

THE TIMES AND SEASONS

Date: July 16, 24

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Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

INTRO: The passage that was read for us this morning was 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. In verse 17 it speaks of those who will be "caught up." The words translated caught up are very interesting words. This speaks of Christians being "caught up", and the original word is *harpazo*. The online bible says it means to seize, carry off by force, to claim for one's self eagerly, to snatch out of the way. That is the word from which we get the word *rapture*. The Lord will come and snatch us out of the way and claim us for Himself eagerly! That is the day we are very, very, close to and which we look forward to. And we look forward to it because we will be with our Lord, and He will be with us.

But I want to draw our attention now to chapter 5, verses 1-10. It goes on to say:

*1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*

*2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

*3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

*4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

*5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

*6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

*7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*

*8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

In 4:13-18 we have Paul's teaching on the rapture and in 5:1-11 we have his teaching regarding the tribulation. What a fascinating passage is before us this morning with regard to prophecy. Paul says, "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren you have no need that I should write to you." The area that Paul is concerned with addressing is "the times and seasons." Our question is: What does this refer to?

#### I. A SURPRISE FOR THE WORLD

When the rapture happens it should not come as totally unexpected for the Christian. We are to expect Christ every day, because we do not know the day or the hour and the great catching up is imminent. The time of the rapture has been explained in 4:13-18. Tell me, what follows the rapture? Well, it is the revealing of the antichrist and the tribulation. So, it should not be surprising to us at 5:1, which immediately follows 4:13-18, that it should speak of the tribulation.

Now you might ask me, how do you get the tribulation out of chapter 5:1-11? That is a good question. Notice now verse 1, "But concerning the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you." Why not? Because, verse 2, "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night!" Now you might say, "But wait a minute, does not the rapture come as a thief in the night?" Is this not talking about the rapture?

Well, we must first identify what the phrase "the times and the seasons" refers to. Vines Dictionary says that, "Broadly speaking, *chronos*, (that is times), expresses the duration of a period, *kairos* (that is seasons) stresses it as marked by certain features....Chronos marks quantity, *kairos*, quality." End quote. So *chronos* from which we get our word *chronology* speaks of the length of time to a certain point and *kairos* speaks of what kind of time that point is.

So, just what does "times and seasons" refer to? J.Dwight

Pentecost says, "Christ also speaks of the 'times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24), which are evidently to be distinguished from Jewish 'times and seasons' (Acts 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:1)" (Pg. 129, also 314). So Pentecost refers to the times and seasons as a Jewish time.

In Acts 1:6 the disciples asked Jesus, "Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And Jesus said, "It is not given to you to know to know the times or the seasons..." Now why would Jesus say that? Men like Rick Warren have concluded from that that Christians should not be interested to understand prophecy, but surely that is wrong. What does this mean then?

Now I have wondered if Acts 1:7 may not in fact be a pre-tribulational rapture passage. It is interesting that two separate words are used for *know* in Acts 1:7 and in 1 Thessalonians 1:5. In Acts 1:7 it is *ginwskw* and in 1 Thessalonians 5:1 it is *oida*. The word to know, *ginwskw* may convey the idea of experiential knowledge when it is influenced by Hebrew thinking (TDONT II:398#2 pgph1). For example, the marital relationship is described by the word to know, *ginwskw* (eg. Gen. 4:1; Matt. 1:25 *ginwskw*). The Greek word in Acts 1:7 is *ginwskw*. It is this word that is used in 2 Corinthians 5:21 which says of Christ that He *knew* no sin. It does not mean He had no academical knowledge of sin. It does mean that He had not experienced sin in His own life.

The word *oida*, as used in 1 Thessalonians 5, on the other hand speaks of full knowledge. If this was the intent of the uses of the words for knowledge then these passages might say this: "You will not experience the times or seasons related to the day of the Lord, but regarding academical knowledge of the day of the Lord you know perfectly well that this day comes as a thief in the night."

It is instructive to note that Jesus did not say, "Well, let me tell you something. Since the Jews rejected Me, the kingdom will not be restored to Israel. It has been replaced by another group of people known as the Church." That is the doctrine of replacement theology that is now gaining popularity again. This is the view that the Church has replaced Israel, and so the promises of a restored kingdom once intended for Israel now apply to the Church.

