

1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

by Paul Washer

The believer is not in darkness and is therefore not taken unaware by the Day of the Lord, but is rather a son of light, made alive, reconciled to God, and given understanding.

Duration: 57:17

Scripture: Matthew 24:42, 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Topics: "Teaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding our identity as believers and living in accordance with it. He encourages listeners to stand upon the promises of God and press on in their pursuit of holiness and righteousness. The speaker warns against complacency and urges believers to be alert and sober, ready for the sudden and decisive event of their eternal destiny being fixed. He emphasizes the seriousness of this life and the impact that our actions here have on our eternal future. The sermon concludes with a prayer for strength and a plea for believers to serve God wholeheartedly.

Transcript

Well, let's open up our Bibles again to First Thessalonians. Chapter five. Let's read beginning and let's begin in verse one.

Now, as to the times in the epics, brother, you have no need for anything to be written to you, for you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief.

For you are all sons of light and sons of day, we are not of night nor of darkness. So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober for those who sleep, do they're sleeping at night and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we. Come before you this evening, Lord, not that we are humble, but we are humbled.

By our need for you upon the name of Christ, Lord, we plead that you would grant us grace, that you would lavish grace because we need it, Lord, but not according to our need, according to your riches. Help us. Help your people, Lord, to understand who they are in your son and they might walk.

In newness of life. That they might shine as luminaries, Lord, in a dark and twisted place. In a perverted generation.

That they might show forth your glory, father, help us, strengthen us, give us keenness of mind to understand your word, Lord, make the reality be ours. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Lord, in this evening, we desperately need you. Help us, Lord, in Jesus name.

Amen. Well, I see that the weather is kind of kept many back tonight. But we ought never be discouraged, never.

Never. Because even if it three or two or one are gathered here together, he is in our midst and he is our helper. He would come here tonight.

Not just for a large crowd, but he would come here tonight just for you, if you belong to him, truly belong to him. Regardless of all the sin today, all the failure. All the even hopelessness, because you go round and round and round with the same struggles, regardless of all of that, if you were the only one here tonight, he would meet with you here.

His grace is greater than all our sin. His love is astounding. His love, in fact, is what makes preaching pitiful.

And what makes preachers sad? Because it doesn't matter if you have the tongue of angels or Spurgeon or the mind of Martin Lloyd Jones, you're never going to be able to get your mind around the love of God, and most certainly you're never going to be able to make it known to men. That is why we're so desperately, always desperately in need of the Holy Spirit. So many words are spoken so often.

So little power, so little life, my desire is not to preach. My desire is to see you blessed. To see the Holy Spirit take God's truth and open up a door and show you who you are.

In Jesus Christ, so often preachers like myself were known for pointing out error. For reproof. But I do know this.

Pointing out error is necessary and reproof is necessary, but I know you, I know your faces and I know that the greatest need that you have. Is to understand who you are in Christ and how much God truly, truly loves you, and we're going to look at a passage tonight that is it's one of those passages where if I simply speak in generalities, I could preach through this passage, I could study this passage in a matter of a few minutes and make it known in generalities. But if I really want to get down to what it's saying, it's it's a lot of hard work.

But it's so important that we're going to do that work tonight. I've got a lot of notes, as you know, I'm usually not nailed down to notes, but I am going to use them tonight because I want to be very precise about what's being said here in this text. And I don't know if we're going to make our way through it, but we're going to at least start because what is this text about? This text is about what Christ has done in your life that you haven't just turned over a new leaf.

You just haven't entered into a new path of life. Something radical, extraordinary has happened to you. You are not like you were before, and you must know that you must understand it, and then you'll be better able to walk in the power of it.

You haven't just been told to live a different way. You've been recreated. Supernatural, I'm not speaking in metaphor, I'm speaking in reality, you are not.

Like the rest of the world. You're not and you need to know that and then you need to stand and you need to walk in that. So let's just try to limp our way through this, see what we can what we can learn.

