

1Thessalonians 12-06-08a

This is Friday, June the 8th, 2012. We're in the Book of First Thessalonians, Chapter 5, and we're in the final section, which in your New King James might be labeled various exhortations. So we'll be picking up, we'll take just one step back to look at something in verse nine and then move forward this evening.

Let's take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer and ask his blessing on our fellowship and our study. Father, we are grateful for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and the study of your word. We thank you for this passage.

We thank you for the food that it provides, the nourishment for our souls, the strength and comfort and guidance and encouragement that it gives to us. We pray that each one of us will find that necessary encouragement as we look at these things together and that everyone will be blessed and be edified and prepared for the tasks at hand in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Let's read this section again because the latter part is directly tied to the former part and we've studied the first eight or nine verses of this chapter. Paul says, concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night 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.

But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober for those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk or drunk at night. 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. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

We've seen this concept of night and day of being overtaken as a thief and the unexpectedness and the loss that thereunto pertains. We've seen this unexpectedness. And yet it is also inevitable when labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, there is an idea of inevitability.

And he says you are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief. If we were in darkness, it would be OK to sleep. Nighttime is a time for sleep, but we are not in the darkness and we are not of the night.

We were of the night. We were in the kingdom of darkness. But at the point of salvation, God has transferred us out of darkness into light into the kingdom of the son of his love.

And we are evermore not in that darkness. We are not in that night. So it informs us when we look at this passage, who is it that is going to be overtaken? And the inevitable judgment will follow.

It is those who are not saved. They are in darkness. Now, people in darkness can do one of two things.

They can either be passively in the darkness, simply sleeping, which is sort of doing what you're supposed to do in the darkness. Or they can be reveling and carousing, which is really a not recommended course of action. So you've got your nice believers, shirt off the back, salt of the earth, what a great guy, moral, upstanding, ethical, living a good life, altruistic, charitable.

Well, they're still asleep when it comes to the plan and purpose of God. None of these things matter. This is like saying this guy was so wonderfully faithful at shining brass and he was still shining it as the Titanic slipped below the waters of the Atlantic.

There's no point in doing things that are part of a futile system that is permeated with evil and has no future, has no lasting or permanent benefit, no altruism, no charity. And hear me carefully. Charity doesn't ultimately do any good if it is not a part of the plan and purpose of God.

Here's a homeless person and you give him a spare shirt or give him a buck twenty five for a well, I guess now it'd be eleven twenty five for a meal or some such thing. You have done no intrinsic good. That is not intrinsically good.

Human beings think it is. How could that not be good? Give a hungry person something to eat. It's not good because it does not reflect the glory of God.

Only God is good. Jesus said himself, you call me good. The guy came up and said, good master.

And he said, why do you call me good? There is none good but God. Right. Do you believe it or not? There is none good but God.

And there is always a tainted motive. If we do not have the Holy Spirit, if we do not have the glory of God within us and in the person of Christ, in the power of his word, in the presence of his Holy Spirit, then the things we do are always tainted with evil. There is selfishness.

There is self gratification. There is self congratulation. There is self importance.

It is always tainted. How much, if you've got some food, maybe a whole lot of food, but there's been a rat, there's been some mice in the area and there's some some leavings, how much of that puts you off the whole thing? It doesn't matter how much food there is or how good the food was. If you find mouse or rat leavings, what does that do to the rest? Well, human effort, human attempts to do good are always peppered with, shot through with these leavings, and it spoils

what might in other circumstances be good.

So those who are asleep in the night, they're still in the night. And the day has dawned. The day spring from on high has appeared.

The Lord Jesus Christ has risen like the sun with healing in his wings. And it is wrong to be in the night. It is wrong to be asleep.

And nothing you do in the darkness, whether you sleep like a good person or carouse and get drunk like a bad person, makes any difference. You're still trapped in the night and the day will overtake you as a thief. You will suffer grievous loss in that day.

That's the notion. But we are not of the darkness so that the day should overtake us as a thief. We're sons of light, sons of the day.

So there should be no sleeping. Sleeping in the day is only for the sick. We should be healthy, we should be productive, we shouldn't be lazy, we shouldn't be shiftless, we should be awake, alert and doing those things that look ahead to the return of the Lord Jesus.

Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night. Let us who are of the day be.

And we looked at this last time. Sober. Be paying attention, be alert, be vigilant, be actively taking care of business, putting on the breastplate of faith and love.

