

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 05 December 2020
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: A day is coming
Title: We don't know when
Passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Outline: **We expect the unexpected**
We belong to the day
We revel in God's appointment

- When will Jesus **return**?
- Last week I made it clear that Advent is **NOT** about getting ready because **Christmas** is coming but getting ready because **CHRIST** is coming
- because ... Jesus will **return**... !
- ...and he will put **evil down** and **right** all **wrongs** and we will be **with him forever**. //
- A great **day** is coming.... When **justice** will be **done**... when **peace** shall finally **reign**... when **evil** will be no **more**...
- And during **Advent** we lift our gaze from the **concerns** of **THIS world**, to that **second** coming and all that it will mean for us **then**... and **therefore**, all that it means for us **now**.... //
- Paul said in last week's passage that he did not want us to be **uninformed** about such things – to be **ignorant**...
- ...for these marvellous truths make a **difference** to how we live life **now and how we grieve now!!** ///
- Here we are at the end of a **very** difficult and challenging **year**... where COVID-19 **still** rages unchecked in **many** nations and has changed the way we **do** things here... changed the way we **live** - changed our nation, changed us as **people**...
- ... we are **weary** and **wary**... we're on **guard**...
- ...even what we do here in **church** has **changed**... maybe for **ever**...
- But a **day** is coming...
- A day is coming... when all **disease**... all **viruses**... all **cancer**... will be **no more**...
- We are people therefore of **joy** and **hope** and **expectation**... /
- A **Day** is coming!! /////
.... But we **don't** know **when**... //
- There is one thing about this day says Paul, about which we will **remain ignorant**...
- The **timing**... /
- And for us... well – it's been **2,000** years since this day was **first** looked forward to...
- **Where is it?**
- **When is it coming?** //
- So here is where we are **heading** this morning from **1 Thessalonians 5** which I read earlier – and I trust you have that open in front of you
 - Because **my** job – the **preacher's** task is not to give my **opinion**... not to just speak **about** the

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

passage... or around the passage... not to use the passage as an **occasional illustration** to what I want to **say... my** task is to **teach** the passage... to help us see what it **means** and then help us to apply it to our **lives...**

- So **here** is where we are **headed**:

1. **We expect the unexpected**
2. **We belong to the day**
3. **We revel in God's appointment**

• First

1. WE EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

- Have a look with me at 1 Thessalonians 5:14 – *Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*
- Notice Paul says 'you know very well that the day of the Lord' – the day of Jesus' return – 'will come **like a thief in the night**'.
- **How** did they know that?
- **Jesus** had told them...
- Matthew 24 – Jesus said: *But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son...*
- Not even Jesus knew... and he went on to say - *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*
- **Expect the unexpected...**
- Jesus will come like a **thief** in the **night**...
- ...in the sense that there will be no **notice**.
- It's not **usual** for thieves to **letter box drop** a street to let people know they are **working** a certain **area**... "just to let you know we'll be robbing houses all up and down here from next Thursday....!"
- No – the **point** is – you don't **know** when the thief is **coming**....
- ...so you are **ready** all the **time**...
- When you leave you lock **windows** and **doors**; you leave a **light** on to make it look like someone's at **home**... you have someone collect your **mail** if you're away....
- You might have motion sensor activated video surveillance camera so if someone does turn up when you're away, you receive a notification on your phone...! You've done as much as you can to be ready for the thief!
///
- Paul is saying... Jesus may come back at any time.... believers **beware!** Be **ready!**
- But there's a **warning** here too for those who **don't** believe – did you hear that?
- Have a look with me at v3 - *While people are saying, "Peace and safety," **destruction** will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*
- While people are **complacent** about God, or remain **sceptics**...

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- ...and when they are talking the **world** up – ‘**peace and safety**’ – the equivalent to ‘she’ll be right mate’... everything is just **fine** with the **world**... they have **no interest** in God, see no **problem** with the world the way **is**....
- Then... then.... **Destruction** will come on them **suddenly**.... They will not **escape**. ////
- Here friends is the sobering reality that the **Day** of the **Lord** – the Day that we are **waiting** for – **longing** for – to put all things **right** – will actually be a **terrible** day if you don’t **know Jesus**... he will say to people who don’t **know** him – don’t **want** to know him – to those who **ignore** him – those who **shake** their **fist** at him: – ‘**away** from me – I never **knew** you’....
- I hope that won’t be **you**...!
- And the way to make sure it is **NOT** you, is to turn away from a life where **you** call the **shots**, and invite Jesus **instead** to be your **King**... put your life under his **rule** – or perhaps – back under his rule **once again**...
- **THAT** is how to make sure you’re ready for Jesus when he **comes**! ////
- There is a **day coming**... but we don’t know **when**... so we are ready **every** day to meet our King, and we live as people who....

