

Ready or Not!
1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

As we come to the remainder of the Paul's (and the others) letter the Thessalonians, once again, they turn to the practical. However, there's a lot here that we need to noodle through to get to the practical application. So just as I encourage you not to worry about getting through all of these questions, don't worry if you can't figure out all the deep theology behind this text because it has to do, once again, with the end times.

Pastor Eric

Opening / Icebreaker

When you hear the phrase "**the Day of the Lord**," what emotions or ideas come to mind? Why do you think people often feel uneasy about this topic?

Observing the Text

What question were the Thessalonians asking about "times and dates?" (verse 1). Why is this question so common among Christians? What did Jesus say about this in Acts 1.7? Why does the Bible emphasize that **no one knows the timing** of the Day of the Lord?

What does the phrase "**the Day of the Lord**" mean in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament?

What are the two images the texts uses to describe the Day of the Lord? What does each metaphor teach us about that day?

Who will be **surprised** by the Day of the Lord and who will **not** be surprised? Why?

Interpreting the Text

John Stott said that God's wrath is not uncontrolled anger but "**his holy and uncompromising antagonism to evil**." How does this understanding affect how you view God's judgment?

Why is it important for a good and loving God **to judge evil**? What would it say about God if he did not?

The passage contrasts **people in darkness** and **people in the light**. What characteristics describe each group?

What does it mean that believers are "**not appointed to wrath but to receive salvation through Jesus Christ**?" (verse 9).

Applying the Text

The writers describe believers as being **awake, alert, sober, and armored**. What might spiritual alertness look like in everyday life today?

Once again, the writers return to **faith, love, and hope** in verse 8 (see also 1 Thess 1.3). Where do you currently see **faith** at work in your life? How is **love** expressed through your actions? What helps sustain your **hope**?

If Jesus returned **today**, what would you hope he finds you doing? What changes might you want to make in light of that reality?

Finally, what does a **balanced, healthy expectation of Jesus' return** look like for Christians today?