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1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about how we can have such a passion for the Lord that nothing derails our faith. Our answer is not found in WHAT, but WHO. Not what we do, but who we know. We press on to know Jesus better, and press on to pursue the right prize. If you'd like to listen to the podcast, here's the link… https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/

Blessings,
Jonna

Today we start our second to the last focus of this series, Kingdom Outpost. I'm gonna be honest. I have a pretty good grasp on some things in scripture, but the end times is not one of them. I know the basics, but I'm looking forward to getting a fuller understanding from Tim this weekend. No pressure, right? 😂

One thing I do see repeated in 1 Thessalonians several places regarding what's to come is, "Encourage each other with these words." Why? I think one reason is that we are looking forward to our future with the Lord WHILE we live in a broken world. And this world has many distractions… some distractions that make people think the future pales in comparison to how good things are… and they would be wrong… and some distractions that make the future seem like it can't possibly be good enough to make the pain of today worth it. In either case, we need to encourage each other so that we keep an "Eternal Perspective." Our future with the Lord is our incomparable hope.

So with my limited understanding, I'm going to see what the Lord wants me to be encouraged by in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

Vs. 1-2 ~ "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."

So… Paul must have taught about this in person. They were fully aware of what was to come. I can't say I'm fully aware like they were… just that I'm fully aware that it's coming. What's coming? The Day of the Lord. What's the Day of the Lord? This is what I'm a little sketchy on. But one of the benefits of being married to Tim is that he points me in the right direction so that I can have a better understanding… as I'm sure he's going to do for everyone on Sunday.

Tim pointed me to 2 passages concerning the Day of the Lord…

Zephaniah 1:15-18 ~ Yikes! It sounds kind of scary… It's a future time right at the end where there will be wrath, distress, anguish, ruin, devastation, thick darkness, gloom, clouds, a trumpet blast, a battle cry… Against who??? Against those who "sin against the Lord." Don't ALL people sin against the Lord? Yes, but thanks to Jesus Christ, those who believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord, will never face the wrath of God because Jesus took our wrath for us 2000 years ago. I don't have to fear the Day of the Lord because Jesus is my Savior… even from the wrath.

Acts 2:18-21 ~ The Spirit will be poured out on the servants of the Lord, believers in Christ, so that they can prophesy. God will show His wonders in the heavens. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood BEFORE the Day of the Lord SO THAT "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." So the Day of the Lord will include justice for those who rebelled against God, but mercy for those who turn to Him. Encourage each other with these words.

Why is it important for me to have an eternal perspective? Because if I don't, I will ignore the fact that people need Jesus. And I will let the temporary struggles and pleasures of this world distract me. I praise God that other people didn't let distractions stop them from sharing the gospel with me.

What will things be like in the world when this Day of the Lord comes like "a thief in the night"? Vs. 3 says, "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."

So… WILL there be peace and security in the world at that point? Based on what I see in the world around me and what I see in scriptures like Ephesians 4:18-19 speaking of unbelievers, I think unbelievers will choose to say things are peaceful and safe even if they aren't. They choose ignorance. The passage in Ephesians 4 says, "They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity." They are ignorant of the truth due to their hardness of heart.

They think that by defining their own truth they can avoid or change reality. But truth and

reality are absolute. And the Day of the Lord will come suddenly like labor pains come suddenly. Let me not be blind to this, though. Labor pains in a pregnant woman are expected even if they come suddenly. The truth of what's to come has been written in black and white for thousands of years. Ignoring what it says is a choice… and a bad one.

Vs. 4-6 ~ "But 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. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober."

I have no need to be ignorant of the truth because I'm a child of light and of the day. I will not face the wrath of God. So let me not "sleep." Let me not stick my head in the sand and ignore the truth. But instead, keep alert and stay sober. Watch for what God is doing.

Vs. 7-8 ~ "For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But 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."

What does it mean to "be awake", to "be of the day", and to "be sober"? It means I'm a believer in Jesus Christ who has put on the breastplate of faith and love, and I've put on the helmet of the hope of salvation. So ~

The breastplate… what protects my heart is…

- *Faith… putting my full confidence in Jesus Christ, trusting that His word is true and that He is who He says He is*
- *Love… the evidence of my faith in Jesus is that I'm growing in love because "God IS love" (James 4:8).*
- *Faith and love protect my heart's resolve to stand with Jesus no matter what.*

The helmet… what protects my mind is…

- *The hope of salvation… this is not "the wishful thinking" of salvation. This is the "absolute certainty" of salvation. Because I'm absolutely certain that I'll spend forever with Jesus and that my sins are forgiven, I can be absolutely secure in Him.*

The Lord protects my heart and my mind. My mind takes in the information of life… I have the absolute certainty of salvation. My heart determines how to process the information… in faith and love. The Lord helps me understand and cling to the truth.

Here's my hope and what I anchor my faith in and what grows my love from vs. 9-10 ~ "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."

My destiny WAS wrath, but no longer. My destiny was facing an eternal punishment of God that I will now never face. It's very possible that my destiny was to face the wrath of the Day of the Lord but because I belong to Him, even that will not touch me. Why? Not because I could change my destiny, but because Jesus did. He gave His life for me so that I could live with Him no matter what. That's why I don't need to be afraid of the Day of the Lord. I'm with the One who is over it all. He's saved my soul and He protects my heart and mind. Therefore, I anchor my faith in Him and love Him with all I've got because He is my hope. Not only does He do all these things for believers, but He gives us other believers to encourage and support each other so that we don't lose heart. That's why Paul says…

Vs. 11 ~ "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

I'm not called to be distracted by my own little world, but to be an encouragement to other believers, and to let them be an encouragement to me. By doing this we build each other up in the Lord so that our circumstances never derail our faith.

Paul calls us to encourage each other and build each other up… "just as we ARE DOING." That means… Don't stop. Keep doing it. Actively and intentionally do it. We need the encouragement and support and God provides it for us by helping us be His hands and feet with each other. Our faith is not a spectator sport. We're called to engage with each other. It helps us stay strong as we are the encourager, and it helps us get stronger as we are encouraged.

O Lord, as Your Kingdom Outpost, please help us to have an active, intentional, eternal perspective of faith, hope, and love. Please let that be an encouragement to those around us. And please don't let us stick our heads in the sand concerning what will be. Help us to pay attention to the ending so that we're not afraid in the middle of our stories. Amen.