

Enduring in the End Times

1 Thessalonians 5: 8-11

Paul had spent a great deal of time dealing with the rapture of the church and the second coming of the Lord. He sought to enlighten them concerning the events that are sure to happen. If you remember, the Thessalonians were a bit confused, and even concerned, about who would be taken as the Lord returned for the church. Apparently, they also had questions concerning the coming of the Lord.

After seeking to settle them regarding the coming of Christ, Paul shifted his focus toward preparing the saints to endure for the Lord during the end times. He knew this would be a most difficult season for believers, but one in which we must endure for the glory of God.

We have heard all our lives that the Lord could return for the church at any moment. Just because He hasn't returned yet is no indication that He isn't coming. The world stage is being set in our generation for the Lord's soon coming. Consider a few verses of Scripture that deal with His coming. [2 Thes.2:3 – Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;](#) [2 Tim.3:1 – This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.](#) [2 Tim.3:13 – But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.](#) Surely you will agree these prophecies are being fulfilled?

We are in the midst of difficult days, but we must press on and continue the work He has called us to do. The passage we've read provides instruction for those who are living in the end times. I want to consider the [details](#) of our preparation as we think on: [Enduring in the End Times](#).

I. The Armor of the Believer (8) – Paul knew this would be a battle. He knew the enemy would be relentless in his attacks. If Christians are to endure, we must possess and properly use our armor. Let's take a moment to consider the armor.

A. Soberness – We have already dealt with this in our last study, and yet Paul was inspired to speak of it again. Remember, being sober has the idea of "*rigid discipline, living a pure life of righteousness.*" As we think of a soldier going into battle, he has to be disciplined, taking all he has learned and applying that to the current situation. He cannot deviate from the battle plan no matter how much he is tempted. He must stand his ground, even when it seems defeat may be imminent. He is to be aware of his surroundings at all times.

- This provides a profound truth for us as well. We have the benefit of the complete Word of God. Most of us were raised in church and we are grounded in our faith. We know what we

believe and why we believe it. We are equipped for the journey and the battle. This is where our soberness is so important. We could have the best tools or weapons at our disposal, but if we fail to use them or use them improperly, they are of little benefit. We must be disciplined to stand even when it seems we are standing alone. We must keep our eye on the advance of the enemy and stand firm in the Lord.

B. Breastplate of Faith and Love (8) – Paul speaks next of the breastplate of the soldier. This was a vital piece of armor. It protected the heart and the vital organs. If a soldier's heart is left vulnerable, he may not survive the battle. The same is true for us. We don't wear physical armor, but we must ensure that we are dressed with the breastplate of faith and love.

- These two are critical in defending the heart. Without faith in the Lord we are tempted to abandon the cause and flee from the fight. If we lose our focus and faith, we will not survive. Through faith we trust in the power of the Lord and are shielded from temptation and sin.
- Love is also important within the heart. When we shield our hearts with love, we are willing to endure when others might fail. Love creates an allegiance to our Master. Love allows us to see as God does. It allows us to feel the needs of others. It is much easier to abandon a cause when there are few consequences, but when we love and care for those around us, we are more likely to stand and fight. Love will compel us to endure for our children, for the church, and even for those who are unsaved.

C. Helmet of Hope in Salvation (8) – This too is a critically important piece of armor. The helmet protects the head and brain. We all know that without the head, the body quickly dies. Without the ability to think and process information the soldier will not survive long.

