

LSB 1 Thess. 5:1 - 11

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, 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 who is pregnant, and they will never escape. 4 But you, brothers, 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 awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep 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. 9 For God has not appointed 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, comfort one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

A person that I greatly respect and love recently told me that I'm a fire and brimstone preacher. Not in the sweaty red faced Bible waving screaming version that is stereotyped, I do it quietly without raising my voice.

Which brings up something else. We just finished up Vacation Bible School which Larisa always manages to make winsome and fun. You just feel good hanging out with her and all of her teenagers who are exhausting themselves quite literally running and yelling and playing and loving on all the children who come.

It is barely organized chaos and it's fun. The little children get to hear Bible stories that over and over single out Jesus as the source of our salvation. The little ones are learning about Jesus, but perhaps more importantly, the team of teenagers are learning that within the fun and chaos, perhaps the most rewarding high on earth is watching God work miracles in people. Including them.

The work Larisa accomplishes over time in the lives of the teenage volunteers may be more important even than reaching the little children. She's teaching young adults that there's no more satisfying activity than dismissing self and comfort and security and instead joining with like minded people and working to physical exhaustion to advance the kingdom of God.

For me, as a sidelined onlooker it is a painful reminder that faithfulness to teach the words of this book is unpopular. The reason this church is empty is because faithfulness to the message of this book doesn't make you feel good. And so people quit.

The ultimate theme of this book is judgement against rebellion, and restoration of all glory and worship to God alone. After Genesis 3 the world spins out of control, actually under control of an evil usurper who has stolen this world and all of the glory due to it's Creator away from the creator and a plan ensue's where God will reclaim and retake this world that rightfully belongs to Him.

He will crush the rebellion and depose the ruler of this world. But it's a bloodbath, literally. This world is condemned. Every rebeller against this world's owner will be crushed and held accountable. And that happens rapidly after the church is removed. Seven years. A very short time frame with increasing stacatto judgements as the end of that seven year period approaches.

That didn't make you feel good, did it. People vote with their feet. And yet, if we truly love God and hate Satan, those things should actually give us joy. Our God wins. And yet like the prophet who ate the book, the words are sweet in our mouth but bitter in our stomach.

The trouble is, I DO love God and I DO want His Son to come and retake this world that is rightfully His, but there's another part of me that can't help but love the duped rebellers.

On Wednesday night as Larisa and team were doing their best to make the story of redemption fun for the little ones, singing and rocking to and fro, with hand gestures that the teenagers all know but the little kids are trying so hard to mimic the big kids. As all of that was going on a group of Tonopah teenagers was just outside the park fence with very noisy motorcycles and 4 wheelers zooming up and down the street and being just as disruptive as they could possibly be.

Their message is simple. Christians are not cool. Sin is cool. And yet in the midst of that Larisa commented, those teenagers haven't stopped watching us. She has a missionary heart for those kids in spite of their disruptive rebellion.

There's this tension in us that wants God to come and judge the rebellion but also realizes the rebellers are just duped image bearers who are redeemable. Larisa reminded me that those kids are our mission field. Even the noisy rebellious disruptive ones.

The tension for me is how do I teach this book verse by verse and soft pedal what it says so that people feel good? There's an example for us in Acts chapter 24 where Paul is locked up in a prison and the person who is the ruler with the authority to set him free, the king, as it were, is curious about Paul, him and his wife, and they request an audience in order to listen to Paul's message.

It would be like being locked up in prison in Carson City, the old state prison, and our governor is curious to know what I believe, what message do I have for him, from God. So he comes to the state prison from the governors mansion with his wife, and says, bring Jim Galli to me, I want to hear what his message is. What would you do? What would you say? Make him feel good and it might go well for you?

That's what happened to Paul in Acts 24. Felix and Drusilla his wife have requested an audience with Paul in order to discuss christianity as opposed

to judaism. Felix is the governor in Judea, neither a jew nor a christian but a man who kept abreast of what was happening. He's curious and his wife, *is* a jewess and also curious.

