

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11** But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

## Keep Christ's Clothes On!

What do you do at night? Well that depends on the person doesn't it. Some people are going out to the bar or to dance club and so they change into party clothes. Some people go to sleep and so they change into pajamas and go bed. Paul in our text tells us not to be like either of those. No I am not saying it is wrong to sleep. I do it every night. And no I am not saying going out at night is intrinsically wrong. The sleeping and night time that Paul is talking about in our text are metaphors as you probably realized. But if they are metaphors, what does Paul mean by children of night and children of day. That is a very important question since

children of darkness shall obtain the wrath of verse 9 but the children of the day shall obtain salvation. So are you children of day and what makes you so?

I want you to see that what makes you a child of day or child of the light is keeping the clothes Christ gave you on. Not the ones you bought at the store or made yourself and not the ones you put on in the morning but the clothes that God has made and put on you. It is wearing these that makes you children of light and not wearing them that makes you children of darkness as Jesus says in **Revelation 16:15** "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!"

So what does it mean to be a child of day? Well it doesn't mean to never sleep. If Paul was talking literally here and going to heaven meant that you couldn't be literally sleeping or napping when Christ came otherwise you would go to hell, would any of you ever be able to sleep again? Not only would every minute of sleep we took put us in mortal danger but demanding that we not

every fall asleep lest we risk hell would not be the actions of gracious and merciful god but a frivolous one, a god who we would fear but we couldn't love .

Thankfully when Paul talks about children of day not sleeping, he isn't talking about literal sleep. Nor is he talking about always being conscience that God could come at that moment. You all know, as the Thessalonians knew, that today, this moment could be the moment when Christ returns to the take the children of day to glory and cast the children of darkness to wrath. You all know that. But how many minutes off your life are you consciously aware of that? What if to go to heaven you had to be aware of that fact, the exact moment when Christ came? 99% of the time we don't think about it. So if not sleeping meant always being aware that this moment could be the moment Christ returns, would be terrible and would once again mean our god is not gracious but frivolous. Thankfully that is not what being a child of day means and our God isn't frivolous but is gracious.

Realize that there are a lot of Christians who do think God

does work in ways like that, is frivolous like that. There is a impression, a false one but it is still believed, that if someone dies right after going to confession or receiving the Lord's Supper that they will go straight to heaven because they didn't have time to collect any more sin. This is terrible teaching and an unscriptural one but it is portrayed, for example, in the TV series "Hell on Wheels" and the movie "God isn't dead". In "hell on wheels" a man who was a war criminal had just gotten done confessing his sins when he was shot through the head. Then some people in the TV show express what a great way that is to go because just having got done confessing his sins he surely went to heaven. AWFUL. Ungodly. Unbiblical thought . That man despite the heinous crimes he committed could go to heaven but not because he just had confession but if he believed in Jesus for the forgiveness of all his sins.

Don't you see what an unscriptural, ungodly teaching that is? If going to heaven meant not having committed any sins since the last time you said you were sorry or took communion, chances

are all of us would go to hell. That false notion would be just as terrifying as having to be physically awake when Jesus comes again or losing heaven. What if Jesus came right now and you never apologized to your brother for how you acted or your spouse for being unkind? What about all the sinful things you did and never apologized of which there are countless? Yes you are suppose to be comforted when taking the sacraments that your sins are forgiven but you don't need to run to the pastor every day to take it in fear of dying without having it in the last 24 hours means you will go to hell. Yes if you are dying and in weakness and fear you doubt the forgiveness of your sins and place in heaven receiving the Lord Supper can be a comfort for the Holy Spirit through it to work forgiveness and assurance of forgiveness and place in heaven because of Christ's gift. But if there is not time or noone around who can give it to you, for those who believe in Jesus their sin is still forgiven and heaven still the gift of God in Christ. In the Lord Supper, Christ gives you His body and blood given unto death for your sin to forgive your sin and to assure your

sin is always forgiven through faith in Him.

So what does being a Child of day mean? It means not changing your clothes. **Revelation 16:15** says ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") Christ on the cross made for you spiritual garments of holiness and perfection and through the Gospel in words and sacrament He brought you to faith and wrapped you in them washing your soul clean from all that you have done, all that you will do so that whether we are literally awake or literally sleeping whether we had communion that day or week or not we should live together with him. Therefore comfort and edify one another. That is what being a child of day means. To not change those clothes, the clothes Christ won for you and clothed you in.

What does it mean to be a child of night? It means you never put on those clothes Christ won for you or you reject them. Notice that important qualification. Never put them on or reject them. I certainly hope that none of us goes a day with out realizing

how sinful we are and knowing that we are also forgiven, but  
certainly many hours go by when we don't think about that and  
sadly there maybe days when we aren't contrite for our sins and  
don't rejoice in our forgiveness. But not always being conscious  
of our forgiveness doesn't make us children of darkness but  
rejecting the clothing of Christ, rejecting the forgiveness of Christ  
the salvation of Christ does.

This is what our text is talking about with the children of  
night telling each other "peace and safety". You are you children of  
light. You know that Christ is coming at any time and you know  
what you deserve for your sins but you also know what Christ did  
for you and what Christ has given you. Christ has washed you  
clean from all you sin and wrapped you up in His beautiful  
holiness so that you wont be punished for your sins but taken to  
heaven. Children of night very well might be aware of a lot of that.  
They very well might be very conscious or vaguely conscious that  
God is coming and will stand judgment on each soul. Even if they  
have never heard the scriptures the conscience of man until it is

burnt out through forcefully rejection or drowned out by alcohol or  
dissipation testifies to that. So they very well might knew God is  
coming for judgment but they don't want to know it because they  
have rejected the clothing of Christ, the forgiveness of Christ, the  
salvation of Christ. They don't want to think about dying or God  
coming and them having to answer to God for each unkind thought  
and word, for each careless action and each failure. So like a bunch  
of drunken teenagers hyping each other to do something like stupid  
like car surfing the children of darkness tell each other "peace and  
safety". They convince themselves they won't have to answer to  
Christ for their sin, or that they have nothing to answer for, they  
did their best that is all God could ask for them, or they have done  
enough good in their life to be saved, or they just went to  
confession there good for awhile.

These and many other things are the ways the world  
convinces themself of peace and safety. But not you. Don't by  
spiritually drunk and sleeping like the children of darkness. Your  
peace and safety comes from Jesus who died for you, who

provided robes of white for you and through the gospel in word and sacrament put them on you. Don't change those clothes. Don't rely on the works of your hand.

That is not how children of day should act. We shouldn't push away the knowledge of our sin. We shouldn't push away the knowledge that I could die at any moment. We shouldn't push away the knowledge that Jesus could come at any moment. Why not? Because God did not appoint us to wrath but to obtain salvation. His coming isn't bad news but the greatest news. So stoke up the fires of faith and rejoice. Be sober. Not that word as one catechism student once told me sounds so serious. But while Christ coming again is serious, dull boringness is the opposite connotation Paul is intending for us children of light and day. This sobriety he talks about is knowing Christ is coming and not being glum about it but rejoicing for we know that yes I am sinner but Jesus has washed me clean so that whether I am literally sleeping or awake even if He should catch while doing something sinful which the chances are very good, even if I haven't apologized to every

person I have hurt which we haven't done and couldn't do, He comes to take us to glory. Christ is coming children of day. Sleep peacefully, live joyfully don't take off the clothes he gave you. Amen.

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