- The mind is the most vulnerable part of the body. It is there that doubt and fear begin. It is often within the mind that sin takes hold. It is vital that we keep our minds focused on the Lord and the blessed hope that we have in Him. As long as we have faith in the Lord, looking toward His coming, we can overcome the struggles we face. A heart and mind that is settled in the Lord and looking for His return will endure even in the most difficult situations. [1 Pet.1:3-4 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ^{\[4\]} To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.](#)

II. The Admonition of the Believer (9) – After Paul addressed the armor believers are to possess, he then reveals our obligation to live unto the Lord. Notice:

A. Our Promise (9a) – *For God hath not appointed us to wrath.* What a promise we have in the Word of God. Keep in mind that the believers in Thessalonica were confused and concerned with the second coming. They feared the dead in Christ would not be taken in the rapture and were unsure of their presence in the Day of the Lord. Paul reveals that God has not appointed or “placed” the believer within His wrath. In fact, He has promised to deliver us from the wrath to come. *1 Thes.1:10 – And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* John 5:24 – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* Rom.8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

▪ I know there is a lot of debate concerning the church and the Tribulation. When we consider the whole of Scripture, we discover the church will not be left to face the wrath of God in that time. This is yet another confirmation of that truth. *God hath not appointed us to wrath.* Here the word *wrath* is not a reference to a sudden burst of anger or a quick and passing judgment. It speaks of “*an abiding and settled state of judgment.*” We have the assurance of God’s Word that he has not appointed the church to endure that wrath.

B. Our Provision (9b) – Here Paul reveals wherein our hope and assurance lies. We are not appointed unto wrath, *but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* The wrath of God is reserved for those who reject Him and deny the Lord in salvation, but provision was made for our redemption upon the cross of Calvary. We don’t have to face the wrath of God if we are cleansed in the shed blood of His precious Son. The Lord provided a means of escape from the wrath of God as He offered Himself the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sin. *2 Thes.2:13-14 – But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:* ^[14] *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Aren’t you glad Christ bore our sin and endured the judgment we deserved so that we might be redeemed?

III. The Advocate of the Believer (10) – This reveals what the Lord did for us and the hope we have through Him. Consider:

A. His Sacrifice (10a) – Paul reminds them that it was *Christ the Lord who died for us.* He bore our sin; He faced the wrath of God for our sin; He offered Himself as the only sacrifice worthy to atone for the sins of humanity. Christ died in our place; He became our substitute. *1 Pet.2:24 – Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* 1 Peter 3:18 – *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,*

the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

B. His Security (10b) – *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.* This ought to have put all their fears and doubts to rest. As Christ died upon the cross for our sin, He secured eternal life for those who believe upon Him in salvation. Whether we live or die we will live eternally with Christ our blessed Lord! *Rom.14:8-9 – For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* ^[9] *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

- What a blessed assurance we have in the Lord. We have no way of knowing what we will face or endure in this body of flesh. When all is said and done upon this earth and in this life, the saved will enjoy the glorious presence of the Redeemer throughout eternity!

IV. The Advantage of the Believer (11) – Here Paul mentions a couple things that set the believers apart from the world. Notice:

A. Our Comfort (11a) – *Wherefore comfort yourselves together.* He exhorts them to comfort themselves together by considering and rejoicing in all they have in the Lord. Life is difficult, at best, but this is not all there is for the child of God. We are a people of hope. We have the assurance of our salvation based upon the finished work of Calvary and the empty tomb. We can take comfort even in the most difficult of times. *1 Thes.4:13 – But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* *1 Cor. 15:19-20 – If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* ^[20] *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

B. Our Commitment (11b) – *and edify one another, even as also ye do.* Paul was well aware that some were weak in their faith. There would be those who would not understand or embrace truth as they should. This is an exhortation for the strong to edify the weak. He wanted them to maintain their commitment to each other.

- We too need to be reminded and challenged in that regard. Those who are strong need to encourage those who are weak. We need a steadfast commitment to encouraging and edifying one another. There is enough tearing down already; we need to be committed to building up for the glory of God and the good of the church!

Conclusion: I trust that these verses brought a measure of comfort to you today. I also hope they challenged us to persevere in the trials of life, seeking to encourage one another. We need the Lord's help and we need the help of each other. Times are difficult and they will only get worse, but we are more than conquerors through Christ the Lord.

This passage reveals a sobering reality. The wrath of God will one day come upon all who have rejected Him. Do you know Christ as your Savior? If not, you will face God's wrath.