

As a Thief in the Night

by Tow Siang Hwa

The sermon emphasizes the urgency of being prepared for Christ's unexpected return, likened to a thief in the night, through vigilance, scripture, and community support.

Duration: 29:21

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:1

Topics: "Secret Rapture"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not forgetting that the Lord is coming. He explains that history is the story of God's creation of man from the beginning until the end. The preacher urges the audience to be prepared for the Lord's coming, comparing it to a thief in the night who comes when least expected. He emphasizes the need to constantly remind ourselves of this, as our memories are frail and the pressures of life can make us forget.

Transcript

Our scripture text is 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 to 10, and the title of the message by Dr. S.H. Toh is As a Thief in the Night. Please turn your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 1. When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child. 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, 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. 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.

Amen. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, once again we look to Thee for Thy instruction.

I thank Thee for those of Thy people present here tonight. As we pass the last few hours and minutes of the year 2005, and as we step into the threshold of a new year, may our hearts and minds be attuned unto Thee, the Giver of life and the Redeemer of our souls. We thank Thee for a year that Thou hast seen us through.

The year 2005, wherein we have received much from Thee, from Thy bounteous grace, from Thy many full blessings, the many provisions, protections we have received from Thee. Now, Lord, may Thy Spirit lead us, open our understanding, quicken our thoughts and our hearts' desires, that they may be attuned unto Thee, that we may all realise the lateness of the hour, the urgency of the times, that soon we will hear the midnight cry, the bridegroom cometh. So, Lord, open our understanding to understand the passage that will be spoken, that Thy name be greatly exalted, and Thy people be encouraged in the most holy faith.

This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. 1 Thessalonians 5, 1. Please have your Bibles turned there.

It is so good, so good to be here with you and to spend the last moments of this old year. What should we think of on such a night as this? I have been meditating, waiting on the Lord. What is it, Lord, You want us to hear from You? And very clearly comes the message, as a thief in the night.

How many of us have experienced this? We lived in a house in Andrew Road for 36 years and never had we a thief until that night. We never thought that any thief would come, but he did. As a thief in the night, when we least expected, he came.

So, here is the moral, the lesson. Dear friends, our Lord has said so. His coming is as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow.

But the thing is, are you ready? Are you prepared? That is what matters. That He will come, He will come. There is no doubt about that.

I hope you are not doubting. But what I am going to ask you is, are you prepared for the thief tonight? He may come tonight, he may come another time. Verse 1, Please see, of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you, that I preach to you, or is there a need? I say yes, there is a need.

There is a need for us to remind ourselves. Why? Because our memories are so frail and when you live in a world like Singapore, the pressures of life are so hectic. Some say we are living in the pressure cooker atmosphere.

That is why some people emigrate. They say when you go to Australia, your day's work, you can finish in half the day. Because you work at such a high pressure here.

So when you work at that kind of pressure, very soon you forget. Because we get into a humdrum and a routine kind of life, you forget the Lord is coming. Please, do not forget.

Do not forget because this is the grand climax of history. What is history? Can you tell me what is history? History is the story of God's creation of man, from the creation until the end of history. There is just two points.

Creation, maybe about 6,000 years ago, more or less. End of history is written in 1 Thessalonians 5. When the Lord comes, he is the Lord of history. He is the creator.

He is the man who began history for you and me. He put us here on planet Earth from Adam until now. One day he will say, time up.

On that day will you be found wanting? This is the whole point of tonight's message. So, verse 2, yourselves know. I hope you do.

If not by tonight, after tonight, you cannot say you do not know. Please, I am going to say it so many times, you might get tired by saying so. But they call me the holy nagger.

I nag a lot. I keep on telling you until you get so sick that you will not forget. But I want to tell you again, please.

For your own sake, the Lord is coming. Are you ready? He will come as a thief in the night. How does a thief come in the night? At the time you least expect.

Usually they say between 2 and 4 am. When you are really dead asleep, he will come. So, this is an analogy, an example.

Jesus says, when you least expect me to come, I will come. When men will say, he is not coming, I will come. So I say, tonight, after you have heard this message, you will belong to that group of people who will daily remember, remind themselves, tell themselves again and again, maybe today.

When you wake up first thing in the morning, when you pray to the Lord, also say, Lord, make me ready for your coming. Maybe today. Last thing at night, when you go to bed, say the same, Lord, could it be tonight? Maybe tonight, I want to be ready.

How can you be ready, dear friends? Read on, verse 3. When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. Who is the them? I say, generally, all people, of course, are the them. Yes.

When the world says, peace and safety, then Jesus will come. But, more particularly, the them refers to Israel. We were in Israel in September, October.

And the Jews of Israel had just evacuated from Gaza. You know where Gaza is? They had pulled out 8,000 people, 8,000 Jews. Some had been settled there for over 30 years.

And once the order comes from Prime Minister Sharon, you got no choice. You can't say, hey, I have been here for so long, why do you want to disturb me? No choice. So 8,000 people were forcibly taken out of Gaza.