We looked at that in detail. Helmet, hope of salvation. Now we pick up in verse nine tonight.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, thereupon which hangs a tale. This is a verse, this is a crux, one of the verses that calls for interpretation, because depending on your understanding of the plan of God, we want to know what's going to happen in the future related to the church. If you understand the dispensations, if you understand that 69 of Daniel's 70 weeks have already gone by and there is one week remaining, that week contains the Great Tribulation.

The last half of it, the last three and a half years are the Great Tribulation. If you want to be precise, the whole seven years is not the Tribulation, it is the last half of the 70th week. That is the Tribulation, the Great.

Hey Philpatus, hey Megale, the Tribulation, the Great. That's the last three and a half years. First three and a half years is the false peace.

That's the peace and safety that these people are going to think they are enjoying. They will be lulled, they will be wooed, they will be enticed, they will be seduced by the Antichrist into thinking that there is peace and there is safety. But all this is doing is putting them further and further out on a very slender branch which will then break and the Great Tribulation will follow.

God did not appoint us to wrath. Our understanding, and of course if you don't understand dispensations, if you think Daniel's 70 weeks have all gone by and that God has organized his plan on covenants instead of dispensations, if you have a completely different view of eschatology then you can do other things with this verse. But we've seen in passage after passage, place after place, that there is this remaining seven years and Paul talks about it.

We're going to see it especially in 2 Thessalonians. But that is the day of wrath. This is the day of judgment.

This is the consummation of history. This is when the harlot is thrown from the back of the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns. This is when a third of the earth is scorched.

This is when the seals and the trumpets and the bowls are fulfilled that are found in the book of Revelation. All of these things are future in our understanding, which is of course the right and best understanding. Everyone thinks theirs is right and best, but ours actually is.

It's the best understanding we are able to gain. There are other views, but it is so confusing when you try to take scripture that way. By far the least difficulties and the greatest degree of harmony and mutually supporting testimony and witness of scripture is the view that we have a spouse.

That's why we have believed in it because every other one is just a great tangled mess. So the day of wrath is going to be this time of Jacob's trouble, the seven years, the 70th week of Daniel, after the Messiah is cut off. Then you have that mystery period.

Paul says it's a mystery. It's not revealed. So you wouldn't expect it to show up in the Old Testament.

This is the day of wrath and Paul says that day is not going to overtake you as a thief because you are of the day. And his exhortation is because you are of the day, act like it. Don't be asleep in the day or the day will overtake you as a son of the day, just as it's going to overtake everyone who is of the night.

And he says, God did not appoint us to wrath. Now there's a lot of talk and there's a fresh flurry of interest in the debate about Calvinism and so on in the Southern Baptist Convention. There's currently a discussion and debate going on.

There's been a statement that was released recently because there's been a new generation of really hardcore Calvinists who are not content to be thought of as tolerated. They want to be respected or actually, you know, it's a long story, but suffice it to say, this is a live topic. If you get up on the web and look around at some Southern Baptist blogs and tweets and Facebooks and so on, you'll see this going on.

And to be fair, the leaders in the various parts of the denomination are very ironic. They're being

very gracious and charitable. They're expressing their point of view, but without rancor.

These guys have known each other a long time, preached in each other's churches. They're not fighting over it, but they're having a polite debate, which is the right way to do it. And it is a credit to Christ that they are doing it in that way.

Now there are others standing behind them who are peeking out beside and sticking out their tongues and wagging their fingers at each other and saying much more unkind things. But the leaders, the seminary presidents and the well-known pastors and so on are handling it very charitably and very well. But it's funny to read the others, like the little children, get back, get back, be quiet, you know, go to your time out.

But the question is, what does it mean when, for example, in Acts 13, it says, as many as were appointed unto salvation believed, what kind of an appointment is that? And you have the same word here, although it's a different verb. God did not appoint us to wrath. Does this mean he did not predestinate us to wrath? He did not make an appointment with wrath for us, like we would with the dentist or the doctor.

Well, this is the word *tithemi*, t-i-t-h-e-m-i, and *tithemi* means in the gloss, the basic meaning is to put or to place. And it's helpful to get a grip on this verb. You might think, well, I get it, we don't have to go through the wrath.

But pay attention because there are different kinds of appointing that God does. And this is a particular kind. God did not appoint us to wrath.

Wrath is *orgy*. This is the word *orgy* comes from this. You know, it means a very passionate anger, usually resulting in some form of violence or judgment, especially in Scripture.

