougar is near. Some people live in those areas still today. Have to watch your children because we live in a remote area and the cougar is about the house.

And there's rattlesnakes and copperheads. Be vigilant. Watch.

Be sober. Same word, sober, in the Greek that is used here in Thessalonians appears again in 1 Peter 5 and it tells us there, be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. I think sometimes the way the Christian people live, they live as if there were no devil and no world with demons filled.

But it's actually just we're living in the millennium and it's heaven on earth and just have a good time and enjoy things of life. God gave us all these things to enjoy. Just enjoy them and live it up.

But we're not in heaven yet, brothers and sisters. The day will come when we can be blessed and at rest and at peace and no more devil, no more demons, no more war to fight because we're home in glory. But we're not there yet.

The devil still walks about as a roaring lion. He's your adversary. And he's seeking whom he may devour.

Oh, but, whom resist steadfast in the faith. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Yeah, resist the devil steadfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Withstand the devil. Stand against his own sets of his vials, all the vials of the devil that he has. Be rooted, grounded, strong, immovable, knowing that the same identical sufferings and temptations are appointed to your brotherhood.

The whole body of Christians throughout the world. Reading from the paraphrase of the Amplified there. You know, sometimes we think we're alone in this.

Nobody else is facing these struggles. Nobody else is facing these temptations. But know that the whole brotherhood of the body of Christ throughout the world has faced similar temptations and similar testings.

Know also this, that the Lord Jesus Christ took on flesh and blood just like we and was tempted in all points like we, yet without sin. And because He overcame, and because He reigns victorious, we also shall overcome in Him. You know, I'd just like to expand a little bit more on the word sober.

Sober meaning to be well balanced. To be temperate. It's not walking around with a long face all day.

It's not walking around looking sad. But it's walking around with your eyes open, spiritually speaking, and being well balanced. Taking all truth of the Scripture and balancing truth with truth and being rooted and grounded in the Word of God and being temperate.

Having our own flesh under the control of the Holy Ghost. Be sober in how you think. Verse 8 of 1 Thessalonians 5 Let us who are of the day be sober.

He says it again in verse 6 and verse 8. I think he's trying to get our attention. Isn't humanity given to lightheartedness? Am I not in my own nature given to just sort of lighthearted? Not taking things as seriously as I ought. Being nearsighted.

Seeing the things that are here, now, you know, nearsighted. Instead of seeing that city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And my eyes set upon that city and upon the eternal principles and Word of God that will never change.

You know, it won't change. Like brother Paul said this morning, we will prove God's Word true either by embracing the promises and making them mine and proving that God saves sinners and He takes the vilest and cleanses them and saves them and gives them a new life and gives them victory over sin and takes them home to glory with Him or proving true that the wages of sin is death and every soul that sinneth shall die. It's true.

You'll prove God true. You won't outwit God and you won't escape His judgment. Let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and of love and for in Helmut the hope of salvation.

Yeah, not just sober. He gives us some armor to gird the Christian, putting on the breastplate of faith and love. The breastplate in Helmut, what they are to the soldier in protecting his heart from the darts of the enemy and his head, that's what they are to the Christian, to us, to protect us from the fiery darts of the enemy.

Faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love is stronger than death.

It's the most powerful testimony the world will ever see when the people of God love one another with a pure heart fervently and they are astounded. But we shouldn't be surprised. Jesus said it would be that way.

The world will know. You are mine and you are my disciples if you have love one for another. Verse 9, God has not appointed us to wrath.

No, God has not appointed us to incur His wrath as His children, but rather 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. Beautiful.

Verse 12 and 13 speak to us in our relationship with those who labor in the Word and admonish. Also in Hebrews, it speaks to us, says that those that watch over the souls of men must give an account. I just reflected back over my years here and had to say, Lord, why? Why is there some that it seems I or we haven't been able to help to a better place and I'm looking at myself, I'm not looking at You.

