



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians

Chapter 5

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- St. Paul ended chapter four by speaking about the second coming of Christ, the rapture of the alive believers, and the resurrection of the faithful departed
- In the chapter, St. Paul started by addressing the question about the time of the second coming of the Lord (5:1-3)
- Then he spoke about:
 - ❑ Walk in light (5:4-11)
 - ❑ Walk in obedience (5:12-22)
 - ❑ Concluding remarks (5:23-28)



The Second Coming (5:1-3)

- We do not need to talk about the seasons and times because it is not for us to know them since they are in the authority of the Father (Acts 1:7)
- The day of the Lord will be like a thief only for the sinners (v. 4)
- Thief: when it is unexpected, so unprepared and unready
- Night: when we are sleeping, lazy
- Peace and safety: (false) like the foolish rich man



The Second Coming (5:1-3)

- Sudden destruction: Eternal damnation because they are not ready
- Labor pains: Eternal suffering
- Pregnant woman: it happens when it is not expected
- Shall not escape: there is no way out
- This is very true for the sinners and unbelievers



Walk in Light (5:4-11)

- Darkness: spiritual ignorance or sin
- Sons of light: righteousness and spiritual knowledge
- Sons of Day: Not lazy but vigilant
- Sleep: spiritual apathy
- Watch: for Christ's coming
- Sober: refrain from carnal indulgence



Walk in Light (5:4-11)

- People use the night to either sleep (rest/get lazy) or sin (under the veil of darkness)
- Our rest is in watchfulness not laziness and our conduct should be righteous and does not need any veil
- Sons of light are watchful and sober, as the soldiers since we are in continuous spiritual warfare



Walk in Light (5:4-11)

- We must sober, but also armed; not only watchful, but also guarded
- The armor guards us against being surprised by the day of the Lord as a thief in the night
- The helmet and breastplate defend the two vital parts, the head (ignorance) and the heart (sin) respectively



Walk in Light (5:4-11)

- For "the breastplate of righteousness," Eph 6:14, we have here "the breastplate of faith and love"
- Righteousness which is imputed to man for justification, is "faith (motive from within) working by love (outward acts)"
- Hope of salvation protects our mind from spiritual ignorance and error



Walk in Light (5:4-11)

- God prepared the kingdom of heaven for us (Matthew 25:34) and the eternal fire for the devil (Matthew 25:41)
- We are appointed for salvation in Jesus Christ
- Salvation is only through the death of Christ, so we may live with Him
- Wake or sleep: alive or dead (physically)
- The hope of salvation and the coming of the Lord is the source of our comfort and edification



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Responsibilities of the clergy:
 - ❖ Labor: tirelessly looking after the needs of the flock (deacons)
 - ❖ Over you in the Lord: they received this authority from God to protect and lead the flock into the green pastures of salvation (bishops)
 - ❖ Admonish: discipline is an essential part of spiritual care (priests)



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Responsibilities of the flock:
 - ❖ Recognize their office, and treat them accordingly with reverence and with liberality in supplying their needs
 - ❖ Esteem them very highly
 - ❖ In love
- For their work's sake: furtherance of your salvation and of the kingdom of Christ



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Be at peace: not only between the clergy and people but also among themselves
- Warn the unruly: who would not work and those insubordinate to church
- Comfort the fainthearted: without hope
- Uphold the weak: who need support



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Everybody needs another chance, so we should be longsuffering with all
- Overcome evil by good (Rom 12:21) with everybody the believers and non believers
- Prayer → joy → thanksgiving → prayer and so on
- God's will for us to be joyful



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Do not resist the Spirit, or counteract His influence by sensual lives:
 - ❖ Disobeying the word of God
 - ❖ Refusing to follow the exhortations
 - ❖ Suppressing your own conscience
- Don't despise the inspired teaching but be cautious in distinguishing between true and false, good and bad



Walk in Obedience (5:12-22)

- Holding fast to false teachers is a form of evil
- The Christian should not only abstain from evil but from the resemblance of evil
- Many evils come to us in sheep clothing, we need to be careful by testing it against the word of God and the teaching of the Holy Church



Concluding Remarks (5:23-28)

- They needed the peace of God especially because of the persecution
- Sanctification in every respect is a prerequisite for peace (no peace for the evil doers)
- The righteous will rise as complete human beings (soul, body, and spirit) but glorified
- Blameless: free from carnal, sensual, and spiritual sins



Concluding Remarks (5:23-28)

- May be this is impossible for us, but not for God
- He is faithful, so don't lose hope
- He called us, and will do it for us, don't resist His work or quench His Spirit
- Intercessory prayers (v. 25)
- Kiss of peace (v. 26)
- Public reading of Scriptures (v. 27)
- Benediction (v. 28)



Conclusion

- Why do the Thessalonians have no need that St. Paul write to them concerning the times and the seasons?
- What does it mean to be sons of day and sons of light?
- How do we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord?
- What are the responsibilities of the clergy and of the flock?
- What is the relation between prayer, joy, and thanksgiving?
- Explain the liturgical tone in this chapter?