

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

**NOTES:**

**A. Introduction:**

1. In 1 Thessalonians 4 Paul addressed a worry the Thessalonians had: that by dying they would miss Christ's second coming (1 Thes. 4:13-18).
2. In 1 Thes. 5, he emphasizes that preparation is key.
  - a. Time isn't open-ended. Jesus put a period on the sentence of time.
  - b. Death for the believer is never the last word; Jesus always has the last word.

**B. Keep your eye on the goal; don't get distracted by the peripheral.**

1. In basketball the person dribbling the ball is only vaguely aware of what's happening around him—the peripheral. The main focus is the goal—to put the ball through the hoop.
2. In the Christian life, our goal is not to figure out when Jesus will return:
  - a. That can lead to our becoming distracted with peripheral teaching, like the "four blood moons."
  - b. That can lead to making unfulfilled / embarrassing predictions (e.g. Harold Camping).
3. Jesus' teaching during the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension shows us what is essential.
  - a. "It is not for you to know the times or season" – Acts 1:7.
  - b. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..." – Acts 1:8.
4. But the fact of Jesus' second coming must also shape our lives and practice—our futureology: 1 Thes. 5:1-11.
  - a. God's wrath and justice, the second coming, the day of the Lord are essential beliefs.
  - b. These beliefs should propel us to invest in people, explain God's love, and that God has a purpose for their lives so they are prepared.
  - c. We don't belong to darkness but to light and our belief in eternity redefines what we live for now. E.g. Lord Anthony Ashley-Cooper whose statue is in Piccadilly Circus (London): He did much social good by stopping child labor and opening schools for children, etc.. **Lord Anthony Ashley-Cooper's motivation:** *"I do not believe I have lived one hour without the expectation of the second coming of Christ."*
  - d. Langley is a better place than heaven because we still have the opportunity to be ministers of reconciliation and spread the gospel. Heaven ends that opportunity. **Pastor Doug:** *"Don't replace passion for mission with teaching that is peripheral."*

**C. Practical application.**

1. Our church's goal and vision is to see 1000 come to Christ this year.
2. Alpha is a major part of that vision.
  - a. Folk hero and British adventurer Bear Grylls is helping publicize and promote the Alpha series this fall.
  - b. Our next Alpha session begins on September 28.
  - c. Our church's involvement will be two-pronged:
    - i. A church Alpha class with, hopefully, hundreds in attendance.
    - ii. Home Alpha classes where people will host an Alpha class in their homes.
    - iii. Training will be provided.
    - iv. **View Session 1 of the newly updated Alpha videos.** (A link to this video will be on the sermon page of the CLA website. It is also available on the Alpha site: <http://alpha.org/watch/>)
3. What can we do now?
  - a. Remember, Alpha is for non-believers. Ask, could I bring a friend to Alpha this fall? Who do I need to pray for? Who is the person I should invite?
  - b. Pray about becoming involved as a table host or as a host of the Alpha series in your home.

**MINISTRY:**

1. What are some views of time, the world and what happens to us after we die common in our society? How do those views differ from the teachings of Jesus? How have you bridged the gap between the two?
2. What are some essentials of the Christian faith? How might a focus on the time/manner/signs surrounding Jesus' return become a distraction?
3. According to 1 Thes. 5:1-11, how are we to live as Christians?
4. In what way is Langley a better place than heaven?
5. After viewing Video 1 of the Alpha series (or recalling it from Sun. a.m.), discuss what you saw and your reactions to it.

**PRAYER:**

Dear Jesus, please keep us from all kinds of distractions. As we live as alert children of light, help us to stay focused on our mission of spreading the gospel. Please give us Your heart for our unsaved friends, neighbors and colleagues and the courage to invite them to an Alpha class in the fall. Amen.