First of all, let's look at verse four. He says, but you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day would overtake you like a thief. Now, the great truth of this passage is that the day, the Lord's day, the coming of the Lord is not going to overtake the believer as it will.

The unbeliever. It's not going to bring destruction to you if you are a believer, it's going to bring glory and joy and life. Now, look in verse three for just a moment with regard to the unbeliever, it says, while they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child and they will not escape.

Now, the word overtake is the word cut the Lambano and it's it's it means to to reach out towards, to take hold of, to seize. It can even have a sense of of violence to it. Mount says this to come suddenly upon something, to overtake it, to surprise it.

I want you to imagine someone walking along with no idea whatsoever that they're in danger and all of a sudden a trap is sprung upon them and they're captured before they even know they're in the trap. That's the idea. Also, I want you to see that this verb is in an heiress tense and it indicates something of a sudden, decisive event.

And what I want to press upon you, all of you, because I can't suppose that all of you are converted, what this is talking about. Is finality, finality, listen to me. In one moment, your entire eternal destiny is going to be fixed before you can even cry out, before you can turn your head, before you can breathe another breath, before your heart can beat in one shout, your entire destiny is fixed.

Now, you might want to correct my language and say, well, Brother Paul, no, your entire destiny will be determined. No, you're wrong. You're determining your entire destiny right now as you live.

You are determining your destiny as an unbeliever and grace is given to you that you could walk in rebellion and God not judge you. That you could be nonchalant and not care about the things of God and not care about eternity, and yet God does not judge you. Grace upon grace measured out to you, but one day at a shout, it all comes to an end before the shout is over.

It comes to an end. And your destiny is fixed. What we're told here is that with the unbelieving world, it'll be like a thief coming in the night unannounced with the unbelieving world, it'll be like the labor pains grabbing violently, grabbing hold of a woman and locking her in her place.

She has nowhere to go. She can't turn to her left or her right. She can't make a decision to go in any certain direction.

And right there. Is where she is and where she will have to give way to the pain in the same way you will have to give way when Christ comes, you know, so often we preach and we teach from this pulpit, but I want to just stop for a moment and plead with you before I start talking about the glories of the believer. I want to talk about you.

There are at least some of you who do not know the Lord. And when he comes and he will come. It's horrifying for the preacher to think that your soul will be forever, forever, forever damned, that is the plight.

Of the unbelieving world, but when we look at our text, we see that it is not the plight of the believer now, the believer and the unbeliever have something in common. One. Both of them are ignorant with regard to the time and epoch of the Lord's coming.

Both, and yet Paul assures us that for the believer, Christ's coming will not be like a thief in the night, and now we need to ask ourselves a question, why look at verse four, he's going to state it negatively first. He says, but brother, he says, but you, brethren, are not in darkness, he's already assured us that no one knows the time or the epic. But then he comes right back and he says, but you, brethren.

You, brethren, you're not in darkness. You're not in darkness now, what does this mean? Darkness, I believe in this context is referring to something very important. It's referring to the sphere or the realm.

In which the unbelieving world exists. It is the realm of an unbelieving world, of a depraved world, of a world that has rejected God, it is that realm, moral realm, spiritual realm in which they dwell. And he says, we're not in that realm.

But before we go on to explain why we're not in that realm, I want you to look at something. I want you to look at how the Bible describes every person that is in the realm of darkness, everyone that is outside of Christ, everyone that is still in Adam. This is what it says.

First of all, every person, including you tonight, if you're here without Christ. Every person outside of Christ and in this realm of darkness is dead in their trespasses and sins. That's why I can preach to you, plead to you, and it doesn't even disrupt your thought pattern.

It doesn't even make its way into your conscience, because apart from the Holy Spirit, you are dead in your trespasses and your sins. Another thing the scriptures say is that you are excluded from the life of God. You may see people around you everywhere and they know God, they talk about God, they delight in God.