Lord, have I not taken it seriously enough? Have I not taken the charge seriously enough before God and labored and travailed till Christ be formed in each one? Why are there those that are not yet saved sitting here for a long time? And Lord, I must give account. I don't know what all that means. I don't know for sure where the responsibility starts of the elders and the personal responsibility of the individual.

But, oh God, that I could be free from the blood of all men, that I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God and have not been weak in faith in believing what God wants to do in the lives of those who He bled and died for that there would be victory, be salvation. I thank God this morning for this body here, for this congregation. I have not felt anything but esteem and love from You.

And I thank You for that. I am not admonishing You on that this morning at all. I am so unworthy to be here.

I just thank God for You all. And when I think of You all in my prayers, it brings joy to my heart. But then I do think of those who are yet struggling with bondages and sins.

And it makes me examine my own heart. To those of you who are going to the new fellowship, I thank God for you. I bless God for you.

I am grateful to God for what you have contributed to the body of Christ here at Charity Christian Fellowship. And I know all of us that are staying here, we can say you are going to be missed, but we believe it best for the kingdom of God's sake that there be a multiplication, that there be an advancement for the gospel's sake, that we would go out into other places. So, I bless you in that.

We love you. You have our support and prayers. Go in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And the Lord strengthen thee and fulfill His calling and His purposes in your heart and life. Those of you that are going to other states, other places, oh, may this church always have a vision of sending people out. Well, we are not done yet.

We now go on to some real meat of the message this morning. Some real practical things. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 14.

Now we exhort you, brethren. We exhort you, brethren. In verse 27, He says that I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Now I exhort you, brethren. Holy brethren. And that word exhort is an earnest appeal or an earnest beseeching.

And He says, I exhort you, brethren. He's not speaking to the elders as separately from the brethren, but I believe the elders are included. But brethren.

We're all brethren. Hallelujah. You know, brethren.

The ground is level. At the foot of the cross, we're all brethren. Now He's going to give some very specific clear direction.

Warn them that are unruly. Warn them that are unruly. And that word unruly in the Greek appears again in 2 Thessalonians, but this time it's translated in English as disorderly.

In 2 Thessalonians, it says, Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us. I really, as I meditated on this and considered this, in 1 Thessalonians, the same Greek word is used and translated in the English to unruly. Warn them that are unruly.

He's saying in 1 Thessalonians, those that are unruly or disorderly, warn them. And the word warn means to admonish, to put in mind, to bring this to their mind, to warn them and to caution or reprove gently. And those I get from strongs and from fairs, if you want to look them up.

Those definitions of the meaning come from strongs and fairs. And it's such a blessing to my heart that he's saying a brother that is unruly is to be warned, meaning to be admonished, to be put in mind and to be reprov'd gently. What is unruly or disorderly? Unruly and disorderly.

I didn't take the time to study it up as deeply as I should have. The amplified paraphrase says those who are out of line. And if we look back in 2 Thessalonians, it's speaking of those who will not work. So here it says also loafers and disorderly.

So I believe the appeal coming to us from 1 Thessalonians is that those are disorderly or unruly, we are to warn. We are to admonish. We're to put in mind.

And we're to make an appeal. And we're to gently reprove. Now who knows just where you would pick up on 2 Thessalonians at what point.

But I don't believe we should go to 2 Thessalonians before we fulfilled 1 Thessalonians. Are you following me? First, we warn and gently reprove and bring to mind the unruliness or the disorderliness of conduct. We bring it to mind and we warn and we gently reprove.

Then 2 Thessalonians says seeming to me as now he's writing to them again and if this unruliness or disorderliness is a state in which a person persists and will not hear the gentle reproof and the gentle warning and admonition now he says it's time for further discipline. Now you withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly. But let's not hasten too quickly to 2 Thessalonians if we haven't fulfilled 1 Thessalonians.

And this is written to the brethren. But I'm not trying to excuse the elders in the ministry. The elders have a charge of overseeing and responsibility.

But I believe that if we as brethren will fulfill these scriptures the Lord will use these methods because they're His Word. It's how He has ordained it. And I believe that we will see a better fruit and result if we will follow the Word of God.

