

## **Awake and Sober**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Last week we saw how the Thessalonians were worried about those who had died. But they were also worried for themselves – how would they survive the Last Day? Perhaps, if they could know the day it would happen, they could make themselves ready. Paul's answer to not being afraid on that Day is very different.

#### **A Dangerous Peace and an Unsafe Security**

Paul says there is a kind of comfort that acts like a sedative. 'Peace and Security' was what Rome claimed it could give its people. Whilst we don't have Roman officials making those kind of claims, plenty of other things offer us the same. And yet, there is a comfort and lifestyle, that numbs you to the danger you're in.

#### **The Day of the Lord: Sudden but not Surprising**

Rather than be drawn into a debate about the timing of the Lord's return (which no-one can know), Paul uses two images to show that Jesus will return suddenly, but that it does not need to surprise us.

The first is of a burglar. Burglars don't announce themselves before hand. The reason they catch people unawares is that they come at night – and people are asleep at night. Christ's coming will be like that: it will catch people asleep and unaware.

The second is of a pregnant woman. Everyone knows that at a certain time labour pains will start – there is no avoiding them. And there will be no avoiding the destruction that comes when Jesus returns.

But we don't like talk of judgment and destruction. We want justice for others, but mercy for ourselves. We want there to be a day of reckoning, provided that we are not caught up in it. But because we do all fail God's righteous standards, what we need is for our judge to become our saviour.

#### **No Fear of that Day**

Paul gives two reasons why we don't need to fear that Day: Firstly, we are children of light, so the Day of the Lord does not need to take us by surprise. But secondly, God has not destined us for wrath, he has destined us for salvation. Jesus took the wrath for us. He died so that we might live.

So our eternal peace and security is based on the rock of Jesus' death, and God's destiny for us.

#### **Living in the Light of Day**

Whilst the Lord's return does not need to fill us with fear, it will change the way we live. Because we are children of the day, we will not sleep through life. We will not be spiritually disengaged. Others will live like that, but we won't join their slumber party. We won't allow affluence and comfort to intoxicate us.

But finally, Paul tells them to encourage one another. Sometimes we feel weak, unworthy and discouraged. That's when we can encourage one another with the truth that the coming King has not destined us for wrath, but gave his life for us. Salvation is what he has in store for us.