But you, you're excluded from the conversation. Why? Because you have no part with God. And why do you have no part with God? Because you have no part with Christ.

Also, it says of these people, of the unbelieving world, the reason why the second coming will overtake them is this. They are darkened in their understanding. If you're here tonight without Christ, you're darkened in your understanding, and that alone should humble you to cry out to him, to help you, to give you light.

That alone should make you so preoccupied with the matter that you seek the Lord, that darkness might give way to light and you might see the glory of God shining in the face of Christ. The Bible also says this about those who are dwelling in this realm of darkness, that they are given over to the lust of their flesh. You might be a very noble person compared to other men, you might be dignified, you might be

intellectual, you might be keen in all the manners and modes the way people ought to act.

But the fact of the matter is you're given over to the lust of your flesh. You may be a very religious person and delight in religious things, but you are given over to the lust of your flesh apart from Christ. That's what this dark realm looks like.

This is the realm into which we were born, also hostile to God and living in rebellion against his law. You may be religious, you may be moral, but if Christ is not the center. Of your relationship with God, if he is not your hope, if he is not your love, if he is not your delight, then you are hostile to God and you are hostile to his law.

Also, it says that they are willingly blind, see so many people sometimes when I was talking, especially on a university campus, and they go, I just can't see this and they want to pretend that there's some sort of victim, but they're not. They're not a victim. And if you're here tonight and you say, I can't see this, you're not a victim.

The Bible says, you know, you know, you know. But you're willingly blind. And you willingly ignore.

More. And because of that, you're not preparing for his coming, you do not fear his coming, you do not expect his coming, and therefore his coming will come upon you like a thief in the night. Sometimes I wish that people could see what preachers see when you look out over a group of people like this, not just seeing persons going about their daily lives, you're seeing people who are eternal.

And we'll spend an eternity in the glories of heaven or spend eternity in the terrors of hell. Sometimes people ask, why did the preacher look so burdened? Because he looks at things in a different way. Every.

Every one of you take note of this. This is not just another Wednesday night, any time the word of God is opened, it is not just another night, it is a night for you to seriously consider, do you know the Lord? Are you truly Christian? If he comes tonight, will it overtake you like a thief, like a trap? Are you born again? Do you have the assurance of the Holy Spirit? Where are you, Adam? Where are you? To whom do you belong? Every preacher half worth is salt. If he could, he would grab you, tie you up and drag you to the kingdom.

But he can't. He cannot. No one can.

Where will you be on that day? When he returns. Where will you be? Will you be in the realm of darkness? Or will you be in the realm of light? Will you be by nature a child of darkness and disobedience and wrath? Or on that day, will you be a child redeemed and recreated a special work of God? Where will you be? Where will you be? Let's go on. Paul says.

In verse four, he says, brethren. But you, brethren, are not in darkness that today would overtake you like a thief in the night. Now, why is the believer not in darkness? Why is it? Well, Paul tells us in Colossians chapter one, verse 13, because God, this is what he's done for you.

God has rescued you. From the domain of darkness, and he has transferred you to the kingdom of his beloved son, that's who you are now. Prior to coming to know Christ, you were all the things I mentioned, but now if you truly have believed, if you truly have repented, if you truly are Christian, if you're truly born again, what has happened to you? This has happened to you.

You've been translated. From the kingdom, the dominion of darkness, of death, of sin, of law. Of death, of condemnation, you've been translated from this realm.

And you've been moved into the realm of Christ and the kingdom of Christ, and what does that mean for you? I've got a list here, let me read it. It means you've been made alive. You're no longer dead.

It means that you have been reconciled to God. It means that God has given you understanding. It means that the power of sin has been broken in your life.

