

Happy and Holy in a Hostile World – Part 5

1 Thessalonians 5; Coast School of Theology; Earl Miles; 12-15-2019

The Basics of the Christian Life (5 Chapters of 1 Thessalonians)

1. The Nature of True Conversion
2. The Nature of True Gospel Ministry
3. The Testing of Our Faith
4. The Temptation of Life in a Fallen World
- 5. The Day of the Lord**

What do we need to know to be happy and holy in a hostile world? What do we need to know (and apply) when we are under persecution?

- Know that God is for us, not against us.
- Know that we have followed reliable witnesses to Christ.
- Know that we should expect our faith to be tested.
- Know that we will be tempted to find an easier, more pleasurable lifestyle.
- Know that one day evil and suffering will be judged and banished and we will be rewarded for our faithfulness.**

Every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming of the Lord.

- And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (1:10)
- For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? (2:19)
- So that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (3:13)
- ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (4:16-17)
- Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (5:23)

The Unexpected Day of the Lord (1-3)

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ 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. (NASB)

- We don't need to know dates and times for what is coming next.
- The Day of the Lord is the 'wrap up' of the history of this fallen world which includes the judgement of all men and the reward of God's people in the kingdom of God.
- The day of the Lord will come unexpectedly for the unbelieving world (like a thief who unexpectedly shows up to rob you in the middle of the night while you are asleep).
- It will begin with painful events.
- It will not be a literal 24 hour day but a short season like the end of a pregnancy.
- Unbelievers will not be able to escape the judgment of God on the day of the Lord.

'Christ designed that the day of his coming should be hid from us that, being in suspense, we might be as it were upon watch.' - Calvin

'it will come suddenly to unbelievers' – Calvin

The gospel includes this information (the return of Christ is part of the basics):

- Jesus came to save from sin and satisfy in God.
- Jesus lived the life we could never live.
- Jesus died the death we deserve to die.
- Jesus rose from the dead as Lord and Savior.
- Jesus will return one day to judge and establish heaven on earth.
- God calls us to repent: to turn from sin to God for happiness/ satisfaction.
- God calls us to faith: to trust Jesus (the Lord and Savior) to be saved from sin and satisfied in God.

The Expected Day of the Lord (4-6)

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. (NASB)

- The day of the Lord will be expected by believers.
- Believers will know that the return of the Lord is approaching.
- This speaks against the idea of an unexpected, secret rapture of the Church.
- Unusual things will be happening before the return of Christ for His bride, including the Great Apostasy and the rise of the Man of Lawlessness.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do*

so until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

²⁵ “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. ²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” ²⁹ Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. ³⁴ “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; ³⁵ for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. ³⁶ But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” – Luke 21:25-36

Resting in Jesus, Hoping in God, and Pursuing Love (7-8)

⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ 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. (NASB)

- We prepare for the day of the Lord by resting in Jesus (faith) and hope in God and pursuing love.
- To ‘sleep’ is not to do these things but to live for the moment without regard for the day of the Lord.
- Faith working through love is the breastplate that guards our vital organs in tribulation/spiritual warfare.
- Hope for salvation in the day of the Lord is what guards our minds in tribulation/spiritual warfare.

‘when he arms us with a breastplate and a helmet, he admonishes us that we must maintain a warfare ... the life of Christians is like a perpetual warfare, inasmuch as Satan does not cease to trouble and molest them’ – Calvin

‘the man that is provided with faith, love and hope will be found in no department unarmed’ – Calvin

Pre-Wrath Rescue (9-11)

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (NASB)

- It is true that believers will not have to endure the wrath of God in the day of the Lord.
- But it is not true that believers will not have to endure tribulation leading up to the day of the Lord.
- The best we can say is that believers will be ‘caught up’ or raptured before the wrath of God falls on this world (Revelation: Seals [tribulation throughout history], Trumpets [great tribulation leading to the end] and Bowls [wrath of God on the ungodly at the end])
- ‘whether awake or asleep’ refers back to 1 Thessalonians 4.

‘The sum is this – that Christ died with this view, that he might bestow upon us his life, which is perpetual and has no end.’ - Calvin

Elder Ministry (12-13)

¹² But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. (NASB)

- We prepare for the day of the Lord by following Biblical leadership.
- Two responsibilities of elders: ‘charge over’ and ‘give you instruction’
- Peace in the local church requires an understanding of Biblical leadership established by God and trust in God through it.

