

## 1Thessalonians, Chapter Five, Lesson Two

GOD'S GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT 1Thessalonians 5:7-11

### STIMULATE

\*\* Last week we began our look at four specific gifts which are ours by the grace of God, listed for us here in 1Thessalonians, chapter five. The first of those gifts was "**God's Gift of Sobriety**". Hopefully we are able to apply our alert minds and sober, self-controlled actions to service we render toward the name of Christ.

It has been a privilege to apply that study to my own heart, as I strive to honor the Lord in everything that I think, say and do.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* Our study for today is entitled "**God's Gift of Encouragement**" and is found in 1Thessalonians 5:7-11. When life gets difficult, when we feel like failures because of our battles with sin, what encouragement could there be to lift our hearts to the rejoicing attitude which we have been called to live out each day? For the answer, let's read our passage for today and allow the Holy Spirit to transform our minds for the glory of God.

Read passage (V.7-8) (V.9-11)

Opening Prayer

### *God's Gift of Encouragement*

### INVESTIGATE

**V. 7** \*\* When we left off here in chapter five, last week, we learned that sleep in this passage referred to a lack of preparedness, and because Christians are sons of light (V.5) and not of the darkness that is in the world, we are to be prepared by constantly being alert and sober. As Paul now continues this metaphor here in verse seven, how does he describe those who sleep?

Two ways - They sleep at night and they get drunk at night!

\*\* To what do you think Paul is referring by using the term "night" in this verse?

He is speaking of the realm of darkness which envelopes the unsaved world around us.

cf.Rom.13:12-14 - "lay aside the deeds of darkness"

John 8:12 - "I am the light of the world"

John 3:17-21 - "men loved the darkness"

\*\* From what Jesus just said in John 3:20, how would you explain why men live their sinful, unprepared lives in the realm of darkness?

If they were to bring those unrepentant lifestyles to the light of God's saving truth in Christ, they would expose their evil hearts and they do not want to do that - even before their own eyes! cf.Romans 1:32

**V. 8** \*\* How does the opening of verse eight imply that Christians are to be different from those who sin in darkness?

Paul begins with the word "but" - indicating that we are to be different from what he has just described.

\*\* So, are we to dwell in this "realm of darkness" like the unsaved individuals around us?

Absolutely not! "...we are of the day..." cf. V.5

\*\* Paul now goes on to repeat his exhortation to be sober (nepho - to be self-controlled), but what advice does he add to that important command?

Put on the:

- 1) Breastplate of faith and love
- 2) The helmet, which is the hope of salvation

\*\* What word picture did Paul provide for his reader by using the term "breastplate"? What would have come to their minds?

A Roman soldier would wear this piece of armor that was designed to cover the vital organs of the body from the mid thigh to the neck. They knew that it was an extremely important piece and could protect the life of its wearer.

\*\* For the Christian, what are the two components of their breastplate?

Faith and Love!

\*\* Since we are not of the realm of darkness, from where does our faith and love come?

Faith - "in Christ" cf. 1Timothy 3:13 and 2Timothy 3:15

Love - "of God" cf. Romans 5:5 and 1John 4:19

\*\* Alright then, given that description of our breastplate, what is the only way it will protect us?

If we use it! It must be an active and aggressive part of our daily life! Paul says, "having put on the breastplate". It does us no good to walk out of our homes without our armor on.

The commentator William Hendriksen said, "The best defense is a good offense, the most positive protection is an attack". cf. 2Peter 1:3, 3:1 with James 4:7-8

\*\* Still here in verse eight, what is the second piece of armor that Paul mentioned?

The helmet - made up of our "hope of salvation".

\*\* What was a helmet designed to protect?

Obviously, the head.

\*\* And what did that contain?

The mind - that with which we are to be alert!

\*\* We can actually protect our thinking process with this wonderful piece of armor. What is it about this piece that makes it so effective?

It is the "hope" of salvation. Our hope is not based upon wishful thinking, but upon the firm reality of God's precious word. Hope does not disappoint!  
cf. Romans 9:33 and Hebrews 6:17-20

**V. 9** \*\* Moving on to verse nine, what two things do we learn about the destiny of a Christian?

1) We are not destined for wrath! Praise the Lord!

cf. 1Thessalonians 1:10 - "...Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

2) We are destined to obtain salvation!

cf. 2Thessalonians 2:13 - "...God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation..."

cf. Both of those realities with 1Peter 1:3-5

\*\* How do we get this salvation according to Paul?

"...through our Lord Jesus Christ"! cf. Acts 4:12

**V.10** \*\* How did our Lord Jesus Christ accomplish this wonderful salvation, according to verse ten?

He "died for us"!

cf. Romans 3:23 - "...all have sinned..."

Romans 5:8 - "...Christ died for us..."

Romans 6:23 - "...the free gift of God..."

\*\* Realizing that the apostle has shifted his attention to those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, what does he have in mind when he says, "whether we are awake or asleep..."?

Paul has gone back to his reasoning which he used in 1Thessalonians 4:15-17, where he was describing the rapture of Christ's church. He is saying whether you are alive or dead, you will share the same destiny.

\*\* What is that destiny according to the end of verse ten?

We will all "live together with Him". What wonderful news for the aching heart!

**V.11** \*\* As he did in chapter four, verse 18, what does Paul now say we should do with this wonderful knowledge?

"Therefore" - since this is going to take place, "**encourage one another**". God has given us the gift of encouragement, which is administered through the lives of Christians as they share His truth with one another.

\*\* What will be the impact of "**God's Gift of Encouragement**"?

We will build up one another - which is at the heart of our ministry.

cf. Romans 15:2 - "...for his good, to his edification."

2Corinthians 10:8 - "...for building you up..."

Ephesians 4:12 - "...to the building up of the body of Christ..."

\*\* Do you think that this instruction was going to be hard for the Thessalonians to apply to their life?

No - "...just as you also are doing". It was already a common practice for them. They simply needed to "excel still more" in this area as well. cf. 1Thessalonians 4:1 and 10

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* What behavioral patterns have we seen today which are to be avoided at all costs?

Not being prepared for the Lord - carousing in the realm of darkness.

\*\* What were the things which Christians are to actively pursue in our passage?

Wearing our breastplate of faith in Christ and the love of God, as well as keeping our thinking protected by the helmet of hope, the certainty of our salvation based upon God's promise in His word.

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* Let's review the question which was asked at the beginning of today's study.

"When life gets difficult, when we feel like failures because of our battles with sin, what encouragement could there be to lift our hearts to the rejoicing attitude which we have been called to live out each day?"

What was the good news in verse nine from today's passage which enables us to give "**God's Gift of Encouragement**" to one another?

- 1) We are not destined for wrath! Praise the Lord!
- 2) We are destined to obtain salvation!

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* Do I have this kind of encouraging impact upon my brothers and sisters in Christ? How can I grow in this area of my life, to excel still more, for the building up of the body of Christ?

Let me suggest just two steps: All see - Ephesians 5:7-10

- 1) Walk as children of the light.
- 2) Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

## **ACTIVATE**

\*\* Would each of you go now before the Lord in a word of silent prayer?

Ask Him to help you to walk as His child in the light of His word and to learn to please Him more each day.

Ask Him for an opportunity to share "**God's Gift of Encouragement**" with another Christian this week, in that we have not been destined for wrath, but for salvation through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Closing prayer