It means that you now love God and desire to obey his commands. It means that you are now expecting, longing and waiting for the return of Christ. And to hear the trumpet blow would not bring terror into your heart, but would fill you with joy, unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, is that you? Is that you? Have I described you? Do you remember a time when you were dead? And can you say now that your life is completely different, that you have life, that you have spiritual life? Can you say that right now, that you have spiritual life and you have it to such a degree, you recognize a difference from the time prior to Christ when you were dead? Is there a sense of life in you? Do you have a sense of peace with God? A sense of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is shed abroad, the love of God in your heart. Do you have that now? Is it a reality in your life? Also, have you been given understanding? They shall all be taught of God, the prophet says. Have you been taught of God? Do you look at Scripture now? And have some understanding about it? Do you have something of an understanding about who God is and what he has done for you in Christ? When you look at Scripture, does it warm your heart? Does it delight you? Have you been given understanding or do you still dwell in darkness? And when people talk about Jesus, you really can't understand why they're even so concerned about it.

Also, do you love God? Do you love him now? Now, I know that none of us have a love for God that is worth boasting about. But do you have a love for God and does it pain your heart when you realize how small and fickle your love truly is? You see, the unbeliever doesn't worry about that type of thing. He can nonchalantly say he loves God, even though all his life shows nothing but hostility and he has no pain in his conscience whatsoever.

But you, are you Christian? Do you love God? And when you see that your love for God is so weak and small, does it pain your heart? Does it bother your conscience? Do you want to be more? Do you want to be more? Do you want to love him more? Do you want to show him more love? Do you want to delight him with love? And does it pain you when you can't? Also. Are you expecting? Longing. For Christ, I remember when my mother was dying and she had gone out and the doctors called my sister, I couldn't get there on time.

They called my sister, she was there. My sister, who loved my mom, served my mom. She was such a blessing to my mother.

She's sitting there. And all of a sudden, thinking mom was going to die, mom came back to life. Kind of woke up.

Looked over at my sister and went like this, oh, and my sister went, mom. Why did you do that? And she said, oh, I thought that this time when I opened my eyes, I would see Jesus, my Lord, and it's only you, it's only you. Do you long to see him? Do you or is salvation just some kind of ticket out of hell? Do you long to see him? What's going on in verse four, he says, brethren, you are not in darkness that the day should

overtake you like a thief.

You're not in darkness anymore. If you've been born again, you're not in that realm of darkness anymore. Your mind and heart are not clouded with that darkness anymore.

You don't know when he's going to come, that's for sure, but you're looking to him. You're studying his law, you're seeking to walk according to his commands, you're preparing your heart. You're cultivating faithfulness and godliness, you want to be pleasing to him.

So whether he comes in the midnight hour or in broad daylight, whether he comes in five years or 500, it really doesn't matter whether you know the day or don't know the day, that's not a big deal. Why? You're ready. You are ready.

You're no longer in darkness. Now, let's go on. Verse five, why would the believer not be taken unaware in verse five, he's going to state the reason positively, for you are all sons of light and sons of day.

Now, this is very, very important and we're going to go slowly through it. Look at what he's saying. You are all sons of light and sons of day.

Now, the first thing I want you to look at, look at verse five, look at the look at the adjective all. That's also there in the original text, you are all sons of light and sons of day. Now, why is that important? Paul is making it very clear here that if you are in Christ, you are a son of light and it doesn't matter how long you've been in the faith, it doesn't matter your position in the church.

It doesn't matter how much maturity you have gained. If you are in Christ, you are a son of light. It is not something you have to gain for yourself.

It's something he's done for you. If you truly are a believer, I mean, look at verse 14. He says, he says, we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone, even these that are mentioned here, the unruly.

The faint hearted and the weak, if they are truly in Christ, they are sons of light. Now, what does that mean? This phrase is a Hebraic phrase, it's very, very common when you hear sons of son of son of wickedness and of Belial, it denotes and for the lack of a better word, I'm going to use this word. It denotes almost what we would consider a genetic relationship as the relationship a child would have with its father.

