

The Day Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

MEMORY VERSE

1 THESSALONIANS 5:8

“Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several sheets of construction paper (assorted colors), scissors and a large cardboard box.

As many “Bear of Glad Tidings” templates as the number of children in your class, scissors and markers or crayons.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Here Comes the Parade

Prepare ahead of time a very small procession of volunteer kids or adults to be your parade. They should be somewhat entertaining and could have clown faces, masks, Hacky-sacks, juggle, play a fake instrument or just march around and be silly and throw out small prizes like erasers or stickers.

Have children stand in two lines facing each other near the door as though lined up on each side of a street. Ask them if they have ever been to a parade. Explain that you usually arrive early to get a good place (or you may have to climb a tree in order to see!), so there is almost always a lot of waiting involved with parades. Ask them not to move out of their places. But ask the people nearest the door to keep watch for the parade and tell the others when they think the parade is coming.

After the parade is over, ask the kids how waiting for Jesus’ return is like waiting for a parade. You could add that sometimes it is hot when we are waiting a long time, or it may rain, or the parade may be later than we expected, but encouragement coming from down the street can give us renewed hope and help us wait more patiently and expectantly. But know for sure that Jesus will return soon!

LESSON TIME!

In this section of Scripture, Paul writes to the Thessalonians about the return of Jesus Christ. He wanted them to be encouraged and instructed regarding Jesus' return. They were new believers and may not have had a lot of knowledge about such things.

Have you heard that Jesus is going to return? What do you think about that? Is it exciting to you that you will get to see Jesus someday? Or is it kind of scary, not knowing what it will be like. The Bible tells us that it is going to be a wonderful time when Jesus returns. That He will come to make this world much better. Let's look at the time of Jesus' return and learn what it means in our lives. **God wants us to encourage one another because He is returning soon.**

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13, 14

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

In verse 13 when Paul talks about those who have "fallen asleep," he is referring to Christians who have already died. Their body is asleep but not their spirit, because as Christians, when we die we will go to be with Jesus immediately. Paul was trying to help them understand what happens to a Christian after he or she dies.

He wanted them to have hope and not be sorrowful as those who have no hope. Paul tells them that if they believe that Jesus died and rose again (came back to life) that they can know that when Jesus returns He will bring back with Him all the Christians who have "fallen asleep." So, in other words, Jesus will bring back with Him all of the Christians that have died before us. **God wants us to encourage one another because He is returning soon.**

What a great hope that we have in Jesus! When Jesus rose from the dead He conquered death. It no longer had power over Him. Because we believe in Jesus He gives us eternal life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in our lives. We really won't die; we will just be changed when we leave this body. Then all of the Christians will return with Jesus.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

Paul goes on to say that we who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise up to meet Him ahead of those who are in their graves. Again Paul is only talking about their physical bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15:35-57 and 2 Corinthians 5:1-9). When we die, as Christians, our spirit departs to be with the Lord but our bodies wait for a new, changed, resurrected and glorified body that Jesus will give us. Because we know this **God wants us to encourage one another because He is returning soon.**

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a mighty shout and with the voice of an archangel and the great trumpet call of God, and then the believers who are dead will be the first to rise to meet the Lord. Then we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and we will remain with Him forever. We are to comfort and encourage each other with this good news.

Maybe you have heard of the word, rapture. These verses talk about the rapture. The word rapture means, "catching up." There will come a time when Jesus returns that all of the Christians will be caught up to be with Him. After this happens there will be a very bad time that comes upon the whole earth called the Great Tribulation. The Tribulation will last seven years and then Jesus will return to establish His throne and rule on this earth. We will be with Jesus during that time.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-3

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Probably many people wanted to know when the Lord was coming back. Paul told them that no one knows. He tells them that the Lord will come unexpectedly. Just like a thief in the night. Paul is using an illustration to explain that it will come as a surprise to many, like the thief who comes in the night while the homeowner is sleeping.

While people are saying all is well, everything is quiet and peaceful in the world; it is then that sudden disaster will fall upon them. And those people who aren't Christians will not be able to get away and there will be no place to hide.

The important thing that we have to realize is that now is the day of salvation. Do not wait until tomorrow. There are no guarantees that it will get here. If you are not a "child of the light" you can be by simply asking Jesus to come into your heart. Then you will be raptured with all of the other Christians when Jesus returns.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:4, 5

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

Paul tells the believers in Christ that they are not in the dark about these things and so they will not be surprised by this day, because they are children of the light and of the day and do not belong to darkness. **God wants us to encourage one another because He is returning soon.**

Children of Light

Make several simple puzzles. Cut a piece of construction paper into five or six pieces for each puzzle. Use a different color of construction paper for each puzzle. Have the children take turns putting the puzzles together either with their eyes closed or by having them place their hands into pre-cut holes in a cardboard box in a way that they can not see the puzzle as they make it.

After a few attempts, or when each child has a turn allow them to see the puzzles and complete them while looking. Of course they are a lot easier when you can see it “in the light.”

Explain that as children of God we are “children of light.” Jesus has not left us in the dark while we are waiting for His return. He has given us the Bible and the Holy Spirit to show us what we should do while we are waiting for His return.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-8

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

Paul warns them and us that we should be on our guard, not asleep like others. Paul does not mean a literal sleep, he means that we should be alert and sober-minded and watching for Jesus’ return. Paul says that we should also be protected by God’s armor as mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-20 and that God wants us to encourage one another because the Lord is returning soon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-11

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Paul now explains that God’s intention is not to pour out His anger upon us, but to save us through Jesus Christ! He died for us so that we can live with Him forever, whether we are dead or alive at the time of His return. Paul ends this verse by saying that we need to encourage and build each other up.

Jesus said that we are to watch and pray as we wait for His return. It will be a wonderful day when Jesus comes to take us to forever be with Him. These things are very encouraging to us during difficult times. We have hope because of Jesus.

Bear of Glad Tidings

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 it says that as believers we are to comfort one another with God's Word as we await Jesus' return. What is more comforting than a teddy bear?

Use the enclosed template, make copies and allow the children to color the bear with crayons or markers. Then cut the two slits on the bear and cut out the rectangle piece of paper that has the scripture verse on it. Next slide the paper through the slits in the bear's tummy. The children can hang on their refrigerators or bulletin boards.

Explain to the children that it is a wonderful privilege to be able to share God's Word with others to be able to comfort them.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be watchful for the Lord's return as well as being encouraging to others. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