Furthermore, from Acts 1:7 I would gather that the times and seasons have to do with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The word to *restore* is *apokathisteemi*. It means to restore to its former state. Israel was at one time a great nation. The OT promised its restoration and the Jews had been waiting for this for a long time. So, I gather that the times and seasons have to do with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel and this will happen in the tribulation.

Now in 1 Thessalonians 5:1 Paul says that concerning the times and seasons the Thessalonians have no need that he should write to them. Then he tells us why and it is because they themselves know that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. In my understanding the phrase "the day of the Lord" refers to the tribulation and the millennium. The tribulation is the night of this day and the millennium is the day time of the Day of the Lord.

Paul then explains that. Man will come to a time when he seeks for peace and safety. And when he finally achieves peace he says, "Now we have peace and safety." There is the peace treaty of the antichrist. When this world comes to to the time when they say they have peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as birth pangs upon an expecting woman. This indicates that by the phrase 'day of the Lord' he is referring to the tribulation time for it is then that sudden destruction comes.

Now you may say, "Well, is it not Jesus' coming at the rapture that comes as a thief in the night?" The phrase, "thief in the night" occurs twice in the NT. First here and then in 2 Peter 3:10, listen to the 2 Peter reference:

*10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

The phrase, "the day of the Lord" never refers to the rapture. The day of the Lord refers to the tribulation and the millennium. The tribulation is the night time and the millennium is the day time.

Our question now is, does the phrase "the times and seasons" refer to the future time of God's working with the

Jews, the tribulation time? Well, 1 Thessalonians 5:2 identifies the "times and season" with the beginning of the day of the Lord, and that is the night time, the tribulation time.

Now Paul says that it is not necessary for him to write to them regarding the times and seasons because they know perfectly well that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. So, the identification of the times and seasons with the coming day of the Lord is evident.

For the sake of time let me just say, as I see it, the day of the Lord encompasses the entire tribulation and the millennium. The tribulation is the night of the day of the Lord (Amos 5:18-20; 1 Thess. 5:4-7) and the millennium is the light.

OVERHEAD HERE: We'll put up the overhead here and you can study it as we go along.

Now, notice very carefully that the text does not say Jesus comes like a thief in the night. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures never speak of Christ as coming as a thief in the night. They do speak of Him coming as a thief and each time it is with regard to believers who have ceased to watch. For the watching Christian the rapture will not come unexpectedly, though it may come as a surprise. The description of a thief coming in the night is more than a surprise. It is rather that to which the world is in total oblivion to.

Let me give an example of the difference between something coming as a surprise or when one is in total oblivion. My dad used to use dynamite to either blow up stubborn pine stumps or remove beaver dams. I witnessed a number of those. We would be hiding behind trees or sitting under the TD 9 International crawler tractor. We knew that within soon the charge would explode and when it did, it still came as a surprise. But let us say you are walking through the woods. You had no idea anyone was around and then a charge of dynamite explodes right beside you. It is different to have an explosion go off right beside you when you expect it than when it happens when one has no idea it will happen. The rapture may well come as a surprise even though it was expected but when the day of the Lord begins, mankind will be caught off guard and he will be in total

oblivion. They will say, "Peace and safety has arrived" and then sudden destruction comes.

Now note that Paul says they know (*oida*, full knowledge) perfectly, that is exactly or accurately that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Now notice something further in verse 3: "For when they say..." It is absolutely instructive that Paul changes from speaking in the second person to speaking in the third person. When we speak in the first person, we are referring to the speaker. When we speak of the second person it is the one spoken to. When we speak in the third person, we speak of the one spoken about. So, here the first person is speaking to second person about the third person. Paul is speaking to the Christian about non-Christians.

So, in verse 3 Paul speaks in the third person when he says *they* and *them*. It comes when *they* say, "Peace and safety." It comes *them* as labor pains upon a woman and *they* shall not escape.

The indication is that the ones Paul is speaking to, the Christians, will not be there when this day begins. And this day will begin when they say, "We have achieved peace and safety!" There is no possible way we could say today we are in the day of peace and safety. With Iran and North Korea building up their nuclear bombs and with Russia in the Ukraine, there is more fear than ever in the world. Peace is one of the great efforts of mankind today, and I believe that will escalate until both Jew and Arab are finally is willing to give in on some major issues and make peace. No doubt, this is the peace pact of Daniel 9:27.

Well, if the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night on all non-Christians.

