

“Our Hope of Salvation”
1 Thessalonians 5:8-11
(Preached at Trinity, November 17, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. At the end of **Chapter 4** Paul describes the glorious return of Christ. He will appear with the sounding of trumpets and the loud announcement of victory from the archangel. This will mark the end of the world and the final judgment.
2. Paul describes it as “The Day of the Lord” using the Old Testament language to describe God’s judgment. It will come suddenly and without warning.
1 Thessalonians 5:2 NAU - "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night."
3. It will be a fearful event. Men will be crying out in terror.
Revelation 6:16 NAU - "and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;"
Hebrews 10:31 NAU - "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
4. Man’s greatest problem is the wrath of God. Nothing else can compare with this terrible curse hanging over humanity. Most try to escape it by denying its existence. It is a futile effort, however. The human conscience cannot escape this terrible truth.
5. How is it that while some will be trembling and crying out in terror, others will be rejoicing with shouts of joy? How is it that for many the thought of the return of Christ brings great comfort?
1 Thessalonians 4:18 NAU - "Therefore comfort one another with these words." It is because that while they too will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, God has provided for them a way of deliverance.
6. While Jesus is the Judge of all the earth, He is also the Savior of His people. For them there is a blessed hope, a sure confidence that Christ will look upon them, not in wrath and condemnation, but with Divine favor. For them, the thought of Christ’s return brings great comfort rather than terror.
Paul describes this blessed hope of salvation in **Verses 8-9**.
1 Thessalonians 5:9 NAU - "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"
7. This morning I want us to consider this glorious hope that is at the heart of God’s purpose for His elect people. All of history is unfolding according to this plan of deliverance for God’s elect.
8. What is this plan and purpose of God?
God’s plan is to deliver a large number from His great wrath.
1 Thessalonians 5:9 NAU - "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"

9. God's plan can only be understood as you understand the condition of fallen humanity
- A. Out of all of the living creatures man was created with unimaginable honor. We were created in the image of God. We were created as spiritual beings with the ability to relate to God, to think rightly of God.
We were created with the capacity for abstract reasoning and the comprehension of moral concepts such as justice, goodness, and truth.
- B. God gave His Law and wrote it on the heart of man. In addition, He gave one law that would stand as testimony to man's obedience in the Garden. He was commanded to abstain from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- a. Of course, we know that Adam did not remain in his state of moral purity. He engaged in that which God forbade and fell into a state of corruption that affected his entire being – physical and spiritual. In his depravity he lost the ability to think rightly about God. God was now seen as his enemy and God's righteous Law was seen as that which was to be despised.
- b. Adam came under God's condemnation. God's wrath burned against Adam.
- c. Adam served as the head of all humanity. His corruption was our corruption. His condemnation was our condemnation.
This corruption of man is universal
Psalm 14:2-3 NAU - "The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one."
- C. Against this backdrop of human corruption God looked upon his fallen condition and determined to show mercy
- a. God determined to rescue a great number from among these sinful men. He fixed His infinite love upon these elect people and He provided a way whereby they might be returned to their former righteousness. He determined to give them to His Son who would become man so that He could redeem them by standing in their stead. He suffered God's just punishment in their place.
1 Peter 3:18 NAU - "For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"
- b. Jesus Christ died for us that we might live with Him. He has gone to prepare a place for us and has assured us of His return.
1 Thessalonians 5:10 NAU - "who died for us, so that whether we are awake or sleep, we will live together with Him."
- D. This is God's salvation for man. To be saved is to be forgiven and accounted righteous in God's sight for Christ's sake.

- I. This wonderful gift of salvation must be received by faith
John 3:16 NAU - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
- A. Paul is declaring this as something that has already occurred with the Thessalonian Christians
1 Thessalonians 5:8 NAU - "having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation."
1. This isn't a command to put on the armor but a description of an already existing reality. The Thessalonian Christians had already received Paul's message of the Gospel by faith.
 2. This is the starting point. Paul declared this to the Philippian jailor
Acts 16:30-31 NAU - "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
 3. It is through faith that the redeeming work of Christ is applied to us God's salvation becomes ours. Our sins are forgiven. His righteousness becomes ours. No longer are we under God's wrath and condemnation.
 4. Paul describes it as being delivered from the wrath to come.
1 Thessalonians 5:9 NAU - "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"
- B. Paul once again uses the triad graces of redemption – faith, hope, and love
1. These are the chief graces of the Christian life. These graces are what Paul had looked for in the lives of the Thessalonians.
1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 NAU - "We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of *you* in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,"
 2. Our faith and love are the foundation of our Christian life and the assurance of our hope. The Thessalonian Christians were displaying the reality of these graces
1 Thessalonians 3:6 NAU - "But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love"
- II. This blessed hope of salvation gives us courage as we patiently await Christ's return
1 Thessalonians 5:8 NAU - "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."
- A. Paul once again turns our attention to the Christian armor.
1. These graces serve as armor to protect us as we are engaged in the spiritual war.
 2. Paul refers to the breastplate of faith and love. This is the Christian's primary armor. Picture it as the Christian's bullet proof vest. A bullet proof vest is designed to protect the vital organs.
 - a. Without faith we have nothing. We are defenseless against the fiery arrows of Satan. In Ephesians 6 Paul refers to our faith as a shield against Satan's arrows.

