

A Body That's Prepared

1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 11

I. Intro

A. **Question:** What does the future hold?

B. **Statement:** *Don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future*

C. **Jesus said: Matthew 6:34 (ESV)**

³⁴“... not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

D. **No ones knows what the future holds for this church – this body; but even with that, we can still prepare for the future by focusing on what the church is called to do today**

E. **Finish up going through 1 Thessalonians; last few weeks – focused on the church, which is the body of Christ; 1 Corinthians 12:27–28 (ESV)**

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

F. **Talked about being a body of power, a body of action, the body leadership model, a body of encouragement; in order for the church (the body of Christ) to be these things, it has to begin with its members exhibiting lives of holiness**

G. **Today's passage we'll see, even though we don't know what the future may hold in this life, we have confidence that ultimately the future for all us as believers will be spending eternity in presence of the Lord – whether that happens when Christ comes again (passage refers to as *the Day of the Lord*) or when our time on earth is over**

H. **READ 1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 11**

I. **Timeline of events, I believe, will take place when the *Day of the Lord* comes**

i. **1st** – the Rapture; the Lord appears in the clouds and the trumpet blows and all the saints will rise (the dead in Christ first) to meet Him in the air

ii. **2nd** – period of Great Tribulation; 7 year period where there will be first 3 ½ years of peace, antichrist will rise up, then 3 ½ years of extreme/unimaginable persecution/evil/wickedness on the earth; those who turn to Christ during this time (Tribulation saints) will suffer greatly and even martyred because of their faith

iii. **3rd** – Christ returns with the church, the battle of Armageddon takes place, Satan is bound and locked up for 1000 years, and Jesus reigns on earth of 1000 years

iv. 4th – After the 1000 years, Satan is completely destroyed, heaven and earth as we know is destroyed, new heaven and new earth descends, judgment before “Great White Throne of God”, and we all will live in peace with one another and with all creation in the presence of God and Christ forever and ever

J. This is the future we all can confidently look forward to; this is what the body ultimately is to prepare for

K. **Question:** How do we prepare? 3 ways – remembering, relying, and rejoicing

II. 1 – Remembering

A. Whenever scripture is taught – whether in a sermon delivered by Pastor, in Sunday School, small group Bible study – at times there are new things that are learned; most of the time it’s a reminder of things we already know about in scripture

B. (v. 2) Paul reminds church in Thessalonica that they already know that one day the Lord will return (the Rapture); they may not know exactly when, but it will happen suddenly

C. As the church, God expects us to live each day in faith, hope, love *awake and sober* Paul says – meaning, that Christ could return at any second and we must always be prepared

D. If the church labors and functions based on what the body already knows then the body will be prepared for the future, whatever the future may bring

E. (v. 4 – 8) Paul describes two kinds of groups of what he refers to as “children” – all those under authority of the one Sovereign God Almighty

i. 1st group – children of darkness

a) don’t expect Jesus to return because they don’t believe

b) false optimism about the future, live unprepared for the coming judgment of God

c) they cannot escape that judgment

d) they are destined to suffer the consequences of the wrath of God

ii. 2nd group – children of light

a) expect the Lord to return because they know it will happen

b) confident hope for the future

c) live each and everyday prepared for Christ to return and for coming judgment

d) examples of and live out their faith, hope and love

e) they have been saved from the consequences of God’s judgment because they have been cleansed from all unrighteousness through the blood of Christ

F. First, the body of Christ prepares for the future by remembering the hope we have in Christ and His coming again

III. 2 – Relying

A. Question: How does relying help us to be a body that's prepared?

Because of who and what we rely on

B. Question: How many have friends you can rely on, when they say they're going to do something you know they'll follow through?

C. God's Word tells us what He will do; God's Word contains promises that Jesus Himself made to His church that are even more reliable

D. One such promise (actually several): John 14:2–6 (ESV)

²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?**

³And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and will take you to myself**, that where I am you may be also.

⁴And you know the way to where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

E. Just before these words Jesus has said to His disciples – *trust Me, rely on Me and on my words: John 14:1 (ESV)*

¹"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

F. *rely* (Def.) - to depend on with FULL trust and confidence

G. In 2 Chronicles, given an account where Asa is king of Judah (southern kingdom) and Baasha is king of Israel (northern); Baasha builds up/fortifies a town called Ramah to serve as a blockade preventing anyone/anything going into Judah; Asa reaches out to Ben-hadad king of Syria by offering Ben-hadad silver and gold from the temple and Asa's own possessions for help and they establish a covenant between them; Ben-hadad sends his armies to attack Baasha and Israel and this results in stopping the building up of Ramah

i. God sends Hanani to Asa after this with a message: 2 Chronicles 16:7–9 (ESV)

⁷At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not **rely** on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you.

⁸Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you **relied** on the LORD, he gave them into your hand.

⁹For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

ii. *rely* (Heb. - *sha'an*) – to support/rely on one's self

- H. **IMPORTANT:** When people, when the church, rely on themselves instead of relying on the Lord, bad things happen – things don't go so well
- I. In order for the church to be a body that's prepared it's people must rely on God (not themselves) and His promises that the *day of the Lord* and His judgment are inevitable and unavoidable

IV. **3** – Rejoicing

- A. As Paul describes two groups of people – children of darkness and children of light
- B. Children of darkness are those who stumble in the darkness, they stumble through life; like drunks who can't find their way and are oblivious to reality around them; asleep, and will be caught off guard on the day Christ returns
- C. Children of light, those who have believed and trusted in Christ as Savior, they know Christ is coming so they will be prepared; because they walk in the light of Christ they know the way, live with purpose, persevere in hope
- D. That's the reason why the church, the body of Christ, can rejoice and live in expectation/anticipation of the glorious future that awaits us

V. Close

- A. A body that's prepared is one that remembers the great promises of God and the greatest promise of all – that He's coming back again some day
- B. A body that's prepared is one that completely relies on the Lord and His promises for hope and a future
- C. A body that's prepared is one that can rejoice because of that hope and future, no matter what happens in this world either in the present or in the future
- D. (**v. 11**) Let's, as the body of Christ, encourage one another, build up one another, all the more as the *day of the Lord* draws near
- E. Be a people of God, the body of Christ, that's prepared