## II. NO SURPRISE FOR THE CHRISTIAN

Paul then tells us how this truth of the day of the Lord should come as no surprise to Christians. We begin this point in verse 4 which says:

*4 But you brethren are not in darkness that this day should overtake you as a thief.*

Paul is no longer speaking about 'they' and 'them.' He is now talking to the Thessalonian believer. Then notice the

word "But..." There is a contrast here between the sons of the night, the non-believer, and the sons of the day, the believer. So, he says. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." So, we ask, will this day overtake the believer as well, only it will not overtake him as a thief because he knows it is coming? Or is it because Church age Christians will not be part of the day of the Lord? Paul will explain this question in 5-10.

Notice in verse 4 that it speaks of "this day." This day refers to the day of the Lord. The "day of the Lord" is an OT concept and it speaks of the night time and the day time of the day of the Lord. The night is the tribulation, and the day time is the millennium. The phrase, "day of the Lord" occurs 30 times in the Bible and 25 of those are in the OT.

In verse 5 Paul now explains why this day does not overtake believers as a thief. It is because, and it says, "You are all sons of light and sons of the day." Well, what does that mean? One must answer here what day is spoken of when it says believers are sons of the day. The immediate context is that of the day of the Lord. However, it does not fit well that Christians are sons of the day of the Lord, in the darkness part, because that is a time of darkness and gloominess. This day must be some day that the Thessalonians were well aware of for Paul does not define what day he is speaking of.

I think he is referring to the day of Christ which he speaks of in 2 Thessalonians 2:2. In this passage it is evident that they are well aware of what the day of Christ is. Let me just note here that all modern versions follow a MS variant which reads "day of the Lord", not "day of Christ". I do not think that is right. So let us look at the identification of this day in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5:

*1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,*

*2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

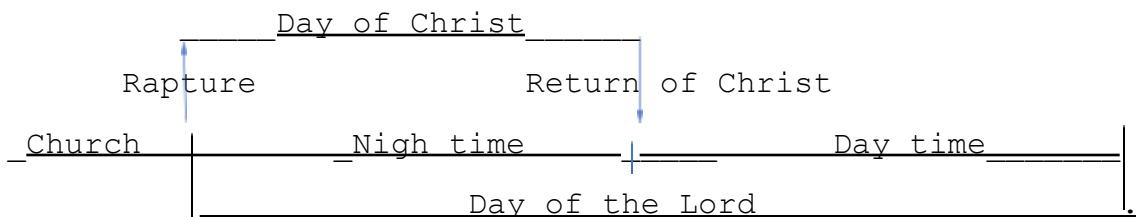
3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

I think that the day of Christ is a time period which is in progress from the time the tribulation begins until the believers return with Christ near the end of the tribulation. I think it describes the time of the day of the Lord from the Christian perspective. J Dwight Pentecost says with regard to references to the Day of Christ, "In each case in which the Day of Christ is used it is used specifically in reference to the expectation of the Church, her translation, glorification, and examination for reward" (See J.D. Pentecost 231-232). The "day of Christ" is referred to five times in the NT and in my estimation always refers to the time of the wedding of the Church.

Here is a diagram of this view:



Notice that in verse 1 he speaks of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then he explains which part of His coming he is referring to. It is when the believer is gathered to Him and that happens at the rapture. Then notice in verse 3 he says, "Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day..." note the phrase "that day". The words, "that day" refer to the day of Christ.

He goes on to say that it will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed. Now I have explained that I believe this "falling away" should be translated, this "departure." Which departure? The departure of the saints when they are gathered to him. I



explain this in detail in another message on sermon audio which you can find by giving the reference.

Now note our diagram. The departure, the rapture happens just before the day of the Lord begins. The day of Christ in heaven begins at that time, but on earth, the Day of the Lord, the night time part, begins on earth.

Now note that the Christian is a son of the day, in the day of Christ, and he is a son of the day when he comes down with Christ from heaven at the end of the day of Christ and on earth he enters the day time of the day of the Lord, the millennium.

Now, just what is the result of all this? Notice now in verse 6 the word, "Therefore..." Because we are sons of light and of day, therefore, "...let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober." Now this command to watch is a very common strain of thought in the teachings of Jesus for the believer when it comes to eschatology, or end time teaching (Matt. 24:42, 43; 25:13; Mk. 13:33).