Then he goes on and he says comfort the feeble-minded. Comfort the feeble-minded. And when I think of feeble-minded I did some study on that word.

Comfort the feeble-minded. The timid. The faint-hearted.

Comfort the feeble-minded. Those that are timid and faint-hearted. Comfort.

What does comfort mean? It means to relate. Near to. To encourage.

I see the word picture of coming alongside as the word picture of comfort. Where you come alongside and you draw near to a person who is timid, he's faint-hearted, maybe experienced a severe trial and his hands are hanging down a bit and his knees a bit feeble and he needs encouragement. He needs comfort.

So alongside comes a brother or a sister. This all applies to sisters as well. He says to the brethren but it's also to the sisters.

You come alongside and you comfort. You draw near. And as I thought of that, I thought build relationships.

Come alongside that person. Draw near. Build relationship with that person.

And comfort and encourage the faint-hearted and the timid. And then he goes on and says support the weak. Support the weak.

Very similar but a little bit different here. Here he says support the weak. And the weak, if you look that up in Strongs and Fairs, it's weak or weaker.

Or more feeble. Or one without strength. Comfort the weak.

And support the weak. I believe you could use the word comfort and support interchangeably without doing any violence to Scripture. But the word support is to hold oneself opposite to by extension to care for.

In King James, be to hold to. I'd like to just illustrate this this morning. Can I have a brother come up here? Real quick.

Volunteer. I need a brother to help me. Brother Philip.

So to support the weak, you come next to him and you support. Everybody knows what support is, right? Support means to bear up and to hold up. So Brother Philip, as I'm getting tired and weary, you support and you hold me up.

Now, isn't that a blessing? Now, I want another brother. Quickly, one more brother. Now, if I'm really weak and I'm really going down and you have two brothers to support and hold you up.

Isn't that a blessing? Isn't that a beautiful word picture? Where we come alongside and we comfort and we support and we hold up our brother who is weaker. Thank you. You may go back.

They know what that's all about in the army. You don't let your weak comrade lie there who can't run anymore because he's been wounded in battle. You see that picture of a soldier on either side bringing that one along in the middle, holding him up, supporting him.

Oh, that the church of Jesus Christ, that we would get this thing in our hearts into practical everyday living and application. It's easy for me to preach it this morning, but to do it, you know, I think sometimes we get it all backwards. We support those we shouldn't support, but we don't support the weak and the feeble and the poor.

Rather we look at them and say, I'm not sure they're going to make it. Maybe even say it to someone else. Lord, forgive us.

Have mercy on us. Say, well, they'll never achieve anything great for God. You know, I think we should be very careful how we throw those words around.

Oh, he's done great things for God. Oh, you never saw a man of God like that. Oh, he's such a man of God.

And everybody else sits back and draws a little farther into their corner, a little more timid, because I can never be that. But I don't think that's the heart of God. I don't think that's the heart of God.

We need to make ourselves small. We need to make ourselves little. We need to humble ourselves.

He that is great, he that will be great, shall be servant of all and shall humble himself. I should let one of you brothers come up and preach this. Who am I? You know? But just your fellow servants, just saved by the blood of Christ.

Oh, if we can just somehow tap into the heart of God in these issues, in these things. And then he says, be patient toward all men. Be patient toward all.

The word men is in italics in my Bible. Is it in yours too? In your King James? Be patient toward all. The italic means it was added for clarity or ease of reading in the text to complete the sentence.

Be patient. Be long-spirited. Have long patience.

Be long-suffering. Isn't it like God to be long-suffering? The long-sufferingness of God God waited while the ark was preparing and Noah was a preacher of righteousness for those 120 years. Oh, the long-sufferingness of God.

The long-sufferingness of God to us for that He's not willing that any should perish. I believe that's why Jesus hasn't returned yet. Perhaps, be patient toward all.

You know, I thought of that in where it really gets tested with those that are closest to me, isn't it? You know, I want to be patient with Brother Philip because he might think less of me if I weren't patient with him. How about patience with my sons and my daughters and my spouse, my wife, my husband. How about patience there? Always keeping your temper.

