Scripture Together: 1 Thessalonians 5

As we come to Chapter 5, let's read all five chapters of 1 Thessalonians again at least once this week. Then come back and spend focused time in Chapter 5. Read slowly and prayerfully, more than once, keeping the whole letter in view as we go deeper.

5 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.

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

12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, **13** and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. **15** See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**19** Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not despise prophecies. **21** Test all things; hold fast what is good. **22** Abstain from every form of evil.

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

A Few Questions to Consider

- What stands out to me most from this passage?
- What does this chapter reveal about the character and ways of God?

Living Together With Him Shapes How We Live Together.

At the end of Chapter 4, Paul gives us hope concerning those who have fallen asleep and the coming of Jesus: "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." As Chapter 5 begins, he turns from what will happen to how we should live while we wait. The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, but we are sons of light and sons of the day. Let's pay attention to the repeated call to be watchful and sober in verses 6-8, putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

At the center of this encouragement is Jesus, who died for us so that we should live together with Him. Paul follows this with a call to comfort and edify one another. As we continue reading, let's keep that connection in view. This is about the spiritual formation of the whole community, how we help one another grow as we live together with Him and wait for His coming. This instruction wasn't just to a few leaders; it was to the whole community.

The instructions that follow help us see how we share in that pursuit of seeing everyone fully formed. Part of this is paying attention to the people who are serving and leading, loving them and honoring the work they are doing. It also means learning to live at peace with each other, speaking up when someone is getting off track, encouraging those who are losing heart, supporting those who are weak, and being patient with everyone. Rather than getting even when someone hurts us, we keep looking for what is good for each other and for those around us. These are not disconnected reminders. This is how we live as children of the day, remembering that we are living together with Him.

There is such beauty in the prayer in verses 23-24. Let's make that our prayer for each other, that God would make us fully His in every part of our lives as we wait for Jesus to return. Our complete sanctification is His will, and He is faithful to do it. Our part is to cooperate with Him. Paul closes by asking them to pray, to greet each other with pure, holy affection, and to make sure everyone hears this letter. Then he leaves them with a blessing of grace.

A Simple Way to Engage the Passage

- Read all five chapters again this week, then return to Chapter 5 slowly and prayerfully.
- Read the end of Chapter 4 and the beginning of Chapter 5 together, paying attention to how they connect and the hope and comfort they hold.
- Talk about how we can put Paul's instructions about caring for one another into practice (verses 11-22) with your prayer band or someone else.

A Few Questions to Consider

- How is the hope of living together with Jesus shaping the way we live now?
- What can we learn from Paul's calls to sobriety about what it means to live as children of the day (verses 6-8)?
- How are we participating in comforting, strengthening, and helping one another grow?
- Where do we need to cooperate with God's work of sanctifying our whole lives (verses 23-24)?

Prayer Posture

Father, sanctify us completely, and preserve our whole spirit, soul, and body blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us live as children of the day, watchful and sober, comforting and building one another up. Teach us to cooperate with Your work in our lives. You are faithful, and You will do it.