
Words of Truth

I Thessalonians 5:8-11

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“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (I Thessalonians 5:8-11).

We concluded our last study with the importance of not being a people of the night wherein we are vulnerable due to unawareness. This study draws the Thessalonians back to the fact that they were children of the day (I Thessalonians 5:5) with all that such means (I John 1:5-2:11). Then, again, the emphasis of being sober is reiterated. Being aware is certainly a point that cannot be stressed enough (I Peter 5:8-9). However, this context is not just repeating sobriety in connection to the Day of Judgment. We will come back to considering the Judgment Day, but briefly the battlefield is brought into the context.

What is the point of armor? Whether we are talking about carnal or spiritual warfare, armor is for protection. One wears armor because there is a battle. Faithful Christians are in a battle (II Corinthians 10:3-4, I Timothy 1:18, I Timothy 6:12, II Timothy 2:1-4, and II Timothy 4:6-8). Note this text that should be familiar to us: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (Ephesians 6:10-17).

The armor pieces mentioned in what we are studying are faith, love, and hope. That is fitting (I Corinthians 13:13). Christians walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:7). The significance of love is clear as love [charity] is the greatest. Hope however, is really the contextual focal point in looking forward to Christ’s return. Hope is significant for us in overcoming all we face in Christ (I Peter 1:3-9 and I John 3:1-3). The Hebrew writer penned words wherein hope was

presented as an anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19). When Paul wrote to the saints in Rome he pointed out that salvation is found in hope of things to come (Romans 8:24-25).

The hope of salvation is so important for Christians because the alternative to salvation is facing the wrath of God that will come upon those who are disobedient (Colossians 3:6). Faithful Christians can fight the fight of faith without this fear. The hope we have is because of Jesus Christ. Do you remember what was written concerning this earlier in this letter? Notice: *“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come”* (I Thessalonians 1:10).

Even though I have already indicated this hope is for the faithful in Christ, I think it best to allow the Scriptures to present that fact more clearly. Those who have been in Christ, but then choose to be sinners, do not have this hope. Notice: *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Hebrews 10:26-31).

The faithful do not have to fear the coming day of wrath because Jesus died for us (I Peter 3:18). We cannot confuse the language of this though. Jesus did not just die for some predetermined group of people as some falsely teach (Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:44-49, John 1:29, John 4:42, I Timothy 2:1-6, Titus 2:11-14, and I John 4:14). What separates those in Thessalonica and those faithful today from all others is our obedience to Christ and thus He is our source of salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9 and II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, whether the faithful are alive or dead at His return in the Judgment Day; we shall be together with Him. This is what was already taught in this epistle and is now being repeated (I Thessalonians 4:13-17).

What is also being repeated is that this information can be used to comfort one another (I Thessalonians 4:18). In addition to comforting one another, they were also instructed to edify one another. Each brother and sister in Christ then and now are expected to edify [spiritually build up] one another (Ephesians 4:16, Ephesians 4:29, I Timothy 1:4, and Jude 1:20). Like we have seen with other things in this letter, it is not that they were not already doing such (i.e. I Thessalonians 4:9-10). It is just a reminder (cf. II Peter 3:1-2) to keep on doing the right things they were doing. What could be more edifying than reminding each other of the hope we have in Christ during the days of battle in this evil world?