2. WE BELONG TO THE DAY

- Did you **see** that little phrase there in v8?
- *Since we **belong** to the day... //*
- What does Paul **mean**?
- Well the context is important... so let’s take a step back... v4 *But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness...*
- We can’t claim **ignorance**!
- We **know** this day is **coming**...
- We **won’t** be – **shouldn’t** be - **surprised** – when it **comes**...
- AND **furthermore** – because we **know** it is coming... we are in the “**know**” as it were – and we should be living **accordingly**... v6 *not like others who are **asleep**... but let us be **awake** and **sober***
- In other words – not like those in the **previous** section who cry ‘**peace and safety**’ and live in total **ignorance** of our Lord **God** – of his **Son** or his impending **return**...
- They live as **THIS** life is all there **is**...
- As if they are only accountable to **themselves**...
- ...and they are totally **deluded** about the **true nature** of the world in which they **live**...
- ...so they **revel** and **party** and live **life** at a very **superficial** level - living like there’s no **tomorrow**... /
- We can’t **do** that... because we’re **not** in the **dark**... //
- We **belong** to the **day** – we know **too much**...
- We know there is a **Lord God**
- We know he sent his **Son**
- We know how he called us to **live**

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- We know he died our **death**
- We know he **rose again**
- We know he ascended on **high**
- And.... We know he's **coming back...**
- So our lives **have** to be – **WILL** be different on the basis of all we are **privileged to know...**
- And in the face of the temptation to live for **ourselves**, we will put on says v8, *faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*
- ...words very reminiscent of the full armour of God Paul describes in **Ephesians 6 /**
- **Because** we know a **day** is **coming...** the day when Jesus will return... we are kitted up... **faith** or **trust...** **trust** in **Jesus...** and **love...** as a **breastplate...** **warding off** calls to **love** and serve **self** before anyone **else...**
- Hope of **salvation** as a helmet... **headbutting doubts** and **fear.... ///**
- Friends – we **belong to the day...**
- We live in the **light...**
- Those who don't **know** any better – don't **live** any better...
- But we **know** and **trust** and **love** and **serve** our **great God...**
- ...we **know** that this world is in a very **serious predicament** because it has turned its **back** on **God...**
- And we are **determined** not to join the ranks of those who have **shut** God out of their **lives...**
- So we **belong** to the **day...** and we **live** in the **light...**
- And as such, we:

3. WE REVEL IN GOD'S APPOINTMENT

- God's appointment? Yes. Have a look with me at v9: *For God did not **appoint** us to suffer **wrath** but to receive **salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ. He **died** for us so that, whether we are **awake** or **asleep**, we may live together with him.*
- This is **brilliant** news...
- And a profound reminder that salvation is **all** of **God's work** and **none** of **ours!!**
- God did not appoint us to **suffer wrath** but to **receive salvation.**
- Note that **salvation** is something you **receive** not something you must **achieve!**
- That's where there's **massive** confusion about religion in Australian society, where Australians love to lump all religions into the same category.
- Christianity is absolutely **stand out...** **In ALL** the other religions – salvation **IS** something you must **achieve** – or work **hard** at **trying** to **achieve** as you slog **away** tallying up your **merit points** and trying to **do enough** to get you over the **line...**
- Christianity absolutely **turns** that on its **head...** and you'll see it so **clearly** here... that salvation is something we **receive.** //
- **How** do you receive it?
- Most watching will not need me to tell you
- But in case there **are** some who don't know – you **receive** salvation just as you receive **any** gift...

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

- With **humility** and empty **hands**...
 - With **sorrow** for **sin** and a **decision** to live for **Jesus** and not for **you**...
 - That's **all**.
 - ...with a **heart** like **that** – not full of pride at your **greatness** – but with a frank **acknowledgement** of **failures** and your need for **salvation**... you **will receive** it! //
 - ...notice it comes, **through our Lord Jesus Christ** – and v10 – who **died** for us, so that whether we are **awake** or **asleep** (that is, have died) we may live together with him.
 - Jesus' death and resurrection **secures** our salvation – **dying** the death we **deserve** and **reconciling** us to his **Father**...
 - ...and that means we are **with** Jesus – either **here** and **now** – or **there** and then!! ///
 - How **wonderful** is God's **love**?
 - How wonderful is our **God**?
 - //
-
- **There is a day coming** – that day when Jesus will **return**...
 - we don't know **when**... but we look **forward** to it with great **expectation**...
 - we **long** for it...
 - for we belong to the **day**...
 - and we live **now** for that day...
 - we live in the **light**...
 - we cast **aside** the **works of darkness**...
 - we kit ourselves with **faith** and **love** and the **hope** of our **salvation**... and they help is in the **battle** against the **evil one**...
 - for we know that we been appointed to **receive salvation**... and we **revel** in that. ///
 - did you see the last verse? Same as at the end of last **week's passage**...
 - *Therefore, **encourage** one another – and build each other up just as in fact you are doing.*
 - Actively **work out**, how you will **encourage** one another in these **amazing truths**... //
 - ...so that **this Advent**... our mind will be filled with the **joy** of the **Lord** and all that is to **come**... rather than the **mundane trivialities** of the **Christmas season**.
 - **A day is coming**... we don't know **when**.... But we look with **hope and joy and expectation and longing**... because we have been **appointed to receive salvation**!