

DiscipleLiving In the Last Days

Adapted from <https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/like-a-thief-in-the-night/> Ray Pritchard. APRIL 4, 2017

Today we are going to address the subject of ‘The Last Days’ or living as genuine disciples in the end times. Now I am not prophesying a certain time for the coming of our Lord Jesus and the end of things as we know it, but I think it is prudent to reflect and consider that the Last Days or End Times events seem to be accelerating and becoming more prominent. SO the focus today is how should we as Disciples of Jesus Christ live in light of the imminent return of Jesus, and how should that affect the way we disciple others.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11...¹ *Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,* ² *for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.* ³ *While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.* ⁴ *But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.* ⁵ *You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.* ⁶ *So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.* ⁷ *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.* ⁸ *But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.* ⁹ *For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* ¹⁰ *He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.* ¹¹ *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

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I am using his sermon as a guide, but my actual sermon will be just loosely related to the key points.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. *In this passage, Paul reminds us of four things we already know about the end of the age.*

I. We Know the Coming Destruction

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

No one will escape!

“The same is true of the Day of the Lord. *When God’s judgment is poured out on this earth, no one will escape.* The world cannot escape the tribulation period. Your only hope is to find the way of escape through the Lord Jesus Christ”. (Pritchard)

II. We Know Our Identity

“But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness” (vv. 4-5).

III. We Know Our Duty

“So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and 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, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet” (vv. 6-8).

“In verse 6 Paul uses two words to describe how we ought to live while we wait for Christ’s return.

First, we must be alert. Don't be a spiritual sleepwalker!
Second, we must be self-controlled. The word means “serious-minded” or “earnest.”

We must be *alert* because the enemy attacks on every hand.
We must be *self-controlled* because we are always on duty.
We must reject *moral compromise* because it can only drag us down.

Soldier, Put On Your Uniform

Every Christian is a soldier in that battle.
We must do three things in light of Christ's return:

Wake up! Clean up! Dress Up!

Wake up! (verse 6)

Clean up! (verse 7)

Dress up! (verse 8)

Jesus is coming again, and we will meet him when he comes, whether by resurrection or by rapture. Is that just wishful thinking? Can anyone be sure they are going to meet the Lord someday? The last section of our passage answers that question.” (Pritchard)

IV. We Know Our Destiny

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (vv. 9-11).

God knows our destiny

“God's plan for you is so certain that we may call it a destiny. Paul calls it an “appointment.” Here are three statements to ponder:

God knows where you came from.

God knows where you are right now.

God knows where you will end up.

What is the destiny of the saved?

1. Not to wrath

2. To receive salvation

Let me sum up the message of this passage in just four simple words:
Our Destiny is Deliverance.

Paul tells us the answer in this passage:

Your Identity Determines Your Destiny

Would you be ready to meet Jesus today?

If Jesus were to come today . . . and he may . . . would you be ready?

Christian, do you know what time it is”? (Pritchard)