What for? In order to buy peace. Today, the formula for peace in Israel is land for peace. The Palestinians claim that this is our land.

You Jews are intruders. You have usurped our land. We want you out.

So, because of international pressure, please understand, the Jews did not voluntarily say, we are going to move out and give our homes, hand over to the Palestinians. No. International pressure.

Because if you do not, and the international community put economic sanctions, you cannot survive. So they evacuated. As they say, the formula is exchange land for peace.

You give more land to the Palestinians, there will be more peace. Is that so? Dear friends, what do you think? I want to inform you, please, this is fact. When the Jews withdrew from Gaza, the Palestinian authorities said, that's right, this is the beginning of the end for you.

Now, we put more pressure, more terrorism, until you finish, until Israel will be completely exterminated and wiped off the face of the earth. This is their intention. Their one objective is to get rid of Israel.

But now, Israel says, there will be peace. At least for now. And they are willing, they are considering, to do more pull-outs.

Where? From West Bank, from Samaria, from Judea. You want us to pull out? Okay, we come to the table, we bargain until we feel that it is worth our pulling out. What for? Land for peace.

My friends, let me inform you that this formula is totally unworkable. Absolutely unworkable. Because the Palestinians are now working on the formula that we own the land.

We have been here. You Jews are intruders. You came from outside, you want the land.

The land belongs to us. This is the wrong premise for the Palestinians. How do I know? You want to claim a land, what must you do? You want to claim a property, what must you do? I ask you, all you intelligent Singaporeans, what must you do? Show a title deed, right? Title deed.

Now the Palestinians will not acknowledge that we have a wonderful title deed here. This title deed that God gave to us has all the documents. When God called Abraham, says, I will give you this land.

This is the land from the great river to the great sea, the Jordan on the east, Mediterranean on the west. All this land, and as far as you can see, this is yours. By covenant.

Why does it say so? Read Genesis, Deuteronomy. It's all there. So, title deed given by God.

But the Jews today are blind. Blinded. They're totally ignorant about the fact that the Messiah has come.

And they put him to the cross. Crucified him. Now the Saviour is coming, and they do not know.

They're waiting. And they say, peace. Now look at this verse.

Verse 3 is what the Jews are saying today. When they say, peace and safety, that is the sign. Do you see it now? Dear friends, what sign are you looking for? I'm giving you this sign tonight.

Do you remember? Because there is peace as never before in Israel today. Peace. We were there.

Those of you who have been there, and those who are going, you know that peace. But, please understand, that peace is short-lived. Before anything, before they can count, when they say peace and safety, what does it say here? Sudden destruction.

So, I mention this. Prime Minister Sharon is preparing, waiting. His next-door neighbor is called King Abdullah.

You know King Abdullah? King Abdullah held some kind of priest conference in the city of Petra. And all those people were called there in order to make plans for a peace settlement with Israel. I said, dear friends, they can make all the plans.

But, take this. Note this. There will be no peace until the Prince of Peace comes.

There will not be peace. The Word of God is so clear. When they shall say peace, safety, then the Lord will return, and there will be a great war at that time.

But, Jesus Christ will be triumphant, victorious to the very end. And then He, He will establish His reign of justice and peace for a thousand years. Now, read on, please.

Verse 4 Ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. You have the Word of God. Are you reading it, dear friends? Every day, are you reading? For therein is the way of escape from the coming world war.

Therein is the way of everlasting life. Nowhere else can you get that instruction for survival. How can you survive in the next war? How? The Word of God is your only safety, your only security.

The Word of God. Now, I brought with me a card. And, all of you have received it.

I want to take you through it quickly. This card, all of you have received. Have you not received it? Anyone who hasn't received, it is available.

I brought 200 of them. Now, this is to remind you. So, you cannot say you don't know.

Or you were not told. So, I am telling you tonight. This is better than any road map.

You know, President Bush has given them the formula called the road map. You want to have peace, you follow my road map. Made where? In America.

Road map. You follow America's way, there will be peace. True? No, friends.

False. American plans, road map, will never work. Because the root cause of the problem has not been removed.

So, I say you must know. Not the road map, but God's map here. The road map for peace is in God's word.

And here, I urge you to look through as I take you through now. My New Year Resolve. Have you all got a copy? Anyone who hasn't got it? How many? Oh, plenty of them don't have it.

Can we have more copies, please? I want you all to make sure that you have it, so that after tonight, you have the most blessed road map for your safety, for peace, for security. Who hasn't got it? Please, hands up. Plenty of people don't have it.

Please bring it quickly. I brought over 200. How can there not be enough? Please bring over here, over here.

Oh, I'm so sorry. You sure it's finished? You sure it's finished? Wow. Husband and wife, share one, please.

The rest, pass on. Please. I'm so sorry.

I thought I had brought more than enough. I apologize. All right.

The rest of you, just follow. Oh, yes, there are still a few more. Still a few more.

Yes. All right. Please share now.

