

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0 : 00] I believe that was a blessing to many of us this morning. Would you take the Word of God with me and turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5? We're beginning our last chapter in 1 Thessalonians as we've been on this book going through for several months and, well, last couple of months anyway.

And, Lord willing, this Sunday and the next, we will finish up Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5, we'll read beginning in verse 1 in just a moment. Before I get into that, I want to share two verses from Luke chapter 12.

Luke chapter 12, you don't have to turn there, stay in 1 Thessalonians unless you want to flip over quickly, but Luke chapter 12, verse 2, there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered.

Nothing hidden that won't be made known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light. And what you have whispered in an ear in private rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

[1 : 22] Let's go over to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 in verse 1. About the times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord, remember that phrase, will come just like a thief in the night.

When they say peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, watch this, are not in the dark for this day to surprise you like a thief.

For you are all children of light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness.

So then, let us not sleep like the rest, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night. And those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled. And put on the armor of faith and love and a helmet of the hope of salvation.

[2 : 31] For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. So that whether we are awake or asleep, speaking of whether we live or die, we may live together with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing. Would you pray with me? Lord Jesus, I thank you for your word that pierces to the heart.

I pray that you would shine your light into the dark places. That you would remind us that we belong to the day. And it's in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

That's the theme this morning. We belong to the day. Taken straight from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 1. The takeaway I hope that we can all walk out of here with this morning.

The challenge to carry into our week is to let Jesus light up the darkness in and around us. Let Jesus light up the darkness in and around us.

[3 : 39] Back in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, down there in verse 2, it talks about the day of the Lord. So what does it mean when it says the day of the Lord? What is the day of the Lord? The day of the Lord is God's future plan of His return, His rapture, His reign, and reckoning.

So what do we mean by that? We don't know exactly the order or the timing of when these events will take place with certainty. And if you ask different theologians or different pastors exactly how that's all going to play out, you'll get a different answer every time just about.

There are all kinds of different views on the millennium, God's thousand-year reign here on earth.

There are all kinds of views, viewpoints on the tribulation time that the Bible says will be happening here on earth.

And even Christians may or may not go through the tribulation time, the church here. And there's all different kinds of views of what events and at what point of that event is the rapture, God bringing the church home to heaven.

We don't know exactly when with certainty, but we know it will happen. God will return. He will rapture His church. He will reign. And there will be a day of reckoning.

[4 : 50] There will be a day of judgment. So that's what it's talking about. Generally speaking, the day of the Lord. Malachi chapter 4 and verse 1 references the day of the Lord.

It says, look, the day of the Lord is coming, burning like a furnace when all the arrogant and everyone, watch this, who commits wickedness will become stubble.

The coming day will consume them, says the Lord of armies, not leaving them root or branches.

You think God hates wickedness? You think God hates darkness?

You think God hates sin? Oftentimes, we love to cling to the parts of God that are most appealing and attractive to us.

But just like we have to take the whole counsel of this book, every page, every word inspired by God and given to us for direct application to our life, we must also take the entire scope of what we read about our God.

[5 : 58] You can't pick and choose and cherry pick the parts of God that you like and the parts you don't like. God hates wickedness. And in the end, God will judge the wicked.

But then in verse 2 of Malachi chapter 4, But to you who fear my name, to you who fear my name, the son of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.

Who's he talking about when he says the son of righteousness? Talk back to me, church. Jesus.

Thank you. Whoever said that. I think it was Aubrey. There you go. Good job. That's right.

The son of righteousness is Jesus. And he will arise with healing in his wings. For those who what? Fear my name.

So the challenge this morning, walk in the light. Walk in the light. Would you turn with me over? We don't have it on the screens, and that's intentional. Would you turn with me over to 1 John chapter 1 and verse 5.

[7 : 08] If you didn't bring a Bible with you, there's one in the pew back in front of you. 1 John chapter 1 and verse 5. Let's read 1 John 1, 5, down through verse 7 together.

For sake of time, I'm going to go ahead and read. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you, God is light. And there is absolutely no darkness in him.

If we say we have fellowship with him, and I think just about everybody in this room would say I have fellowship with God. You would lump yourself into that category.

So if we say we have fellowship with God, and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying. And are not practicing the truth.

If we walk in the light, as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Folks, we cannot have fellowship with one another if some of us are walking in the light, and some of us are walking in darkness.

[8 : 17] I didn't make that up. It's in the Bible. We must be united in striving every day to walk in the light of fellowship with God.

And abhor the darkness. Run from the darkness. Flee the devil and his wickedness. Then we have fellowship with one another.

And at the end of verse 7, the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus his son, cleanses us from all sin.