History prefaces our story with the fact that Drusilla was married to someone else and when she was just 16 years old Felix drew her out of that marriage to be married to him. So they request an audience of Paul who seems to be an important person within this new Christianity which has split off from the jews.

22 But Felix, having a more accurate knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case." 23 Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some rest, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him. 24 But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and summoned Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and answered, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will call for you."

Paul has a private audience with Felix and Drusilla. The perfect opportunity to be a winsome christian and win the sympathies of Felix and Drusilla and maybe even be given his freedom.

Paul has a three point sermon for Felix and his wife who he took away from another man when she was just 16; See it there in vs. 25? Righteousness. Self control. Judgement.

Oh, Paul, Paul, Paul, your one chance to be winsome, and perhaps win over these folks to your persuasion. Win friends and influence people as Dale Carnegie wrote in his book.

But no. You explain God's standard of righteousness. You narrow righteousness down to the area of self control with a guy that you know took a 16 year old away from another man, who was her husband, and then

you terrify these guilty folks with God's imminent judgement? Paul, what're you thinking?? Back in jail he goes.

Beloved, this book is about a disaster of sin that occurred soon after creation where this world was lost to its creator because of a rebellion that spread to every human inhabitant. Man forfeited his dominion over this world to Satan. We are all born into that rebellion. Dead to God. Enemies of God, and yet beloved by God who paid for our redemption with the blood of His only Son.

Satan rules this world, he is ruler of this rebellious world. But not permanently. With the rebellion, God set in motion a plan to redeem sinners out of the rebellion, and ultimately, God's plan working through His Son, Jesus who is rightful owner of this world, Satan will be deposed and all peoples who rebel against God will be judged, and the authority to reign, the kingdom of God will again be enjoyed on this planet.

Fire and brimstone will be involved. That's where that term; *fire and brimstone preacher* actually originates. After God snatches His own people out of this world at the rapture, things get progressively more evil and rebellious as the time draws to an end. Cataclysmic things begin to happen world wide. A time of testing for the entire earth as we read in Revelation chapter 3.

If this sounds like an apology for preaching judgement, it isn't. If I'm to preach verse by verse through the book and be faithful to its message, that means there will be some happy places and some sad places and some scary places. Last week was a happy place, in case you missed it. Speaking about the rapture where God rescues His church out of this world before the 7 years of final judgement begins.

Actually, every week is a happy week if you consider that this planet is condemned to judgement by God for rebellion and sin, and we all have escaped the wrath we were due. That's why our message is good news. There is blanket condemnation for sin, and we are all sinners, but the good

news is there is a way of escape. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins and He is preparing a new home for us in heaven.

Beloved, that's only Good News if somehow you understand the scope of the bad news of the condemnation of this rebellious place. If the world is a happy rosy place that's getting better every year, who needs a Saviour? Saviour from what??

But there is more good news beyond the ultimate good news of salvation from the condemnation of sin. Beyond that, God provides a lot of joy and pleasures and inner peace, and love, and thriving, in Him, even here in a condemned world. We are so very blessed.

Pam and I have enjoyed our lives and all of the blessings of children and grandchildren. We've always had more than we need. God has smiled on us these many years. I often feel like our minimal obedience to His plan and design has brought us maximal blessings. Still is. We've been happy in a world that struggles to find any real happiness. We are blessed.

But back to our task at hand. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

I Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

The Thessalonian Christians, like us, were curious about God's time schedule of events. They were waiting for Jesus to appear and remove them out of the world. They were experiencing persecution and distress. Becoming Christians had cost them personally.

Those who were Jews were likely unsynagogued, expelled and separated from Judaism and also perhaps their own families. Those who were Greeks were considered fools and lunatics by their fellow Greeks, including perhaps their close relatives and families.