And the idea here is this. God is light. And you, by the work of the Holy Spirit, you have become a child of God, and according to Second Peter, chapter one, verse four, it has been imparted to you.

A likeness. A participation in this divine nature. Now, what is he talking about? He's talking about the phrase that has become so common, the phrase born again.

You have been regenerated. You have been changed. You have become a new creature and that creature, what is characteristic about it? It is a creature.

That manifests. That is filled with. Light, let's go on, I want you to get an idea of this.

Look at Second Corinthians, four, six, it says, for God who said light shall shine out of darkness is the one who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Now, this is what has happened to you. In creation, which is one of, if some people would say, the greatest

demonstration of the power of God in creation, he spoke into darkness and there was light.

And then he looks at the believer and he says the same thing, this one who did this, this one with this tremendous power, he has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. How is a man saved? How is a man born again? It requires a supernatural work of the spirit that is either equal with and I feel like greater than the power of God that was manifested on the day of creation. God spoke through the gospel.

God spoke into your heart, into the darkness, the blackness, the depravity of your heart, and he said, let there be light. And when he did that, you were changed. You became something different than you were before.

Look what he says in Ephesians chapter five, verse eight, for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Now, his language is very precise. Listen to what he's saying.

He doesn't say you were formerly dark. He doesn't use the locative and say you were formerly in darkness. That's not what he says.

He says you were formerly darkness. You were darkness. It was a part of who you were.

It was your nature. You were darkness. But then he says, but now you are light.

He doesn't say you're in light. He doesn't. He's not talking here about walking in light.

He's talking about something much more than activity or deeds. He's talking about nature or character. And what he's saying is you are now light in the Lord.

Prior to coming to Christ, we were by nature children of wrath and sons of disobedience. Now, having come to Christ because of the work of Christ, because of the work of God through the spirit in us. We're now by nature sons of light and we are now capable, we are now able to do what? To bear the fruit of light, as it's described in Ephesians chapter five, which is righteousness, goodness and truth.

If we were to describe your life prior to Christ, we would say that you were in darkness and you were darkness. But now. In Christ, you are light.

And you are in his light, this is who you are, and this is how you need to learn to walk. As a new creature, as someone completely different than what you were before, before you were a child of wrath, now you are a son of light. Now, let's go on.

I want to point out a few things here that I think is very important. I want to go ahead and read them. An extraordinary thing has happened to us.

We are new creatures with new natures that can no longer be described in the terms of darkness and depravity, but are now best described in terms of light, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth. Where we were once described as creatures of darkness, we are now best described as recreations of light. This is just one of the small glimpses of what it means to be born again.

This is what it means when Paul says you are a new creature. Something tremendous has happened to you. You're different.

You're new. Now, why is this important? It's important for this reason. Sometimes I will come up to people and I will talk to them, people that I know love the Lord, people that I know are sincere in their faith, people that I can see a work of sanctification in and I'll say to them something like, how are you doing or so on and so forth in the Lord? And I've heard them say to me this.

Well, you know, Brother Paul, I'm just a sin loving. I just have a sin loving, God hated, God hating, dark heart. I've heard Christians say that before, but I want you to know that's not true.

I'll ask them when they say that I'll go, well, if that's true, then tell me, what did God do when he regenerated your heart? You do not have a sin loving, God hating heart. You have a new heart with new affections, and those new affections are to drive you to serve the Lord and to do his will. When you realize that, that I am a new creation, it makes you better able to live the Christian life with hope, knowing God has done something to me and I can obey him and I can walk in his favor and I can walk in his power because he's done something in me.

I'm a different person. Another reason why this is so important is that when you realize that you're a new creation and that God has given you a new heart with new affections, what will happen to you is this, you will realize that you will never, ever, ever be happy. Are satisfied or content, are full of peace.

If you are walking in darkness or participating in the deeds of darkness. I know I'm a new creature and that gives me great strength against temptation, in what way the devil came to me and said, here, do this. I know what I am now.