Yes, patience. Always keeping your temper. Your emotions.

Your heart. Isn't it something that we're more long-suffering, more patient with those that are not as close to us, you know, or unrelated to us? That can even be in maybe a brotherhood. Maybe even in the body of Christ here at charity.

Maybe I'm more gracious, more patient to someone outside of the fellowship than someone within my own church family. be patient toward all. Verse 15 ties right in with it.

And see that none render evil for evil to any man. You know, we can read over that real quick. See that none render evil for evil.

It's just a blessing to take that strong concordance and look up a little word like see. You know, it's just a three-letter word. See.

Oh, but wait a minute. There's a lot hidden there. See.

Take heed. Beware. See to it.

Look to it. You know, I see personal accountability in these words. Take heed.

Beware. That none render evil for evil unto any man. Then also the definition.

Look to. See to it. Sort of like broadening it out even farther.

Not just a personal responsibility, but brethren. Holy brethren. Look to it.

See to it. That none in the body of Christ renders evil to another man. If you see that type of behavior happening in the body of Christ, you have a responsibility to go to that brother and to inquire.

Is it as it appears? Has there been evil rendered? He says, see that none. Oh, that little word none. Yes.

No, not one. None. You know? None.

See that none. It's like, let this not be once named among you as become a saint. See that none renders evil for evil to any man.

You know? Rendering it out. Dishing it out, so to speak. You know, you've heard that term where he can dish it out, but he can't take it too well.

Ever heard that? You know? Well, see that none does this in your thoughts and feelings and actions. Dishing out that, rendering that, which injures and which is destructive. Oh Lord, set a watch upon my lips.

That little member, the tongue, James tells us about. A lot of times, this is how it happens. It happens with that member, the tongue.

A rendering evil for evil. You know, tie that thing together with long-suffering, patience, supporting the weak. You know, just tie that thing together.

See that none render evil for evil unto any. Just stop right there. Any woman, any man, any son, any daughter, any husband, any wife, any boss at work, any of lower rank in the employment.

Some say, well, you can yell at him because he's your, what's the right word? Subordinate? Yeah, you're the boss. You can yell at him. No.

No, you can't. Not if you have Christ dwelling in you, you can't. Not if Christ is in control of your temper.

He won't spit out those words that are destructive and injurious. Then he gives us the positive. Oh, but ever follow that which is good.

Ever follow that which is good. Ever pursue after that which is good. Which is to the edifying, which is to the building up of the body of Christ, which is to the testimony of the glory and praise of God.

Ever follow after that. Follow after? Pursue. You know, there again, it's just that word.

Ever follow that which is good. Just read over that. But follow is an active word.

You're going to engage your will and your heart and your mind and you're going to pursue that. Going to pursue that which is good. Not just going to let life float by.

Not just going to be haphazard in my thoughts and in my actions and just lethargic and just sort of let things go as they go and unfold as they do. Pursue that which is good. Both among yourselves and to all.

Oh, I like that. Among yourselves. Who's yourselves? Who is yourselves? Stop and think.

Who is yourselves? Ourselves? It's just nice to be ourselves. Take off our shoes. Relax around the house.

Have a little popcorn. Share together. A little snack, whatever.

It's just us. Ourselves. Oh, I want to encourage you this morning.

Follow that which is good among yourselves. And then the circle can be broadened. Have a couple of families over.

Yes, it's ourselves. We're ourselves. We're like mine precious faith.

We're together. Exhorting one another. Make that circle a little bigger.

It's the congregation, brothers and sisters here at charity. And you have a heart and a mindset that is to pursue that which is good, to the edifying. You want to see your brother excel.

You want to see him gain spiritual victory and good. You want to see good upon his life. And to all, you're not the kind of person who's praying curses on people and commanding fire down from heaven.