Now the command to watch does not mean to keep our eyes looking into the heavens to see the very moment Jesus returns, with the threat that if we are not physically awake and see Him when He comes, we will miss His return. The command to watch is that we are to watch our lives so that we do not slowly drift away and then become unfit for the kingdom of God.

We go on to verse 6:

*6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

Note that it begins with the word, "Therefore." Because we are sons of the day, therefore let us not sleep. Now the word, to sleep can mean different things but here it means to be spiritually asleep. Is there a danger of going to sleep spiritually? It is our ever-present danger! Oh, how subtle the devil is and in our own nature, we are always in danger of going to sleep spiritually. When our work or our concerns for our physical welfare overtakes, we are falling asleep. When we get involved in certain practices, we are falling asleep. When we get drawn off by video games or the internet in other ways, we may be falling asleep. In various ways we are constantly in danger of falling asleep.

Now it says, "...let us not sleep, as others do..." Literally, I think it says, "...as the rest do..." All of mankind is either spiritually dead or spiritually alive. By far the majority are spiritually dead. May I ask you, where are you?

Now here is the contrast to sleeping, "let us watch and be sober." Oh, how difficult is it not to remain spiritually alert. Right now we are in summer mode. Do you not find it easy to forget the things of the Lord? Let me ask you, are you alive and alert spiritually? How is my Bible reading or my prayer life in the summer? I was talking to a certain lady recently and she talked about how discouraging prayer could be. Do we just keep going no matter how it seems or feels? Oh Lord, wake me up to prayer! Let us watch!

And then let us be sober. What is the connection between watching and being sober. The word for sober is *neepho*. It means, according to Vine's Dictionary, to be free from intoxicants. What happens when one takes in intoxicants? Well, surely one is no longer watchful! Work, or the internet and many other things can be intoxicants. And if one get a little too intoxicated, one does very silly and even stupid things. Consider this, those who get side-tracked with the internet, do they not do spiritually silly things? Do they not waste a lot of precious time? And maybe they even get into video games or many different things. They are no longer spiritually sober. How about someone who becomes a work-aholic? Does that person not have the danger of becoming spiritually drunk?

I remember when our children were little and they saw a drunk, hugging a telephone pole. They could hardly believe their eyes, but there he was, in love with a telephone pole! If we could see ourselves from God's perspective, could it be that we look like that to Him? Be watchful, be sober!

It is not becoming to those who are of the day to sleep. Verse 7 says that those who sleep, sleep at night. The night is for sleeping. The lost are in a spiritual night and they sleep or they get drunk at night. We have a young nephew who explained why he did not need to go to sleep. You see, he told his parents, he was nocturnal. What things might we be doing or involved in that belongs to the nocturnal? May I ask, is there such a thing as a nocturnal

Christian? Not according to our passage.

Well, not everybody sleeps at night. Night life begins for many, not by sleeping but by drinking alcohol. Oh the sin and the shame and the debauchery that happens at night. That is true in the spiritual realm. For many, it is a horrendous time. You see, many of the lost sleep at night and they are nice people, but they are asleep, spiritually. Others live in the grossest of sin.

In verse 8 we come back to those who are of the day, the Christian. The command is first to be sober, which we have looked at already. But there is something to be happening while we are sober that will keep us sober. It is first this, "putting on the breastplate of faith." In another illustration, in Ephesians 6:14, Paul uses the breastplate as the protection of righteousness. Here he calls it the breastplate of faith.

Many times, when I pray in the morning, I thank God for the fact that He has chosen faith as that which pleases Him. We can all exercise faith and we all find it hard. We never get to see God. We have the universe that literally screams, "There is a God!" And then we have God's wonderful Word and it proclaims who this God is, but we never get to see Him. The just shall live by faith! That which will protect the Christian soldier's vitals is the shield of faith. For those interested in these two pieces of armor, you might want to listen to our messages on Ephesians 6:10-20.

And there is something else that is supposed to be happening while we live our lives soberly and that is to put on the hope of salvation as a helmet. When we are struck in our spiritual vitals with an arrow from the wicked one it can be fatal. When we are hit on our head by the wicked one, it too can be fatal, and our helmet is the hope of salvation. This hope is also pictured in Hebrews as an anchor of the soul. Once we lose the hope of salvation we are done for. This hope must be protected.