Please share. And I will send you more. Now, my New Year Resolve.

It is always good that we make use of this critical time, this momentous moment at this time. When you come tonight, did you have some kind of feeling you want to beat the Lord here? And what for? I said this is the purpose of coming here tonight. My New Year Resolve.

At least on this night, you beat with the Lord and say, Lord, I want to make a new start. In case you've not been in the regular habit of reading God's Word, this is it tonight. Make a new start.

From 1st January, that is in about an hour's time, by God's grace, I shall endeavor my utmost to honor my Savior. Are you honoring your Savior? How do you honor your Savior? Are you in love with your Lord Jesus Christ? Yes or no? If you're in love, you're on the telephone for one hour at a time. How many minutes do you serve? Do you fellowship with the Lord every day? Let me ask you.

Be frank. Ask yourself. Do you have quiet time in the morning? Oh, I'm too busy.

I'm a Singaporean. And Singaporeans wake up and must rush. High pressure, must go to work.

No time for quiet time. I said, did you miss your breakfast in the morning? Nobody missed breakfast, right? If you have time to feed your body, why do you not feed your soul? So this is it. From this New Year, I will promise to have 30 minutes of quiet time with the Lord every morning.

Is that possible? Answer is, depends. Depends on whether you love the Lord or not. If you think Jesus is dispensable, I'm more important, my work is more important than Jesus, of course, you can't do it.

You can't. It's so simple as that. So I challenge you.

Do you really love the Lord? Do you really want to prepare for His coming? It says here, When men shall say, peace and safety, I will say, where are we going to have... You know, all the indicators in Singapore are good. Amazing. Ever since the new Prime Minister came in, everything turns good.

Ah, now they say, Singapore is poised for great things. Everything is going to boom. Go and do something else.

Tell me, Jesus is coming. Oh, no, no, no, no. I'm not ready for that.

So this is it. I say, when men shall say Singapore is having unprecedented prosperity and peace and safety, sudden destruction will come. Please be very careful.

This is God's Word. No joking. Listen carefully.

So, are you prepared? If the Lord is coming, how do you prepare for His coming? How do you get ready for His coming? I say, you read the Word. The road map. Not Mr. Bush's road map.

That one will lead to war. God's road map is the Word of God. Read it.

Every day. You say, I don't know where to read. Now you have no excuse because I got all the books for you.

RPG. Alright. Adult RPG.

You're adult, read this. Teenage RPG, this one. You're a child, child RPG.

You're Chinese, Chinese RPG. You have no excuse. So please, when the Lord asks you, did you read my Word? You say, I don't understand.

I don't know. I don't know English. Ah, it's all here.

So it's so important you understand. There's a road map here. This is Daily Remembrance.

Some of you have it, some of you don't. But it is the best reading for morning and evening. Written by Pastor James Smith in 1840.

1840. For his London congregation. So this is very, very good.

I edited this and took 2,000 hours. So this is for you. Get it from your book room.

If you don't know, get your pastor to order from the book room. Now here we are. Let's be very serious.

Take this again. Please see. Share around, please.

I promise the Lord I will make prayer meeting my first priority. When you pray, God works for you. This is the formula.

This is God's promise. It's so wonderful. There is a wonderful God up in heaven waiting.

He says, you ask, I give. You don't ask, I don't give. When you pray in earnest, you will be blessed.

This is the promise. Dare you give God your time and challenge Him for the promise. Take Him at His word.

He promises to bless you. You. You, not me.

You pray, you are blessed. Alright? To honour the Lord at Sunset Gospel Bible Fellowship, if you do nothing else at 6pm on Sunday, why don't you worship the Lord together with us? I invite you. Please come.

And commencing tomorrow, for six months, Rev. Kwik Xuan Yew will preach and teach on Revelation. The coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. The last series when he held it, there were 800 people every night for five nights.

Now this is six months. You come and listen and be blessed. And finally, number five.

I will speak or tract for the Lord Jesus Christ once a week. Are you? Do you ever dare to say something to somebody about His salvation? Because you are a Christian? Because you are a child of God? You want some other person's soul to be saved? Do you know the most precious thing on earth that you have is your soul? And the sooner all of us here place a value on souls, and see every person, your relative, your friend, as a soul waiting to be saved, if he has not been saved, you do this. Go and speak to them.

Pray for them. Give them a tract. So this is for your New Year blessing.

My time is up. Now, please look at the Bible again. And don't throw this card away.

Keep it in your Bible. And I challenge you. After you read, put a tick where you want to do something for the Lord.

And sign your name and date it. And God will take this as evidence for you. Read on.

Verse six. Let us not sleep as others do, but watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night.

They that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and the 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.

Amen. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, bless this congregation of your people, that the words spoken out of thy holy book, this road map to heaven, will touch some heart and change lives.

That from the beginning of 2006, there will be a new understanding, a new commitment, a new self-giving dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, bless all who hear this message, and bless all who resolve to follow the Lord Jesus more closely in this new year. This is our prayer in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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