I know that prior to coming to Christ, yes, my nature would have loved that, and if I had bitten into it, I would have delighted in it. But I'm not that same man. So if I take that temptation now, knowing that I'm a new creature, if I take that temptation, if I bite into it, what's going to happen? It's going to disgust me.

It's going to give me everything opposite of what I'm being promised. I know and you should know that as new creatures, nothing in this world can delight you. The Puritans used to say something like this.

If you have been born again. You have become a creature so high with affections so high that if you were to gain the whole world, it would not satisfy you. And if you were to lose the whole world.

It would not bring you down. Now, let me ask you a question, is something of that a reality in your life, do you have a sense of this, that God has done such a work in you that you cannot delight in wickedness, that you cannot delight in darkness, that you are a child of light, that you are a son of God? Now, let's go on. He not only talks about being a son of light, but he also refers to being a son of day.

And what does that mean? He's talking now about the realm in which we walk. He's not talking so much about what we are as he is talking about the realm in which we walk. There was a time when you and I walked in darkness.

But now, having been converted and haven't been reconciled with God and having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, we no longer walk in that realm of darkness, but in a sense, we walk in a realm of light. Of the Holy Spirit illuminating our hearts and minds of the presence of Christ in our life and also the word of God. That through reading it, through meditating upon it, through studying it, you and I know what is true, we walk in the light of God's word, so we're no longer sons of darkness, but we're sons of light and we're no longer walking in the nighttime, in the dark, stumbling.

But what are we? We're walking in the light, the light of Christ's presence and the light of his word. Now, Lightfoot says this. Not only do you have an illumination of your own as God's children.

But you are also living and moving in an enlightened sphere, the sphere of God's revelation. Hebert says this day is the realm in which we are now living as light possessed men. That's the realm in which we're living, so on the inside we have been changed.

We have become sons of light, no longer do we love darkness, but we love him and then we live and walk in a sphere of light guided by God's word, guided by his spirit. You and I are able to walk in this world circumspectly doing the will of God, avoiding evil, clinging to what is good. Now, let's go on, he says this.

Well, first, I want to look at some important preliminary truths about this. First of all. In verse five, notice what Paul does, he's telling us who we are, and then when he gets to verse six, he's telling us to live a different way.

We need to be very careful that we never put the cart before the horse. We need to be very careful that we understand who we are as we embark on doing the will of God. When we do not understand that God has done a tremendous work in our life and it is hard for us to take up the word of God and seek to obey it.

But when we know that we're a new creature, we can have the confidence as we look in God's word that we can do the things that are set before us. Although there will be a great battle with the world, with the flesh, with the enemy, we do know now, being a child of God, that we can obey God and we can honor him. There are so many times when Christians will struggle with the same sin over and over and over and over again, and they get to the point where they think there's just no hope.

Nothing is ever going to change. It is at that moment that you need to stand upon the promises of God regarding who you are, regarding what he has promised. And you need to go on.

You need to press on to know the Lord. You need to press on to cultivate greater and greater holiness and righteousness in your life because of the work that he has done in you already. Never, never, never give up.

Never stop. Keep pressing on. Keep fighting.

Keep walking. Keep moving. Keep clinging.

And in the end and even before the end, you will see victory. Now, he says here. I want you to look.

At verse five, for you are the sons of light and sons of day. We are not of the night nor of darkness, so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. Now, I want us to look at something that's very important here.

He said, let us not sleep as others do. What does he mean? The word sleep, according to Hebert, is often used to refer to all sorts of moral and spiritual laxity or insensibility. Let me give an example.

A person who is sleeping is totally unaware of what's going on around him. He could be in the greatest danger whatsoever and not have any clue as to his peril. Also, another thing about a person who is sleeping, a person who is sleeping is inactive.

Words such as being fervent, disciplined, dedicated, self-controlled, driven, all those words mean nothing to a person who's sleeping. The only word that could be used to describe them is slumber. Now, in the spiritual life, it's the same same way.