Why not, instead of cursing that bar, and then somehow claim you broke through in the spirit realm and the bar closed, why not instead of cursing that bar, pray that the people would get saved in that bar and that that establishment would be turned around and be used for Bible studies? You know, I have to admit I have a problem with that theology that says we curse this place and we pray a curse on that place and, you know. Well, Jesus didn't come to destroy men's lives and to curse them, but he came to save them. Something wrong with our theology if you want to destroy people and curse them.

Ever follow that which is good. Yes, we can rejoice if the place closes for lack of business because the spirit of God is reviving people and they're no longer going to the bars and are no longer doing those

things. Wonderful.

Verse 16, rejoice evermore. We'll close real shortly. Rejoice evermore.

It should just be our life. Rejoice when you feel like it. Rejoice evermore.

Rejoice in the morning when you first get up. Rejoice evermore. Rejoice when you get your paycheck.

Rejoice evermore when you get that bill for that heating oil. Rejoice evermore that you have the ability to have a warm house to be in. Don't complain.

The world is complaining enough. Do your heating man a favor and blessing. Thank him.

Thank him for bringing you heating oil at three dollars a gallon. I don't know. But they hear so much complaining.

Rejoice evermore. Rejoice not that the devils are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. That's what we have to rejoice about.

And pray without ceasing. A life of prayer. You know, it's your life.

It's your breath. It's how you live. You don't have to get in the right posture to do it.

You can do it in the car. You can do it on the airplane. You can do it on the train.

You can do it at work. You can do it behind that machine. You can do it on that tractor.

Pray without ceasing. I think too that could also go deeper there as far as getting in your prayer closet and praying without ceasing. Don't stop at the fifth time or the sixth time, but continue in prayer.

Persevering in prayer. And in everything give thanks. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

A mark of the last days is that people will be unthankful. Should not be so among the Christians. Christians should be the most thankful people on the face of the earth.

Thankful. Blessing God. Giving thanks to God.

Giving glory to His name. And thankful to others. I mean, be thankful and express it.

I appreciate the way that you've taken my counsel. I'm so grateful for that, son. That blesses my heart.

Thank you. That was a good meal. That was very nice.

Thank you that I can open the drawer in the dresser and the socks are clean. Thank you. You know, thank you.

Thank you. I mean, in everything give thanks. Now, those are good positive things I was talking about.

But what about in trials? Should we give thanks in trials? Yes, we should give thanks in trials. Knowing that God, He's on the throne and He's working all things after the counsel of His will for good to those who love God. The little note that was scribbled before he passed out of consciousness.

Romans 8.28. In the car wreck, they found the note. Before he passed into unconsciousness. Romans 8.28. All things work together.

Thank you, Lord. Even this is going to work out for your glory. Thank you, Lord.

I don't understand, but thank you, Lord. It's the will of God. Yes, it is.

You can be assured of that. It's the will of God. It tells us right here, very plainly.

Quench not the spirit. Behold sermon right there. But don't quench the spirit of God.

But I do have to say, try the spirits. Is it the spirit? Now, I was in some circles at times already where they said, it's the spirit. Well, yeah, it's the spirit.

But is it the spirit of God? Is it the Holy Spirit? Some people have done shameful things saying it's the spirit. But the Holy Spirit is holy. He will lead you into holiness.

He will lead you into truth. He will testify of Jesus. He will beautify the saints with the sweet aroma and character of Christ.

Not cause you to roll around on the floor, act like an animal, and all these things that people do and claim it's the spirit. May I be that bold? But don't quench the spirit. Quench not the spirit.

Despise not prophesying. Don't despise the preaching of the word. Don't shut up the mouth of the prophets.

Don't stone the prophets. Verse 21, beautiful, all sort of like, how would I say it, maybe sort of a capstone. Prove all things.

It's a good posture in life. Prove all things. Test them.

Prove all things. And then, hold fast that which is good. Could we imply, throw away that which is not good? Choose that which is good.

And hold fast. And verse 22, abstain from all appearance of evil. I don't believe any godly, Christ-like individual will want to appear like the godless heathen.

In dress, or in action, or in lifestyle. Why? Abstain from all appearance of evil. There will be many applications to that.

We won't take time this morning. But ask yourself, does this have appearance of evil? And verse 23, the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. Completely.