They were waiting for the rapture and they were wanting to know about

how the future might unfold. The coming judgement. The times and the seasons. *1 Now concerning the times and the seasons 1 Now concerning the chronos and the kairos*

chronos is the word for time happening in time and space. Chronology. History in sequence and in their case, what are the future sequences, times. When, exactly, is Jesus returning? Is it weeks? Months??? Chronos is the "when" question.

kairos is the word for the time of opportunity. The right time. The wrong time. Harvest time. Planting time. Kairos is the word described for us by the Preacher in Ecclesiastes chapter 3;

1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

Paul says in vs. 1; *in regard to chronological time and opportune time*; That covers what they wanted to know. When will these things be, and what will be the signs. Remember, the disciples asked Jesus to tell them the future in those exact words. When will it happen and what will be the season of opportunity in which it will happen?

They were waiting for Jesus. They were sad because some had already died and missed it. Paul explains the rapture of the church to them. Those who died will get there ahead of even us who remain.

Next question: When? When?

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need of

anything to be written to you.

Paul answers, you have all the answers you what? need. *you have no need of anything to be written to you.* Why? Previous paragraph. You won't be here. You'll be with Jesus. God is going to remove His church from the world before the world goes into this time of distress.

It's sort of like what we used to hear from time to time out where I worked. One day I asked a question about a certain activity that I found interesting and I asked what the mission for those particular things actually was? What are they for? What will they do, if the time becomes opportune for them.

And my friend who I asked, who obviously had that information simply looked at me and said; Do you need to know? Nope.

We don't need to know the day and hour. In fact we need to **not know** because Jesus told us the fact that we don't know has a purifying effect that helps us. Jesus could come in the next split second. Am I doing something that I'd be proud of when He appeared?

Those who have loved His appearing have also been purified by not knowing the moment. Don't live in the fashion that you want Jesus to find you living in for 10 minutes before He arrives because you know the moment. Live every moment as if He would arrive in the next split second. The helps to purify us

However, the Bible does have much to say about times and seasons, doesn't it. The old testament prophets and the New testament writers wrote a lot of prophecies that speak about the **eschaton**. That greek word means things to come. The eschaton, future things. We get our word eschatology from that word. The study of future things. We look into the prophecies and dream of the day when Jesus will return and depose Satan and retake this planet as it's rightful King of kings and owner.

Paul says; You don't need to worry about future things because you won't be here, but . . . we do anyways, right. We want to know. And God has revealed a LOT of information about future events. Fully 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy about future things. And of those prophecies, about 1/3 is regarding the first coming of Messiah, and 2/3 or so is about His second coming in judgement.

It's actually our motivation to warn those around us. Scientists are working hard to devise realistic early warning systems for tornadoes and huge tsunami waves and earthquakes. Beloved, we have in our hands an early warning system about future cataclysmic calamities that are coming upon the earth, as sure as that next breath that everyone takes for granted.

Wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes in various places, famines, pestilence, evil men will wax worse and worse, and other spoken revelation speak to that second word kairon. The season of opportunity.

We're watching God's judgement fall upon our nation. We're watching unparalleled evil, never before even imagined evil, unfolding before our eyes. We're watching all of the signs given and it seems to us that like birthpangs, they are increasing in duration and intensity. Signs of the end times? I don't know about you, but I certainly think so.

In April of this year, just 2 months ago, some seventh grade boys were charged and a criminal investigation was ordered for the crime of sexual harassment because they mis-pronounced a girl who decided that she is not a girl, but a boy, and these boys refused to acknowledge her confused delusion.

Suppose one of those boys is picked to be a supreme court candidate and someone uncovers the charge of sexual harassment when they were 13 years old in the seventh grade. Such a possibility never even crossed anyone's mind just 10 years ago. Sexual harassment for refusing to call a little girl, a boy. That's frightening. Someone can slam that charge on the permanent record of a 13 year old boy.

Times and seasons? Yeah, stuff like that. We are engaged and we do watch. We all sort of know the path we're on is unsustainable. Global warming, global cooling, maybe nuclear wars fighting over whether it's real or not, and who has to cease and desist while someone else doesn't change anything. Look around you. With the weapons of mass destruction and the lunatics who run the place, what do you think's going to happen. Fire and brimstone and vapor of smoke don't really seem too far fetched right about now.

I had a little wake up call just yesterday morning. Because the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the rights of the helpless unborn babies, you and I are being called a cult. We're delusional people who are passing out the cool-aid. I read it in my phone messages Saturday morning.