That's what cleanses us. Y'all, we're not talking about living as perfect people. That will never happen. As long, and we talked about it last week, as long as we are wrapped in this sinful flesh, there will constantly be a struggle between this flesh and what this flesh wants, and the spirit inside of us, and what he wants.

And the key is to win more battles for the spirit than you lose. The key is to continue on striving to listen to the spirit and not walk in the darkness.

[9 : 31] It doesn't mean that sometimes the darkness isn't going to creep in. It doesn't mean that sometimes the darkness isn't going to overwhelm us, and we have to then turn back to the spirit.

Every one of us will fall, but the righteous man falls seven times and does what? Rises again. Gets back up. You don't walk in the darkness.

You don't live there. You don't stay there. You get back in the light because we belong to the light. We belong to the day. God saved us from the darkness. He saved us from the wickedness. You aren't trapped by that anymore. Unless you still are. Unless you still are trapped by that, and you're playing church. You're playing Christian. You're putting on this front. You're trying to act like you're one of God's people, and you're not. And you're not hurting anybody except you.

[10:25] God loves you. He wants you. The invitation is stretched out to you, and all you have to do is give up and say yes. We are to walk in the light.

There's a pastor that I read frequently from time to time. He's written some encouraging books, especially on the Christian life and walk. And he says, walking in the light means we pursue obedience and are honest about our remaining darkness.

darkness. I think that's a great way to put it. We are not perfect. There will still be darkness that creeps in, but we are honest about our struggles.

We are honest about our frailties, about our weaknesses. We open up. We're vulnerable. And we get one another's help and God's help in dealing with it.

Walking in the light means we pursue God. We pursue obedience to Him. And we're honest about where we fall. And when we fall, we can lift each other up.

[11:39] I might need you to lift me up. You might need me to lift you up. You might need one another to help lift you up. And fight back against the darkness.

We're all prone to it. We're all weak. But we don't live there. We don't walk in it. We don't continue on. Back in 1 Thessalonians 5, you, brothers and sisters, are not in the dark.

You are all children of light, children of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness.

Number two, wake up from sleep.

Walk in the light and wake up from sleep. Over in Romans chapter 13. And again, I'd ask you to turn there if you would. Romans chapter 13 and verse 11.

We've got a few verses to read in Romans chapter 13. This is the prime soteriological book of the Bible. That just means it has to do with the doctrine of salvation, how to be saved.

[12:44] Romans lays it out for us that we are wicked, but God loves us anyway. He sent his son Jesus to die for us. And because of the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for us, you and I can be saved.

We just have to turn to him, turn away from our sin, ask God for forgiveness, and put all of our faith that he will save us. Then, we can be saved.

And that's what Romans spends a good deal of time talking about. So in chapter 13, down in verse 11, besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep.

Because now, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is nearly over, and the day is near. So let us discard, watch this, discard the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light.

Let us walk with decency, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual impurity and promiscuity, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't make plans to gratify the desires of the flesh.

[14:07] Don't make plans to gratify the desires of the flesh. Walk with decency, as in the daytime.

Discard the deeds of darkness. Put on, arm yourself, protect yourself with the armor of light. We are equipped with everything we need to fight back against the darkness that surrounds us.

You walk out of this church, and the truth is, you look around inside this church, and there is darkness. You walk out in the world around us, we are bombarded constantly with darkness, with wickedness, with all those things that we just read about in Romans 13.

The sexual impurity, the promiscuity, the carousing and drunkenness, quarreling and jealousy, it finds its way into the church, and it's sure enough outside the church. It's everywhere.

So how in the world can we, who are surrounded by so much darkness, live in light? But we have to arm ourselves. Put on the whole armor of God that you can be able to stand in the evil day.

[15:21] When all the darts come against you, all the temptations come against you, you are strong enough to withstand if you arm yourself with the armor of light. Otherwise, you're a sitting duck.

You can't fight back against the powers of darkness, but with the power of light inside of you, it is strong enough. It is stronger than anything. Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded.

God is stronger than the devil. The spirit is stronger than your flesh. But you have to give in to the spirit. You have to stop giving in to the flesh.

You have to say no to yourself. We all do. Time and time again, we will face this battle.

I wish I could say it's all going to get easier from here. But until we get home to heaven someday, that's why we look with such great anticipation to see our Jesus, to see our Savior, to see His second coming and rapture us home to heaven.

[16:26] It's going to be wonderful and finally the battle will be over. Finally, we'll quit losing these battles. Finally, He'll bring us home to heaven someday. But until that day, He did not leave us alone.

He did not leave us abandoned. He left us with everything we need. His Holy Spirit. His Word, which contains every instruction we need for life.

It's there. What are we going to do with it? Wake up from sleep. Walk in the light. Wake up from your sleep.

Maybe there's people in here this morning who are living in the dark. You're walking in the dark. Maybe there's people who are asleep and it's time to wake up.

