

Grow and Discern Resource Sheet

Series: *Formed for the Future, Faithful for Now*

Date: 7/13/25 **Title:** Awake: Dressed & Ready When the King Comes **Text:** 1 Thess. 5:1-8

The Greek word for the arrival of a dignitary, resulting in blessings for those who are loyal and consequences for those who are not is **parousia**. Parousia is the word used by Paul to describe the coming of Jesus Christ which his church is looking forward to. His arrival will bring judgment to those outside the church but encouragement to those who know and trust Jesus. Paul is exhorting the church to live their lives in anticipation of Christ's coming, in faith, love, and hope.

Key Sermon Points

1. **Arrival: The King's coming is glorious but serious (5:1-3)**

- Despite the obsession many Christians have with the timing of Christ's coming, there is no need for us to spend any time thinking about "times & dates."
- But the big idea in this text is that Christ is coming and that it is referred to in scripture as "The Day of the Lord," which is a day of both **danger** & **deliverance**.
 - Refers to when God decisively intervenes in history **primarily for judgment**, and it is characterized by manifestations of power & majesty, the defeat of unrighteousness, but also **the fulfillment of hope for the righteous** & their final redemption.
 - Paul explains that those who are outside of Christ, even as they proclaim "peace & safety" are experiencing a **false calm**, presuming they're OK when they are not.
 - The Day of the Lord is the day of final judgment for all: Acts 17:31

2. **Alert: Stay awake, living in the light (5:4-7)**

- Paul urges believers to stay **spiritually awake and sober**, not because they are in danger, but because they belong to the light. Those who live in darkness ignore the reality of the Day of the Lord—it plays no role in their choices, values, or daily thinking. They live only for themselves, without reference to God or His coming reign.
- In contrast, children of the day live with **ongoing awareness** of Christ's return. That awareness shapes how they speak, what they prioritize, and how they conduct themselves. This isn't fear-driven living – it's a life shaped by **holy reverence**, guided by the **fear of the Lord** that restrains sin and redirects us when we stray.
- Those in Christ must be watchful because traces of darkness can still live in the heart.

3. **Armor: Dressed in gospel graces (5:8)**

While living in spiritual darkness is marked by sin and ignorance of judgment, living in the light isn't primarily about a checklist of rules. Instead, Paul calls believers to put on three essential graces as spiritual armor: **faith, love, and the hope of salvation**.

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- **Faith** means trusting God especially when it's hard—it guards our hearts from the erosion of doubt.
- **Love** goes beyond intention to action. It must shape our attitude, speech, and relationships. Without love, even truth can become a weapon.
- **Hope** anchors us in what God has done and will do for us—not in our strength, but entirely in His hands. Our justification, sanctification, resurrection, and future glory are all God's work.

These graces – faith, love, and hope – are not just virtues; they are **protection**. They guard our hearts and minds as we await Christ's return.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding the meaning of *Parousia* –as a royal or imperial arrival – shape how you think about Christ's return?
2. In what ways can Christians today fall into a false sense of “peace and security”? How do we guard against spiritual presumption?
3. Paul exhorts us to be “sober” and “awake.” What are some practical ways you can live more alert to the reality of Christ's return this week?
4. Faith, love, and hope are described as armor in verse 8. Which of these graces do you sense the Spirit prompting you to grow in most right now – and why?

Meditating on Formation

1. **"The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night..."** – Reflect on whether your daily life reflects a readiness for the return of Christ. What would change if you lived with more expectancy?
2. **"Let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation."** – Ask the Spirit to show you where your heart needs protection – do you need more faith, deeper love, or renewed hope?
3. **"For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."** – Meditate on the assurance of your salvation and how it empowers a life of courage and holiness.

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Additional Reflections from the Passage

- **Verse 6 says, “So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.”**

What does it look like to “sleep” spiritually, even while participating in church or ministry?

- **Verses 4–5 draw a sharp contrast between children of the light and children of darkness.**

In what subtle ways might we be tempted to “blend in” with the darkness of the world rather than live distinctly as people of the light?

- **The armor imagery draws from other Pauline texts (e.g., Ephesians 6).**

How does spiritual armor help not just protect but also shape our identity and daily living?