



Church at Home
Sunday 15 November 2020
Time for Reflection on
the Epistle
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Time to Reflect (Read the Epistle, Pause to think, Read the Epistle again)

Read: [The Epistle Link to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

I worked for a consultancy company where every month our customers were interviewed to see how they had been treated. There was a lot of anxiety amongst the staff at the end of the month. How would they be rated? However, I was never that worried, thinking if was behaving correctly, I would have nothing to be concerned about.

One of the questions concerning the people in Thessalonica, who Paul is writing to, is 'when will the day of the Lord come?' Paul replies, 'about times and dates we do not need to write to you', that day 'will come like a thief in the night'

However, for those who are living in the way God has guided them, 'this light will not come like a searchlight to reveal the sins done under the cover of darkness', but like the light of a new day (Howard Marshall).

The Thessalonians focus should not be on trying to predict this day, but living as children of light. In my job I treated all customers the same. How we treat people, how we live our lives on a daily basis, amidst the challenges and competing values of the world, matters.

The church in Thessalonica was relatively new. Paul had to leave after only three preaching sessions due to mob violence from those who opposed his teachings. The new believers were living during a time of persecution. There is the military image of being awake and on watch, but here, 'peace and security', a slogan sometimes associated with imperial Roman rule, is not brought about through military might and threat of violence, which only brings fragile peace. They are to live as a contrast society. They are to live the Jesus way.

Our Gospel reading is also set at a time where the values of God's kingdom are clashing with the values of the world. This parable is told two days before the Passover festival in what we now call Holy Week, where the story reaches its climax and Jesus himself brings about peace, not through violence but through the way of the cross. Jesus, firstly is offering a challenge to his own day, a time where he is forcing a final confrontation between God's kingdom and the system that had resisted it.

The third slave could be seen as representing the Pharisees, who had been given the Law of Moses, the Temple, and the command to share God's blessing and yet had kept the light to themselves. The other slaves can be seen as those who take the good news of God's kingdom they have been entrusted with, share it and act to help it grow.

To ponder: What do we do with the news of God's kingdom that has been entrusted to us? How do we live each day in light of this news? As Paul writes to the Thessalonians, how can we encourage one another and build ourselves up in our faith?

Take a time to sit quietly: As we are sent out to live as children of light; May we walk in faith, be sustained by hope, and share the all-embracing love of God with everyone we meet. **Amen.**