‘contempt of pious teachers’ – Calvin

‘it is not so much for the advantage of ministers as of the whole Church, that those who faithfully preside over it should be held in esteem’ – Calvin

‘It is to no purpose, therefore, that any, that do not discharge the office of an instructor, glory in the name of pastors.’ – Calvin

‘this work is the edification of the Church, the everlasting salvation of souls, the restoration of the world and, in fine, the kingdom of God and Christ’ – Calvin

‘This seems to be added to denote spiritual government. ... those that govern the Church in the name and by the commandment of Christ.’ - Calvin

Every Member Ministry (14-22)

¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. (NASB)

- We prepare for the day of the Lord by loving one another as Christ commanded. (John 13:34-35)
- We are to love by correcting those who are out of line.
- We are to love by encouraging those who are discouraged.
- We are to help those who are weak.
- We are to be patient with each other.
- We are to forgive and not take revenge.
- We are to do good to believers and unbelievers.
- We are to find our joy in God.
- We are to pray continually.
- We are to give thanks in every situation.
- We are to listen to God's Word and reject what is not.

'sharp reproof' to the unruly – Calvin

'the fainthearted – a broken and afflicted spirit – my receive consolation' – Calvin

'that the weak may be treated with kindness and humanity' – Calvin

'This patience, however, is, properly speaking, contrasted with a feeling of irksomeness, for nothing are we more prone to than to feel wearied out when we set ourselves to cure the diseases of our brethren. The man who has once and again comforted a person who is faint-hearted, if he is called to do the same thing a third time, will feel I know not what vexation, nay, even indignation, that will not permit him to persevere in discharging his duty. Thus, if by admonishing or reproving, we do not immediately do the good that is to be desired, we lose all hope of future success. Paul had in view to bridle impatience of this nature, by recommending to us moderation towards all.' – Calvin

'every disposition to do injury' – Calvin

'he teaches that we must not merely refrain from inflicting vengeance, when anyone has injured us, but must cultivate beneficence towards all.' – Calvin

'The first step, therefore, in the exercise of patience, is, not to revenge injuries; the second is, to bestow favors even upon enemies.' – Calvin

‘as doubts frequently obtrude themselves as to whether God cares for us, he also prescribes the remedy – that by prayer we disburden our anxieties, as it were, into his bosom’ – Calvin

‘For if this joy does not reign in us, the kingdom of God is at the same time banished from us or we from it. And very ungrateful is that man to God who does not set so high a value on the righteousness of Christ and the hope of eternal life, as to rejoice in the midst of sorrow.’ – Calvin

‘Thanksgiving, as I have said, is added as a limitation. For many pray in such a manner, as at the same time to murmur against God and fret themselves if he does not immediately gratify their desires. ... we always mingle thanksgiving with our desires. We may lawfully, it is true, ask, nay, sigh and lament, but it must be in such a way that the will of God is more acceptable to us than our own.’ – Calvin

‘For what is fitter or more suitable for pacifying us, than when we learn that God embraces us in Christ so tenderly, that he turns to our advantage and welfare everything that befalls us?’ – Calvin

‘the science of interpreting Scripture, so that a prophet is an interpreter of the will of God ... the commendation of external preaching’ – Calvin

‘whatever delusions Satan suggests to them, they presumptuously set forth as secret revelations of the Spirit’ - Calvin

Sanctification by God (23-28)

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. ²⁵ Brethren, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (NASB)

- There are things we need to do, but God is the one who sanctifies us and make us like Christ.
- Sanctification is a process that take time to complete.
- Prayer is a two-way matter; no one is exempt from the need of the prayers of others.
- Tender affection is the love of the family of God.
- Grace to us comes through the Spirit working through the Word to us.
- Suffering is the path to sanctification.
- In this context, ‘brothers’ is used like ‘men’ referring to all people, male and female, not just male.
- Every chapter ends with a reference to the coming of the Lord.

‘Paul, accordingly, knowing that all doctrine is useless until God engraves it, as it were, with his own finger upon our hearts, beseeches God that he would sanctify the Thessalonians.’ – Calvin

‘we must, during our whole life, make progress in holiness’ – Calvin

‘spirit’ = ‘reason or intelligence’ and ‘soul’ = ‘the will and all the affections’ – Calvin

‘For how is the whole man entire, except when his thoughts are pure and holy, when all his affections are right and properly regulated, when, in fine, the body itself lays out its endeavors and services only in good works? ... For then is the man pure and entire, when he thinks nothing in his mind, desires nothing in his heart, does nothing with his body, except what is approved by God.’ – Calvin

‘when the Lord has once adopted us as his sons, we may expect that his grace will continue to be exercised towards us’ - Calvin