And I want to read something to you. Paul is saying this. Let us not be like the unbelieving world, which is characterized by sleeping insensitivity to spiritual realities, inactivity with regard to the will of God and apathy regarding the coming judgment.

Now, when he says, do not sleep, do not sleep, look at it. He says, so then let us not sleep. That is in present tense.

And what that means is this, you and I constantly, even though we're new creatures in Christ, we constantly have to be on guard, on guard with regard to what spiritual apathy, going to sleep, not being zealous, not pressing on to know the Lord. This is a constant danger that is set before you. Now, notice also, he says here, so then let us not sleep.

This is also extremely important. Why? Paul's changed something here. He's now using the plural first person.

He's including himself in this admonition. And what does that tell us? Even apostles. Even great and mature men and women must constantly be checking themselves, must constantly be cautious with regard to this deadly disease.

No one is immune to it. You don't outgrow this danger. You could serve the Lord for 30, 40 years and then fall into spiritual apathy, fall into sleeping, fall into even a type of spiritual coma.

And we must constantly be on guard against this. Thomas, Robert Thomas writes, this inattention to spiritual priorities is utterly out of keeping for those who will not be subject to the coming day of wrath. There is no room in the Christian life for slumber.

No room at all, we are not to be sleeping. Well, what are we to be doing? Look at verse six. But let us be alert and sober.

Now, the word but here is very important because it comes from there are two different conjunctions, adversive conjunctions in the Greek New Testament. And this is the strongest. And what he's saying is the world is sleeping.

The world that doesn't know Christ is sleeping. It's going about its activities as though there were no God and God was not working. But you need to be completely different from them.

You must not be sleeping, but you must be alert and you must be sober now. Also, I want you to notice that both commands are in present tense, that you and I constantly need to be on our guard. We constantly need to be watching.

We constantly need to be sober, are self-controlled because we are in a battle that has an impact on eternity. Now, let's go on. He uses two words here.

One of them is alert and the other is sober. Hebert says this about the word alert. It conveys the demand for morally and spiritually wakeful activity.

Be on being on the alert against the assaults of sin and unrighteousness. You and I as Christians, we have been given a new nature, but at the same time, there is something in us, the fallen flesh. And at the same time, there is a world around us that is in opposition to God.

And at the same time, there is an enemy called the devil. And you and I must constantly be on the alert. Now, when this word alert is used in the New Testament, in the Gospels, it almost always refers to the second coming of Christ.

But Paul uses this word quite often with regard to the daily activities of a Christian, showing us that even in the most mundane activities, you and I must be alert. I want to read some of those to you. And First Corinthians 16:13, it says, be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong in Ephesians 6:18 with all prayer and petitions, pray at all times in the spirit.

And with this in view beyond the alert, with all perseverance and petition for all the saints in Colossians 4 to devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. First, Peter 5:8, be sober of spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a lion, like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

I started off by telling you you are a new creature. But that does not eliminate the battle that is upon you. I have told you that you are no longer by nature a child of wrath, but a son of light.

And yet that does not eliminate the struggles of the Christian life. I have told you how much God is for you and with you, and yet at the same time, you need to know you are standing in the middle of a battle and you need to be careful, you need you must be alert, alert. Now uses another word here also that we must be sober or self-controlled.

Let me give you some definitions of this from Lau Anita. It says this to be in control of one's thought processes and thus not be in danger of irrational thinking. I've written here, be rational and self-controlled and abstaining from anything detrimental to walking in the light, to living like a son of light.

You and I must be alert, but we also must be sober or self-controlled and you must evaluate everything in your life, you must walk circumspectly and you must discern if there is something in your life that is hindering you as a Christian that's keeping you from walking in a manner that's pleasing to God, it's keeping you from walking in the light, then you must cautiously but swiftly remove that thing from your life. We must be alert and we must be sober, Hebert says this, it is not enough just to watch, the watcher must also be sober, rational and self-possessed in perfect control of all his senses, he must be free from the stupefying effects of sin and self indulgence. This is what you must be, this is what you must do.