It's time to put on the armor of light. It's time to walk in the light that Jesus gives. You know who you are. You know what you've done. You know whatever it is.

[17:29] There's no possible way that I could know everything that's going on in your life, in your heart. But you do. And God does. And He's calling to you this morning.

He's saying, I can shine my light into the dark areas. Let me do it. Folks, if you're walking in darkness, you know what you're going to produce? The fruits of darkness.

If you're walking in the light, you're going to produce the fruit of God's light. So what are the action steps? Number one, find self-control by daily surrender to spirit control.

It's a continual battle. We're always going to face it. Paul wrote about it in the book of Romans. He said, the things I want to do, I find myself not doing. The things I don't want to do, that's what I find myself doing.

We will all continually struggle with this, but it's about giving in to the Spirit and surrendering self-control. You will get yourself in trouble. I will get myself in trouble.

[18:27] The Holy Spirit is the only one that will keep me from being ashamed. Paul said in Romans 1.16, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. There was plenty other things in Paul's life that he had to be ashamed of.

He killed Christians, for goodness sakes. I really hope there's nobody in here who's killed Christians. Otherwise, we've got another problem. We've got a security team, though, so just so you're aware.

Paul had done terrible, despicable things that he was ashamed of, but he said, I found one thing that I'm not ashamed of, and it's the gospel of Jesus. And so if you stay in the light and you walk in the light, then you will not be shamed by that.

You will not hang your head in shame when it's revealed what you've done in the light. But how many times have you and I, you don't need to raise your hand, how many times have you and I been ashamed of what we did in the dark?

So we must find self-control by how? Man, you say, you figured out the secret to self-control? That's great, man. You should go make a billion dollars and sell a bunch of books and speak at a bunch of conferences.

[19:37] It's by surrendering to spirit control. I'm sorry, I wish there was an easier answer, but there's not. For you or for me, we must surrender to the Holy Spirit and give up self. Secondly, find an accountability partner.

That's where it gets sticky. You can't fight this battle alone. God never intended for you to fight this battle alone. You've got darkness that's overwhelming you.

It's beating you up. You can't seem to shake it. You can't seem to find the light. You need help. This church is here to help. We're not a trophy club.

We're a hospital. But sometimes we act more like a trophy club. There are people all throughout this church who would love to help you bear your burden.

Keep it confident. Keep it quiet. Deal with it only in the circles it needs to be dealt with. But we, as the body of Christ, are here to help and are called to help one another.

[20 : 41] If you're ignoring that help, that's on you. It's not on us. Find self-control by daily surrender to spirit control. Find an accountability partner.

I'd be happy to do it. I'd be happy to help you find someone else. Someone you love. Someone you trust. Someone who you know and loves you. Cares about you. So the takeaway is let Jesus light up the darkness in and around you.

It's a hard sermon to preach but we're preaching the text as it comes up. We are not children of the dark. So let us not walk in the darkness.

Let us not live publicly or privately like those without Christ. let Jesus shine his light because God wants to do incredible things.

Bear incredible fruit of his light in your life. We belong to the day. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus I don't know what's on every heart this morning.

[21 : 49] I know what's on mine. I just ask that you would convict us God as only you are able shine your light into the dark places.

In our hearts around us there's people who want to share the gospel with others in their neighborhood in their community at their workplace and it just seems like they're surrounded by darkness.

Every time we wake up in this world it seems like there's so little light but your light is more powerful than the darkness. Remind us of that.

Let us not be overcome by the darkness. Let us not be overwhelmed by the night. Joy comes in the morning. You do incredible things with sunrises if we study the scriptures.

You can make a sunrise in our day. we claim the healing from the sun of righteousness that you mentioned in Malachi.

[23 : 02] God I ask that you would convict hearts convict my heart shine your light into the darkest areas of our hearts illuminate it and then help us to take the steps needed.

Daily go to the word daily go to you in prayer. Find an accountability partner and daily go to seek spirit control over self-control. Lord we need it.

This town doesn't need any more fruits of darkness. Our families don't need any more fruits of darkness. This church sure doesn't need any more fruits of darkness. Shine the light God.

There's somebody here who says God has never shined his light into my heart. prayer. I need to ask him to forgive my sins. Put my faith in him to save me. Would you slip your hand up right now? Nobody's looking around but I'd like to see you and pray for you. Would you slip your hand up right now? I need to ask Jesus to forgive me of my sins. Put all my faith in him as my savior. Thank you.

[24 : 10] You can put your hands down. God, I mean if you would say I need prayer. I'm not going to get specific of what it is but I need prayer.

Would you slip your hand up this morning? Thank you. God, you know every heart and you know every situation.

Just ask that you would convict us through your scriptures. Let us walk in the light God. it's in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Brother Gray.