

Advent Devotional November 28, 2021

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Devotional

The Rev. Caitlin Rohrer Werth '10

In today's context, it can be difficult for us to wrestle with a passage that seems to draw so much attention to dualism, judgment, and the anticipated apocalypse. We do live in a world divided, and we have seen well-intentioned people use religion to increase this divide—to pass judgment on others and react out of fear.

But the overall message of the gospel guides us away from that reaction. It reminds us followers of Christ that we are all broken by sin, all connected as a body, all grafted onto the vine, not called to judge, and that nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus. So also *this* passage can remind us that as Christians we are called to see duality in a different way: it's not "us versus them," but holiness versus separation from God—faith, love, hope, and salvation versus destruction and pain. We know enough to live differently. And we are reminded that we can't do so alone. We need each other to continue to live in and through God's love.

The church in Thessalonica was being reminded to put on armor—not for battle, but for love. We are meant to be ready for whatever God brings. We don't know the day or the hour, or even what the future holds, but we can be open and alert to what will come. We are also reminded in this passage that we live with Christ even if we fail—whether awake or asleep, we live with him.

Prayer

God of love, thank you for holding us in your care, for reminding us that we know a different world in you. Help us to be ready for whatever you bring forth, and keep our eyes open so we don't miss your movements. May your love radiate within us and spring forth from us as we live our daily lives, and may we continue to connect and build each other up to further spread your love.