- b. More important, without faith we have no deliverance from God's wrath upon sinners.
1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 NAU - "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."
 - c. And without love we have no evidence of our faith.
1 Corinthians 13:2 NAU - "if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."
 - 3. In Ephesians 6 Paul refers to our breastplate as a breastplate of righteousness. This is because righteousness flows forth from faith and love. Faith and love are the foundation of our sanctification
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NAU - "may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; ¹³ 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."
- B. Paul then looks to the warrior's helmet – the Christian hope of salvation.
 - 1. Remember the context. Paul is setting it up as a result clause.
Since we have put on the breastplate of faith and love let us be alert and sober.
Since we have the helmet of the hope of salvation let us be alert and sober.
 - 2. Paul is maintaining the armor imagery.
The helmet protects the head.
The Christian keeps careful attention upon the mind
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
 - 3. Paul is describing our attitude as we await the return of Christ.
We must remain watchful, sober, vigilant.
 - 4. The Christian must maintain courage and confidence as we stand firm against the onslaught of the forces of evil.
 - 5. In Ephesians 6 Paul refers to it only as the helmet of salvation. Here Paul adds a different dimension. He calls our helmet the "hope of salvation."
 - a. Remember, Christian hope is not wishful thinking or a vain desire that somehow everything will turn out OK in the end.
 - b. Christian hope is an absolute confidence in the unfailing work of Christ. It is a steadfast assurance in the promises of God.
 - c. Paul is talking about our absolute assurance of our salvation—assurance that envelopes the mind like a helmet. Such hope keeps us looking to Jesus despite every trial and difficulty of this life.
- C. Satan seeks to destroy us.
 - 1. He seeks to undermine our hope in Christ. He continually seeks to direct our attention away from Christ and upon this present world—as with Demas, whose love for this present world caused him to abandon his service to Christ. He seeks to dissatisfy us with everything in life.

2. Christian hope maintains great confidence in the work of Christ and keeps an eye upon Him and upon His return.
1 Thessalonians 5:8 NAU - "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."
 3. Paul is declaring that which we already have. We have put on the breastplate of faith and love—Christ's work in us.
From this we have our confidence – our unshakable hope of glory.
 4. When all else seems hopeless, we have the absolute confidence in the return of Christ that could happen at any moment.
1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 NAU - "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."
 5. This helps us keep our priorities straight. It reminds us of our holy calling.
Titus 2:11-13 NAU - "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,"
1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
- D. This helmet keeps our thinking straight. It maintains control over our mind
1. This is how the Christian is able to keep his mind upon eternity.
This is how we excel more and more in pleasing Christ – **Chapter 4:1**
This is how we are able to maintain a kingdom focus, why we tell others of Christ, why we give out tracts.
Without this hope we have no assurance. Without assurance our service to Christ will lack motivation. The primary detriment to our evangelism is the weakness of our hope that has robbed us of assurance.
 2. Our hope of salvation helps us maintain the centrality of Christ
 3. If ours is a heavenly hope it keeps us resolute in denying those things which hinder our journey towards it
Hebrews 12:1-2 NAU - "let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Conclusion:

1. Paul's point in this portion of his letter is the reality of the return of Christ. We should see it as eminent. He will come suddenly, and for the unbeliever He will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night.
2. But for Christians, it will not be unexpected. To the contrary, it will be an expected return. We are looking with expectation.
As Christians we have put on the armor of hope—a breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet of hope. Paul's point is that these things should keep us looking upward.
3. Our great danger is to remove our armor and pretend the war has ended.
This is one of the reasons the body of Christ is so important. We must continue to encourage and exhort one another as we await the return of our Savior.
1 Thessalonians 5:11 NAU - "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing."