

## Textual Outline I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

- I. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed
  - A. about those who sleep in death,
  - B. so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.
- II. <sup>14</sup> For we believe
  - A. that Jesus
    - 1. died
    - 2. and rose again,
  - B. and so we believe that
    - 1. God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.
    - 2. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's word, we tell you that
      - a) we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.
      - b) <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,
        - (1) with a loud command,
        - (2) with the voice of the archangel
        - (3) and with the trumpet call of God,
      - c) and the dead in Christ will rise first.
      - d) <sup>17</sup> After that, we
        - (1) who are still alive
        - (2) and are left
 will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
      - e) And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- C. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

### 1 Thessalonians 5

- III. <sup>1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates
  - A. we do not need to write to you,
  - B. <sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord
    - 1. will come like a thief in the night.
    - 2. <sup>3</sup> While people are saying,
      - a) "Peace and safety,"
      - b) destruction will come on them suddenly,
      - c) as labor pains on a pregnant woman,
      - d) and they will not escape.
  - C. <sup>4</sup> But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.
    - 1. <sup>5</sup> You are all children
      - a) of the light
      - b) and children of the day.
    - 2. We do not belong
      - a) to the night

- b) **or to the darkness.**
3. **<sup>6</sup> So then,**
- a) **let us**
- (1) **not be like others, who are asleep,**
- (2) **but let us be**
- (a) *awake*
- (b) *and sober.*
- (3) **<sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night,**
- (4) **and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.**
- b) **<sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day,**
- (1) **let us be sober,**
- (2) **putting on faith and love as a breastplate,**
- (3) **and the hope of salvation as a helmet.**
4. **<sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- a) **<sup>10</sup> He died for us so that, whether we are**
- (1) **awake**
- (2) **or asleep,**
- b) **we may live together with him.**
- D. **<sup>11</sup> Therefore**
1. **encourage one another**
2. **and build each other up,**
3. **just as in fact you are doing.**

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## Conceptual Outline: I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

### **I. Education about death and grief**

- A. Jesus' death & resurrection as foundation**
- B. God will do the same for Christian dead**
- C. Order of events**
  - 1. Apparent/Observable return**
  - 2. Christian dead first**
  - 3. Rapture**
  - 4. With Christ forever**

### **II. Timing of Event**

- A. hidden from us**
- B. unexpected like a thief**
- C. severe destructions**
- D. painful and progressive like labor pain**
- E. no one can escape**

### **III. Believers' Response**

- A. Thief shouldn't surprise us because we have the truth, live in the light (we identify with the Light)**
- B. Be sober minded because of the truth**
- C. Be ready for action with faith, love, & hope**
- D. Remember God's intent for us**
  - 1. Not suffer but to save**
  - 2. live with him**
  - 3. encourage & build up each other**

### **Theme:**

## Dead or alive we may live together with Christ

### Questions: I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

1. Have you experience death of someone close? How did the loss affect you?

Having used an encouraging but firm tone to urge the Thessalonians to please God more and more by practicing sexual purity, loving one another, and leading quiet productive lives, Paul continued to teach about another area of their struggle.

2. Can you identify from v. 13 what their struggle was? Why was this a struggle for the Thessalonians? What is the purpose of this teaching? How do the rest of mankind grieve? What does he mean by "sleep in death"?

They were grieving believers who died. They thought Christ was returning in their life time so they're wondering what will happen to those who already died and probably about their own mortality. Their fear may also shake their believer about His return. Paul's purpose is to inform them so that their grieving will not be like the pagans who have no hope, no assurance of salvation, no eternal life. Dead for them will be permanent. Judgment & condemnation is their fate. They have real reason to grieve. "Sleep in death" indicts that believer's death is temporal. One day Christ will wake him/her up again as He did with Lazarus. Unlike Lazarus, this resurrection will be eternal. (John 11:11)

3. From vs. 14-18, what are the reasons why believers do not need to grieve like people with no hope? Where is our source of hope? How does Jesus' death and resurrection help us in dealing with grieve and death?

We believe Jesus has won victory over death by His death and resurrection. We also believe that He will raise us from the dead. Our hope is in what He has done and what He promises (v.15) according to the Lord's word. We may grieve and be sad about the temporary separation but our hope helps us focus on our redemption and reunion. We are certain that the Christian dead is with Christ.

Thoughts to question regarding where the Christian dead is until the resurrection:

**In this text:** they are "asleep in him" (v.14), they are "dead in Christ" (v. 16). Therefore, they are not separated from Jesus.

**Other Scriptures:** (Luke 23:43) The soul of Christian dead is with Christ "in paradise" awaiting to receive all that's promised when we're all united (Heb 11:39-40). At that time, the physical body which is perished (decayed) will be replaced with an imperishable new body. (I Cor 15:42, 15:50-54). Remind your group that the focus of our study is not details about the Second Coming but about the fact that because of the death and resurrection of Christ, we will not be separated from Him whether dead or alive. The foundation of our faith and hope is in what Jesus has already accomplished for us through His death and resurrection.

4. What is the sequence of things that will happen when Christ returns? Why is it important for believers to know the sequence of things that will happen? What does Paul tell the Thessalonians to do with this information? Why would these words be encouraging? How

can you encourage your fellow brothers and sisters who grieve or are struggling with the issue of mortality?

- A visible, universal & grand return of Christ
- Resurrection of the Christian dead
- Rapture of believers who are still alive physically
- Be united with Christ and other believers in eternity

Knowing this information gives us hope which produces endurance, not losing heart but continuing in good work so that we would not be discouraged by persecution, separation, and become distraction/ dissuaded/deceived in our faith.

5. What is Paul's next teaching about Christ's return in 5:1-5? Why do people want to predict the times and dates? What are the 2 metaphors Paul uses to teach about the times and dates of His coming? What can we conclude about the Second Coming from these metaphors? How would believers reaction to His coming be different from "people" in v. 3? What makes the difference? How does remembering our identify as children of light/day make us not belong to night/darkness?

About the times and dates of His Coming. Temptations to predict - spiritual pride, profit, manipulate others, self-indulgence. 2 metaphors are thief & labor pains of a pregnant woman. His coming is a certainty (not if but when), it is expected but unpredictable as to when, it'll be painful and destructive, pains is increasing in frequency and intensity. People of this world, the rest of mankind, will be surprised, unprepared, & unable to escape. Believers should not be surprised. The difference is because of our identity as children of light and our belonging to the Light. Certain behaviors are not fitting for us.

6. Paul goes on to contrast the behaviors of believers and the "people" in vs. 6-11. What behaviors are not fitting for children of light? How should children of light be? What's the difference between "do" and "be"? Paul asks us to wear a new outfit. What does it consist of? Why are they important? From your understanding of Chapter 1, what does the new outfit lead us to do?

People - sleep in the night, drunk in the night - not alert, lost of control, ignorant, unaware, living in sin. Children of light - knows the Light/truth, knows the Way, awake, alert, sober/self-control, on guard with full armor ready for battle. "Be" is a state of mind and identity which defines the doing. The armor consists of breastplate of faith & love, and a helmet of hope of salvation. The heart and mind are protect against attacks. Faith, love, and hope drive us to work, labor, and endure till we see Jesus. This is a huge contrast from some of the Thessalonians' idle waiting for His Return in 4:1-12. Waiting for His return helps us be in a different state of alertness and leads us into productive work of evangelism.

7. While encouraging us to conduct our lives differently from the "people/the rest of mankind", Paul elaborate on the reason for our conducts. What is the reason? What does "we may live together with him" mean to you? How are you living together with Him? It is, first of all, God's appointment. His intent for us. Secondly, it's founded in what Christ has done through His death. "...we may live together with him" mean we're inseparable from Him now and in the future, that we may have close contact with Him. This is a glorious promise & provision for us to live with Him now. How foolish would it be if we do not live with Him!

8. Because of this assurance of abundant life in Christ, now and forever, Paul asks us to encourage and build up one another. How can you encourage/build up your fellow brothers and sisters? How have you been living as children of light?