Appoint is *tithemi*, and this is used a lot of places in Scripture. One of the more benign ways that it is used is it means to place or lay people somewhere. It's used, for example, in Mark chapter six, toward the end of the chapter, when it says that after Jesus became known for his healing, when people knew he was coming to a village, they would get all the sick people and bring them to the city square and lay them out, hoping that when Jesus walked by, they could reach out and touch the hem of his garment.

You remember later on, there's a lady that's going to reach out and touch the hem of his garment. Well, people knew that just touching Jesus would make them well. So their friends and relatives would *tithemi* the sick in the city square, put or place them in the city square, hoping that they would be able to reach out and touch Jesus as he walked by.

And so you get the idea that this is something that someone else does to a thing. And for that thing, it is a passive operation. The sick don't have a lot to say about it.

These people are picking them up and laying them down. It is almost exclusively used when

you're talking about corpses. When Jesus, you remember the whole episode in the garden and where have you laid him? They've taken my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.

They took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. There was a tomb in the garden where he was crucified in which no one had been laid. All of those words are tithemi.

Anytime in the New Testament it talks about a corpse or a dead body being laid somewhere, it's tithemi without exception. It's translated to lay or laid almost exclusively. So you get the idea something is carried and placed somewhere.

And when it's placed there, it stays there because it's placed there by others. It doesn't have the power to move around. When Jesus said, you know, the parable of the house built on the rock and built on the sand, storm comes, the one on the sand washes away.

But the one on the rock stands because its foundation had been tithemi'd upon a rock. Put or placed, positioned is the idea. Jesus told the story about no one lighting a lamp, puts it in the cellar or under a bushel, but they place it on a lampstand, tithemi, position it.

You put it in a place because it is going to serve a particular purpose or that is where it is supposed to be. This is the optimum place. Put the sick in the optimum place so that they can get healed.

You put the dead in the optimum place for corpses, which is the tomb. You put the lamp in the optimum place. This is the idea of tithemi, you position a thing.

Remember when God says, sit thou at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. The word make, when that Hebrew passage is quoted in the Greek New Testament, sit thou at my right hand until I tithemi your enemies as your footstool. I'm going to put your enemies, I'm going to position them and place them and they're not moving.

And you'll be able to rest your feet on them. They are going to be placed, emplaced, positioned, put where they can do the most good. That's the word here.

God has not positioned us, placed us, set us somewhere for wrath. But, and remember now, he's not going to repeat the verb. But if you say, he has not done this, but he has done that, and you don't repeat the verb, then the verb is the same.

He has not put or placed or positioned us for wrath, but he has put, positioned and placed us for soterios, for deliverance, for salvation. We have been set. We have been, and what are we looking at? We're looking at the plan and purpose of God.

We are not in the age of the pre-flood people. We're not in the age of the early patriarchs. We're not in the age of Israel.

We're not in the age of the millennium. We, as body and bride of Christ, which he has talked about in this letter, have been specifically put and placed for deliverance. Not just for deliverance, but to obtain deliverance.

Now, obtain is an interesting word because this is peripoieo, or peripoiesis. And you think, well, why isn't it just lambano, to receive deliverance? But this is, and this is what the lexicon literally says under definition one, for peripoiesis, it is the experience of security. Very first thing the lexicon says, experience of security, keeping safe, preserving, saving.

Now we've already got the word soteria for salvation here. So it doesn't necessarily mean to obtain. It means to experience the security of, obtain isn't even here.

There's two or three other Greek verbs that would work great for obtain or receive or acquire or lay hold of. None of those are used here. This is experience the security of soteria, to keep safe and preserve our deliverance.

We have been positioned. Now, what does it mean that we've been positioned? What is it we have in this age that nobody's ever had? We've got the fullness of God's revelation in his word. We've got the record of the incarnate word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We've got the entire Old Testament, all of the prophetic revelation, the law, the narratives, the poetry, the wisdom literature, everything foreshadowing Christ. We've got the record in four different gospels of what he did while he was here. We've got the epistles and the apocalypse to tell the story of Jesus Christ.

Tell us everything we need to know. We've got the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. God has set us in this position, not so that we would undergo orgy, wrath, judgment, but to experience the security of his deliverance, to enter into the preservation and the savingness of his salvation.

This word, by the way, is the same one used in Hebrews 10.39, which I've quoted to you many, many times. We are not of those who draw back unto perdition, unto apolia, loss, but of those who believe with a view toward the peripoiesis of the soul, the preserving, keeping, experience of security of the soul. That's what our faith gives us.

The same word is also going to be used in 2 Thessalonians 2.14, where Paul says that God has called us by the gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't obtain Christ's glory. We experience the security of it.