Entirely. That's pretty inclusive, isn't it? The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved.

Blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know, glorify God in your body. Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Glorify God in your body, in your soul, and in your spirit. And he says, that I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't believe that means that the body wasn't preserved blameless for those who died in the ring at Rome and were killed by wild beasts. I don't think that means that at all. But rather, the body, as the Christian had charged over his own temple, he kept his body free from the contaminants and the defilements of the lusts of the flesh and of the morals of this world and all of those other different things.

But his body was sanctified as well as his spirit and his soul before God. They killed his body and mutilated his body. He was preserved unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord. And God did not judge him for what happened to his body in that way that was above his power. But as a Christian with power over your body, don't go defiling the body, the temple of God.

Don't just go abusing the body. But that you be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I love this verse 24.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. That's where our confidence and our faith must rest. In him that has called you out of darkness.

In him that has chosen you. A royal generation. A royal priesthood.

A holy nation of peculiar people. Separated unto this world. Unto God for himself.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. You know, as we divide, multiply, let us pray for one another.

Pray for us that we may fulfill the high and holy calling that God has called us to and what we heard here this morning in these scriptures, in these admonitions. The Lord bless you. We love you.

And we trust God that we shall meet again shortly when our Jesus comes. Let us hasten the day of the Lord. Watching.

Ready. For Jesus said, behold, I come. I come quickly.

And my reward is with me. May you hear those words. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joys of thy Lord. God bless you. I'm humbled and blessed to know you and to share together with you in the family of God.

Amen. Well, that was a blessing. Thank you, Brother Aaron, for sharing with us the word of God.

What a beautiful picture. What God has for us. I think it's so beautiful how that, you know, God doesn't miss any details, does he? You know, how the word of God ministers to so many areas, so many needs, so many issues in our lives.

All in one chapter. I'm thankful for that. Thankful for the word that came this morning.

It was challenged in my own heart, encouraged. Different areas. So maybe God has spoken to your heart this morning.

There's something you would like to share. Testimony, a confession. Something you'd like to add to the message that could be an edification to all of us.

If you have something, maybe you could raise your hand. We'll get a microphone to you. The ushers could be prepared for that.

If something on your heart you'd like to share. Down here there's a hand in the front. I must also say for myself, it's a time, like Brother Aaron mentioned, a bittersweet time.

There's many of you brothers who we've grown to love and appreciate. But we rejoice in what God will do as you move forward in faith. And trust that God will use you.

Do you have your microphone here, Brother Ron? Yes, I appreciated very much the message, Brother Aaron. Thank you for laboring in the word of God. I have a testimony about the beginning part of the message where Aaron was talking about the day of the Lord coming.

Often in our world today when we feel the natural disasters and everything, it gives people in the world cause to think a little bit. It takes their focus off of this life a little bit. I had that experience at work.

A couple of ladies came to me a week or so ago. That's when, after Hurricane Katrina had come and destroyed much of New Orleans and another hurricane was coming. A couple of ladies came to me in the office and said to me, we want to know, is God going to come back soon? Is the end of the world coming? No, it gave them cause to think.

And I said to them, well, I don't really know. It could happen any time. I said, but the real important thing is not to wait until you think the Lord's coming any minute and then get right with Him.

I said, what God wants is for us to be right with Him now, for us to live as if He could come back at any moment. Because we're on a journey. This life is brief, but it's important because the direction we're going in this life is going to affect where we are in the next life.

And they just kind of scratched their heads and smiled and just walked away. But I think with these things happening, and I also shared with them, that was a terrible tragedy, the hurricane and all that. I said, but it should make us stop and think about these things.

And not just carry on in our life and expect God to bless us. That's not what the Lord wants. He wants us to live expecting and looking to Him and expecting that He could come back at any moment.

That's what He wants. So amen to the message. May we be people like that who live that way.

And may we be people that others can come to when these things happen and give them a word of exhortation. Thank you for sharing. Is there a hand in the back? Amen to the message.

