

1 Thess 5:1-11
“Light in Darkness”
24th Sunday af. Pentecost

November 15, 2020
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior,
and God, our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[1] [*Light and Darkness*]

The concepts of light and dark are used rather often in Scripture
The Gospel of John relies heavily upon this image,
and in our epistle lesson Paul would use that same imagery.

SO Let’s think about it... light and dark.

In the dark, not only can you not see where your going
You cannot see any danger
danger either in your path or coming toward you.
You simply don’t know much about what’s out in front of
or surrounding you.

On the other hand, in the daytime, all can be seen.
There’s no question about the path on which you walk.
And if danger comes, you can see it and make moves to avoid it.

Indeed, in the light, you have great confidence about yourself,
about where your going, and where you’ll end up.

[2] So, with faith, it’s as though all confidence has been given.
You know who you are.
You know where you are going.
You know where you’ll end up.

Faith in Christ, the faith God so graciously gives in Baptism, allows you to know,
without any doubting, that you belong to God.

Faith in Christ allows you to know that the path you walk in life is a God-given path,
walking in the manner of Jesus—serving others, honoring God in all you do.

Faith in Christ allows you to know, with absolute certainty, that you will be with
Jesus in the glory of glories when this life is over.

This is most certainly being in the light!

But in the darkness, it's the absolute opposite. St. Paul warns,

[3] *“The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape”* (vv 2b–3).

The only certainty in darkness is uncertainty.

[4] [**Christ Coming**]

Indeed, this is the reason for Paul writing the words of our passage, to give greater certainty to the believers of Thessalonica.

He writes,

“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (vv 1–2).

Here Paul is adding to what he said in the previous chapter:

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord” (4:16–17).

This, we and the Thessalonians know.

And the reality is that our sinful nature

which doesn't want to trust

causes us to question the times and seasons.

We will say things like,

we just want the Lord to give us some specifics.

We want to know the specifics.

We want some concrete evidence.

But instead the Lord has given us faith.

Faith to believe...

Now, there is another reason for not knowing the day and time of the return of Christ.

If we knew,

then we'd think we could live however we wanted

and just clean up our act before Jesus' arrival.

But Paul – He knows that ploy:

“Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night”
(vv 6–7).

[Great Gift]

So, we really have to say that it’s a great gift not to know,
not to know the day or the time or the season when Jesus will come again.

You see, what we do know is quite enough:

“Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. . . . You are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness” (vv 1, 4–5).

By not knowing, we then focus on what really counts.

The two things that really count are...

[5] First, that we believe that God has made us children of the light.

He did so by buying us back from the clutches of Satan and our sin:

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him” (vv 9–10).

God has made us children of this wonderful future
by giving us faith through the Word in our Baptism and in our ears.

We really are his very own children and we will be such for now and for all eternity.

[6] Second, not worrying about a day, time or season,
we can just let Christ live in and through us.

Indeed, by letting that be the truth of our lives,
those around us will see us as significantly different
from those who live without the light:

“Since we belong to the day, let us be sober; having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. . . . Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (vv 8, 11).

Being children of the light changes *ALTOGETHER* what life is
and what life is all about.

Therefore, we no longer live for self,
but for the Christ who saved us
and for the people with whom we are to share God's love.
This is our enduring mission...
To which we say... Here I am.

That is the sum and substance of being no longer of the darkness,
but being children of the light,
being children of the heavenly Father.

[7] [Conclusion]

By not being of the darkness,
by being children of the light,
we belong, truly belong, to God the Father, God Almighty.

In that most precious status,
he has removed all the sins we have
and ever will commit.

And he particularly forgives our sin
of wanting to know the exact day and time of his return
and the sin of not living as children of the light.

And what's more, he lives in and through us
so that we become and are — lights to the world around us.
If it were not for believers in the world,
it would indeed be the dark ages all over again.

Praise God for having come to us to make us his children of light.
Praise God for living in and through us,
making us alert and sober about this life
and knowledgeable about what is to come in the next life.

Yes, we have so much for which to praise God.
Thus, we say again, all praise be to God. Amen.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
