

Week 7 outline - 11/16/25

In the Meantime

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1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

In the Meantime

I. Half of a conversation

- A. Paul sent Timothy to check on the Thessalonians.
- B. Timothy reports back:
 - 1. Some things are great.
 - 2. Some things need work.
 - 3. The people have questions.
- C. So Paul writes a letter. We can infer what Timothy reported from Paul's half of "the conversation."

II. A review of Thessalonians

- A. Chapter 1: You're doing great!
 - 1. You are **imitating Christ**.
 - 2. You have the Holy Spirit - and you didn't before!
 - 3. Outsiders report how you turned from idols to:
 - Serve the living and true God, AND
 - *"Wait for His Son from heaven."*
- B. Chapter 2a: Recall how we ministered to you (follow our example!)
 - 1. We sought to please God; no impure motives
 - 2. Your belief led to suffering from the Gentiles, just like our belief led to suffering from the Jews.
- C. Chapter 2b, 3: We were worried
 - 1. So we sent Timothy, who said you're doing great!
 - 2. A benediction:
 - May your **love increase** for each other
 - *"... when our Lord Jesus comes ..."*
- D. Chapter 4a: A reminder of holy living
 - 1. **Our God can be pleased!** Do it more and more.
 - 2. **Honor God with your bodies.**
 - 3. **Mind your own business.**
- E. Chapter 4b: We finally get to your questions
 - 1. Yes, Jesus is coming again.
 - 2. Those who are dead will join Him, too - first!

III. Chapter 5a: When will He return?

- A. The return of Jesus is important!
 - 1. His return brings comfort
 - John 14:1-3

- The Messiah came to make all things new. And He's coming again to make all things new.
- 2. His return appears throughout the New Testament
 - Referenced by Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, author of Hebrews
 - Example: Communion & I Cor. 11:23-26
- B. The return of Jesus is important! But not in the way you think.
 1. Paul spends little time with "when": v. 1 - 3
 2. Paul spends a lot of time with "how we are to act": v. 4 - 11
 3. We may be surprised, but we should not be unprepared
 - a. Light vs. darkness; day vs. night; awake vs. asleep; sober vs. drunk
 - b. We have the Armor of God
 - II Peter 3:3,4,8,9 - our belief in His return will cause trouble
 - We have Faith, Love, Hope
 4. Why not tell us "When"?
 - a. We would make it weird.
 - b. It's an issue of "Who is in control?"
 - c. It's a mercy.
 - d. We ask "When" about many things - look at the Psalms!

IV. It's about How We Live, not When Will He Return?

- A. Paul knows he'll talk about Jesus' return, but spends most of his letter talking about how we are to live
- B. Main themes:
 1. Imitate Christ
 2. Love one another
 3. Live to please God
 4. Keep your bodies pure
 5. Mind your own business
 6. Encourage one another

LIFEgroup Questions:

1. Paul's letter praises the Thessalonians for imitating Christ and turning from idols. What are some modern "idols" that followers of Jesus might need to turn away from today?
2. In Chapters 2-3, Paul reminds them how he and his team ministered without selfish motives and endured suffering. How can we recognize and follow good spiritual examples in our own lives—and be those examples for others?
3. Paul's prayer is that their love would "increase for each other." What are some practical ways our love for one another can increase, especially within our church or community?

4. When answering their questions about Jesus' return, Paul focuses less on when it will happen and more on how to live in the meantime. Why do you think God wants us to focus on our way of living instead of knowing the exact timing of His return?

5. The major themes of the letter include: imitating Christ, loving others, pleasing God, keeping pure, minding our own business, and encouraging one another. Which of these themes is most challenging for you right now, and what helps you grow in that area?