And I thought to myself, well, it's not the first time. In Acts 24 Paul was in jail, if you read the entire chapter before the story about Felix and Drusilla, Paul is in jail because the Jews started a riot because Paul was a nuisance and a trouble maker and a cult. He was part of that troublesome new cult called "**The Way**." So they started a riot and Paul got to go to jail for their rioting. He was the problem. They call us a cult? Not the first time.

Vs. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

I want to spend some time thinking about the term in that verse, the day of the Lord, and perhaps we'll stop here and pick things up next week in vs. 3

What is the day of the Lord? The term appears 4 times in the new testament and 19 times in the old testament.

It isn't talking about a single day or event. The day of the Lord is the sequence of events, beginning with the rapture of the church and culminating with the physical return out of heaven of Jesus with His holy ones to wage war with Satan and all those who are in rebellion against God

and His Son on this earth.

The day of the Lord is the cataclysmic re-taking of the authority to rule and reign over this world, this rebellious planet. Think of it in these terms. The authority to reign of Satan, the kingdom of Satan as opposed to the authority to reign of, the kingdom of Jesus, on this earth.

The day of the Lord is that cataclysmic period where Satan is deposed, the rebellers are judged and crushed and removed, and Christ sets up His throne in this world to rule for a thousand years. The day of Satan is over. The day of the Lord has come.

Listen to some of the prophecies from the old testament that define that time and those cataclysmic events that define the 'Day of the Lord' ;

Isaiah 2:12, "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up, and it will be brought low."

Isaiah 13:6, "Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand."

Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, the day of the Lord comes cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate."

Jeremiah 46:10, "For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge Himself on His adversaries."

Joel 1:15, "For the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as destruction from the Almighty."

Joel 2:11, "For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible."

Joel 2:31, "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."

Amos 5:18, "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord, for what good is

the day of the Lord to you?”

Amos 5:20, “Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light?”

Malachi 4:5, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

Zephaniah 1:14, “The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hastens quickly! The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter.”

Zephaniah 1:15, “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”

There's a good reason Paul sort of takes the easy way out and tells the Thessalonians you have everything you need to know about this time period already. You won't be here. The day of the Lord takes place during the final seven years of Jewish time. The church will be removed.

But we still want to know, right? We love to read the end of the book where we WIN. Because when Christ appears in the sky, charging into battle against this rebellious world, we're with Him. Cool stuff. Exciting stuff.

2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

The answer to their question about the times, *chronos*, and the season of opportunity, *kairos*, is in this verse. A thief doesn't announce his plans ahead of time.

Please have the silver polished and ready because I'm planning to rob your house on July 9th at approximately 2:25 AM.

The other situation that describes the suddenness of the event is the days of

Noah. Noah preached a warning for 120 years while he assembled the ark according to God's instructions. Those folks thought he was drinking the Kool-Aid too. Just like now.

But when the skies opened and the water came it hit them like a tsunami. Instantly under water coming with tremendous force. Swept away in a flood. Too late. The door to the ark was sealed shut by God Himself.

The time to repent and beg for forgiveness for your rebellion and enmity to God who owns you is NOW. We'll see in future chapters that God actually sends a deluding influence to those who heard and understood the gospel and rejected it so they could have their sins.

I believe the thief reference must be in regards to the rapture which begins the period known as the Day of the Lord. After the rapture the events that unfold are pre-told. The one surprise event is the removing of the church which begins Daniels final seventieth week of years.

Millions of people vanish. Millions of trouble makers that the world will be glad to be rid of. There'll be some kind of explanation I'm sure. Space aliens removed those weirdo's so the world could progress. Nobody blocking the progressive folks anymore. Good riddance. But

Seven years isn't really a very long time for all the progressiveness. And 3 1/2 years into the seven, things start getting bizarre.

Meanwhile, we wait for the trumpet and the shout to Come Up Here! And we need to be like Noah and warn those around us that the chronos, the exact time, is not known, and the kairos, the seasons of the world around us, leads us to believe that call is imminent.

If you need to repent, please do it today.