I was also blessed and very challenged. There's many things that could be commented on. I just want to, you know, we talk to a whole group of people, different people at different places at different times and different needs in their hearts.

And many times when we talk at the end times and the times that could be ahead of us, and, you know, the devil being like a roaring lion, we don't want to forget that the Scripture many, many times warns us not to be deceived, but it never tells us to be fearful, to be afraid of the devil. Fear is a thing that will render us

useless in the battle for the Lord and we should always look to Him. I know that when we look in the newspaper or watch things happen to the world, look to the future, it's easy to get fearful.

I know one minister once saying that when you tend to get fearful, just turn the news off and pick your Bible up. There's a lot of comfort in there. So we don't need to be fearful.

We can trust in the Lord and face all these things and all things will work out for us. Thank you for the message. I know Brother Aaron shared there about the devil walking about.

And as Brother George mentioned, you know, just seeking whom he may devour, putting fear in people's hearts. And the Bible tells us we're not to be ignorant of his devices. I believe he is our enemy.

He is seeking to draw our hearts away from the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a place that we can have our focus and it's not on the devil. You know, there's two ways we can look at this thing.

We can have our focus on the devil and all that he's doing and all the evil that he's bringing and what he can do and how fearful he is. And we can be aware that God is able, you know, somehow, but our focus is on the devil. But God wants us to have our focus on Him.

That's where our focus needs to be. And yes, we can't bury our heads in the sand like Brother Aaron mentioned, pretend there's not a devil and this is just a... But we need to be aware of the devil and recognize who he is and where he belongs and how Jesus Christ has defeated his power there on the cross. So we need to have our focus on God and be aware of the devil, not to have our focus on the devil and be aware of God.

Anyone else? Yes, my heart is heavy today. It has been recently and I just want to ask everyone here to please pray for me. It may seem like a small thing to you to keep things for years from your children.

I'm going through a time right now where I'm trying to put off every weight and to sort through things and even whether it's schoolwork that my children did or to determine just small things to keep. I want to unclutter my life, but it's so hard. It feels like every time I get started, something just grips me and holds me.

I just woke up crying this morning for things like that. I want to be free, totally free from every weight and not carry these things around with me. Like Brother Paul was talking about being the people in the boat.

All my children were in the boat with me one time. And now I've lost one daughter to death and I feel like most of my other children have either fallen out of the boat or they've been snatched out of the boat. And I feel so alone and so helpless.

Please just pray for me and my family because I know God can help us. And I thank you for the brotherhood here. But I plead with you.

I feel like I'm losing everything. Thank you very much. Thank you for sharing, Debbie.

Over here, there's another one. Brother Dean. Amen.

I thank the Lord for this message today. And Brother Aaron, I thank you. You said it was a send-off message, a message intended for next week.

You know, when I take all those words very seriously, I take them from God. A send-off message is sort of a mark on a fellowship. It's a mark on a person if you're sending them off.

And these are the words you're saying over them. I take these words that you're sending us off as a new church, and I pray the grace of God to be able to live up to those Scriptures. Amen.

I remember one time, My brother was going to die, and he was there on the battlefield, but there were some people that were rushing in on him. And his brother, instead of just running, picked him up and put him over his back and started running with him. And the one that was wounded said, you're crazy for doing this.

Obviously, you're going to get yourself shot now. Just leave me here and I'll die, and you can at least save yourself. I'm too heavy.

And as they kept running, he said, let me go. I'm too heavy. Finally, one brother said to him, he said, listen, you're not heavy.

You're my brother. And so he just pressed on, and he kept going with that idea. The idea of that is that we don't look at it as a burden.

We don't look at these... When we're falling, is it something that's a burden? Or if someone's weak that we have to lift them up? They're a brother. And it's something we just do out of love and out of a sense of, they're my brother. It's not a question.

It's not something we even wonder in our mind whether or not we should or we shouldn't. So I bless the Lord for this message today. And I do pray that God would mark both fellowships, both new fellowships that start two weeks from now with this spirit that we heard today.

Amen. I thank You for the message.

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