We enter into the saving grace of it. And we'll see that when we get to 2 Thessalonians 2.14, but it's the same word there. We saw this, or a form of it, in 1 Peter 2.9. You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And this is the security that we enjoy in that generation, that priesthood, that nation, that special people. And you can see it as well in Ephesians 1.14, of the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. And so the idea of possession that is enjoyed and is secure and is immovable, that's the idea.

So, God did not set, put, or place us for wrath, but to experience the security to enter into the place of stability of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this, I think, is fairly evident from our context, that we have these things through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the dead in Christ who rise first.

It is the Lord himself who descends to receive us. It is the day of the Lord that is going to be the day of judgment and wrath. All of these things are in God's hands.

All authority has been delegated from the Father to the Son. And it is by his authority that judgment will be executed. It is by his authority that salvation will be granted and honored and effected.

Our standing, our security, our possession is in him. So this is through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have not been put in place with a view toward wrath, but with a view toward.

In both of these, it's the preposition *ace*, into, unto, with a view toward. God didn't put us here because he said, I need some people to suffer through the tribulation. He put us here to be an exemplar and to experience the security and the savingness and the stability of salvation.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that. Then we have kind of a twist on the waking and sleeping idea. He has just said, you don't want to be asleep, you want to be awake, because you're a son of the day.

You're not of the night or of the darkness that the day should overtake you. Those who sleep, sleep at night. We're of the day.

But then he kind of, and this is really sort of a clever literary twist. It's a bit of an irony that he turns this same figure to a different purpose. And it's almost a double entendre here, because he's already talked in the previous context about those who have fallen asleep will not lag behind those who are alive at his coming.

And so he started out using waking and sleeping as a figure for alive and passed away. Right. Then in the middle, he used it to talk about those who are saved and who are in God's light and in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus versus those who are in darkness and who are unsaved.

And that day is going to overtake them. But now he's come back to the original idea of waking and sleeping. And he said, you know, if you are of the night and of the darkness, and if you are sleeping in the night, you're as good as dead.

If you're sleeping in the daytime, when you ought to be awake and alert and sober, you're spiritually dead. You're spiritually fruitless. You're like a dead branch.

And now he's going to return to the original figure died for us that whether we and he's back to the subject of life and death. And he precedes it with the salvation comes with the Lord Jesus who died for us. And that's the hook back to the beginning of this, this symmetrical structure.

He died for us so that whether we wake or sleep and it's invested now with both meanings. And this is what we're supposed to catch, whether we wake or sleep. And you say, ah, whether I'm alive or dead, we will live together with him.

But he's also saying whether we are awake or asleep spiritually, even if we're reprobate, even if we go all the pieces and are unfaithful. And we end up getting judged. We are still going to live together with him.

It's another affirmation of the security of the believer, whether we wake or sleep. Even the worst believers are still believers. They're still body of Christ.

They are still going to be caught up with the Lord to meet him in the air. So whether we wake or sleep and you can see this is a this is done with sort of a half wink. You don't want to be a sleeper, a wake-o sleeper, and Christ shall give you life.

But whether you wake or sleep, you cannot escape the great salvation that is ours in Christ. We are eternally and forever in him. And whether we wake or sleep, whether we're dead or alive, and whether we are spiritually dead or alive.

Whether we're asleep at the switch or alive and sober and bearing fruit, we will live together with him. So, therefore, comfort each other and edify one another. Now, why would this be a comfort? Well, he already said, I do not want you to grieve as others that have no hope.

So we understand the dead people, right? But secondly, what about your reprobate relatives? What about those who started in faith and then peeled away? Went back into Judaistic legalism? Went back into heathen, pagan culture? You say, well, Uncle Fred had started out coming to church and was a believer in Christ, but now he's gone back and he is basically asleep. He's carousing at night and he's asleep in the day. What about him when Jesus comes back? And he's saying, this is also a form of comfort.

If there are believers in our periphery who are hopelessly out of touch and out of the faith and disinterested and apathetic and indifferent and in line for all kinds of discipline, you still don't grieve as others who have no hope because they are still saved. So this wake or asleep has both meanings. Therefore, comfort each other and edify each other.

Build each other up. Don't get so distracted over someone who has fallen away that you make no progress yourself. We've got to continue to build each other up and go forward as we can.

And he says, just as you also are doing, keep on doing what you're doing. And this is a healthy church. This is a healthy group.

So comfort each other in both realms. This brings us to verse 12. And we'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll find out what it is that Paul is going to urge the brethren to do, having covered these subjects. But let's pause here and take our break.