Notice now verse 9 which says:

*9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Notice the word "For" that begins this verse. Why should we

put on the breastplate of faith and hope as a helmet of salvation? It is because God did not appoint us to wrath. Now you may wish to check me out on this, but when it speaks of God's wrath in this way, it refers to the tribulation. That is when God pours out His wrath. His wrath is never used to speak of hell. In hell it is His justice not His wrath. In the tribulation God's wrath is poured out on mankind without mixture. This is the wrath that will be poured out in the night time of the day of the Lord, which is the subject of our context.

The verse further says, "...but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ..." Again, this salvation does not speak of salvation from sin and hell fire but from the wrath of God, and I think it includes the entire tribulation period but points in particular to the last half.

Turn now to Revelation 6. We'll go through the references that speak of God's wrath in the tribulation. The tribulation begins in chapter 6 and goes through chapter 19 so we'll see what God's Word says.

We begin with 6:12-16:

*12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

*13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.*

*14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

*15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, Re 6:16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"*

Then verse 17:

*17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

We go now to 11:18:

18 The nations were angry, and Your **wrath** has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

We move now to Revelation 14:8-10:

8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the **wrath** of her fornication."

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

10 "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the **wrath** of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

We move on to Revelation 14:19:

19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the **wrath** of God.

Next we go to Revelation 15:1:

1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the **wrath** of God is complete.

Now verse 7:

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the **wrath** of God who lives forever and ever.

Skip over now to 16:1:

1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the **wrath** of God on the earth."

Now go to 16:19:

19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His **wrath**.

Revelation 18:3:

3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the **wrath** of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

The JFB commentary say, "They have drunk of her fornication, the consequences of which will be wrath to themselves." End quote. They have all participated in that which brings the wrath of God on them.

Revelation 19:15 is the last reference to the wrath of God. It says:

Re 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and **wrath** of Almighty God.

The day of the Lord will soon begin. The day begins with the night. For us it begins at midnight, but not in the Bible. The first day of creation began at night so it always says, "And the evening and the morning were the first day, second day" etc.

We go on then to verse 1 Thessalonians 5:10. Let me read verses 9-10:

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Verse 9 ends with the words, "...to obtain salvation..." that is, salvation from the day of God's wrath, to which He did

not appoint us. Turn back to 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 which speaks of the Thessalonian believers like this:

*9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,*

*10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

Notice that it is not God, but the Lord Jesus that delivers the believer and He delivers believers from the wrath of God. And Paul writes, "...who died for us, that whether we wake (live) or sleep (die) we should live together with Him." This is what he clearly taught in 4:13-18. All believers will be caught up to Christ who will deliver them at the rapture. Now this should be a great encouragement to the believer.

CONCL: That brings us to our conclusion for this morning, and Paul's conclusion to this great doctrine in verse 11:

*11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

Again we have the word "Therefore." So, we need to ask, "Wherefore?" Why should we comfort one another with these words? Because Jesus, who was raised from the dead, there is our assurance we can trust Him, delivers us from the wrath to come. Now listen, if Christians are to go through the tribulation, how can it be said we are delivered from the wrath to come? If the post-tribulational doctrine is a true, there is not much to comfort one another with. Someone has said that is a blasted hope, not a blessed hope. But we can comfort one another because Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come! The word for "comfort" here is the same word used in noun form to speak of the Holy Spirit who is our comforter.

Second, we are to edify one another. The word here means to build up one another as you do when you are building a house. We are an unfinished product and we are to build one another up. How? Well, with the two passages that have preceded this verse. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul told them about the rapture. When he finished he said in 4:18:

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Now in 5:1-11 he has assured us that the tribulation is for the unbeliever. It is for "them." It is "they" that will experience the beginning of the day of the Lord.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Therefore comfort and build each other up with this doctrine!

Then let me comfort us with one other thought. When we are caught up and we go to be with the Lord, I believe we will know what is past. That is another big topic. But I believe when we pass to the other side we will know who went to hell, and I believe we will shed no more tears about that. We sing that there will be no tears in heaven. I do not find that. But when we reach the new heavens and new earth, there God will wipe away all tears.

We will know who went to hell, and we will say, "God, You did everything right." And this knowledge will never cloud our days. We will see God in all His attributes and we will be perfectly content. Nothing from the past will trouble us. Let me encourage you to listen to our messages, "Your First Day in Heaven."

And now, be encouraged with this great doctrine of the rapture!