I heard someone say, I think it was John Snyder a while back, he said, all I'm hearing nowadays is men saying, or maybe it was Brother Hamilton here, all I'm hearing nowadays is people saying, be passionate, be passionate, be passionate, be passionate. And maybe somebody ought to be saying, be cautious, be cautious, be cautious. This.

You and I. Belong to God, and yet we are here behind enemy lines and you and I must be vigilant. We must be sober or self-controlled, we must be on the alert now, I want you to look at something here, look at verse seven, it's a strange argument, but actually it's very powerful. Paul says, for those who sleep, do they're sleeping at night and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

Now, why did he put that in here? Here's what he's saying in the natural world, there are certain activities that correspond or are appropriate for the night. For example, sleeping is appropriate at night. Also, you need to understand that most people who are drunk get drunk when? At night, even in the Roman Greco world of the apostle Paul, for someone to be drunk in broad daylight was considered inappropriate and even debauchery.

Now, thievery, adultery, all sorts of lewdness, when is that mainly practiced? All those sorts of immoralities are mainly practiced in the night. Now, what does this argument have to do with us? Well, I want to read something that I've written here. The same truth can be applied to the spiritual or moral realm, spiritual sleeping, apathy, inattentiveness, a lack of vigilance, a lack of moral self-control are appropriate.

They're appropriate, even logical for the unbeliever. Why? Because he's darkened in his understanding and he lives in the realm of spiritual and moral darkness. So when unbelievers act that way, it's logical, it's reasonable.

But these things are totally inappropriate and contradictory for the believer who has been rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the illumined kingdom of God's beloved son. There's a sense in which you kind of say it is appropriate. When the unconverted sin.

When the unconverted get trapped in sin, it corresponds to who they are when they sleep and do not care about spiritual realities, it's appropriate. It corresponds to who they are. That's who they are.

That's where they dwell. That's how, in a sense, they ought to act. But those same things that are appropriate for an unbeliever, they're not appropriate for you and they're not appropriate for me.

You and I should be on the alert. We should be vigilant. We should be serving the Lord.

We should be self-controlled. We should be nurturing and cultivating holiness. We should be pressing on to know him better.

There should be a sense of awakesness, of zeal, of alertness in us. We should take these matters seriously so that when he does come, when the Lord comes, he doesn't find us as he would find them. But he finds us looking, watching, praying, serving, proclaiming.

Pressing on. And brothers, that's what I want for you tonight. I want you to press on.

I want you to walk out this door and know something. That in all this that I've tried to say, I've tried to say this, Christ is coming. And when someone someone mocked me one time when I said that, well, Christ isn't coming for a thousand years, I said, you're going to see him in less than 25, because whether he comes here or you go there, it really doesn't make any difference.

You're going to stand before him. Every day counts. Do you hear me every day counts, every day matters, every decision matters, every time you pray, it matters, and every time you don't pray, it matters.

Every time you listen to his voice and follow him, it matters, and every time you don't, it matters, everything matters. And you've got to take this not with a sense of dread, not in a way that is morose, but you've got to take it with a sense of solemnity and seriousness. This is the Christian life.

You can't hit the replay button. There is no replay. Live each day, yes, with with joy, but also with a sense of seriousness.

This is the only life you have. It's the only life he's given you and everything that you do here, everything will have some sort of impact over there. Let's go the Lord in prayer.

Father, I pray, Lord, that you would even take this. And use it to help your people, Lord, we are weak and you are strong. You override, you undo what has been done.

And you can do what is undone. Lord, you are great. Help us tonight, help your people.

Strengthen them, that spiritual reality, Lord, might increase. That they might take up their life. And each decision with a bit more seriousness.

They might serve the with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. In Jesus name, Amen.

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