

# We Belong to the Day

Proper 28

Pastor Josh Frazee

1 Thess. 5:1-11

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Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

There are three kinds of light: God-made, man-made, and Christ-made.

The light which God made is the daylight provided to us by the sun. As the earth rotates and revolves around the sun, we get stretches of time in which we receive its light. During these hours, most of us live and work and play. The amount of time the sun shines on us depends on the time of year, as we tend to get more of it during the summer than in the winter. Nevertheless, we get hours of sunshine to do the things we need to do.

That's the way it was until someone created the first candle. I have no idea who that was, but they provided humanity with a way of staying awake a bit longer to read or possibly get some housework done. Since the time of candles, we have entered the era of electricity and light bulbs. Today we live in a world of both God-made and man-made light.

Yet while we live in a world of both God-made and man-made light, we, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, live in still a third kind of light as well: the Light of Christ. It is His Light in which we ultimately find we live and move and have our being. The Day is coming when the "sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood (Acts 2:20a)." Yet we shall remain in Christ's Light. In the new Jerusalem to come, there will be "no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God (will give) it light, and its lamp (will be) the Lamb (Rev. 21:23)."

The day is coming when neither God's sunshine nor mankind's lightbulbs will be needed, only the Light of Christ. That's what we hear in our Epistle text.

## Verse 1

"Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape."

We've been hearing about the Day of the Lord the last few weeks. What Paul wrote to the Thessalonians is also true for us: we have no need to have anything written to us. We know full and well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night or like labor pains upon a woman—quick and suddenly. Or like a marcato note in music—short but accented for a sudden "pop!"

So don't fall prey, dear friends in Christ, to those around us who will be saying, "There is peace and security." Often we think of those passages concerning the Day of the Lord which mention wars and rumors of war; but here we find that at least some will be saying that there is "peace and security" when that Day comes. But both sets of verses—those speaking of wars and rumors of wars, and these about some promoting peace and security at the End—all these verses do is remind us to be ready in season and out of season, for none of us knows when Jesus will return. We need to be found in His Light on that magnificent Day.

Like light bulbs and sunshine, we are not called to get used to this world. We receive gifts from God to use in service to our neighbors and for our use, but these things will not remain.

## Verse 2

“But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.”

You, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, are children of the Light. You’ve been baptized into the Light of Christ. At your baptism, Christ Jesus came to you and made you His. You were in darkness; but you aren’t anymore. Those in the dark persist in their sins and do not want to come to the light. But you have been called out of the darkness into Jesus’ marvelous Light. Don’t fall back into the ways of darkness. You don’t know when Jesus will make His return.

So keep sober. Keep awake. Don’t fall asleep. This is not to say don’t die, as Paul and the Word use the term “sleep” to refer to death. Instead, when Paul writes “let us not sleep” he refers to living a life of sin. That’s why Paul mentions drunkenness in conjunction with the darkness—drunkenness is a sin, so a life of darkness and drunkenness is a life of sin. You, however, have been made people of the Light, to walk in the Light of God’s Word, His Son, Jesus Christ.

“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”

As we have prayed routinely throughout the year, we are called to a life in the Light of Christ, doing the works laid out ahead of us while we can, before the night comes, when none of us can do work. That night being the sleep of death. Death, this time, not sin. So for now, we fight the good fight of faith, guarding the promises of God entrusted to us and sharing them with others so that they might come to the Light and receive salvation as well.

### Verse 3

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

God has destined you for salvation. He no longer sees your sin or your darkness but only the Light of His Son Jesus. With His Spirit at work in you and me, we look forward to the end of time.

It’s kind of like living in Alaska, at least, from what I’ve heard and read about life there. During the winter in Alaska, darkness lasts twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for long stretches of time. The people living there have no choice but to live and work in the darkness of night. Yet while they have to live in times of complete darkness, they know that summer is coming. They look forward to their Alaskan summers because they know that then the opposite is true. They will be able to go for entire days for stretches of time with nothing but sunlight. They will live and sleep with the sun shining down on them.

While we may not live in Alaska, and we may not receive God’s created light of the sun twenty-four seven like those living in Alaska during the summer, we can and do look forward to a time of nothing but Light. It will not be a time of natural created light or of man-made light bulb light, but it’ll be a time when we are in the Light of Christ for all time. We look forward to that time, knowing that the darkness of sin will be completely outshone by the Light of Christ forever, and we will live in His Light for time without end. All this

we'll receive—not by our works but by God's grace found in the Light of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, Him crucified and risen. In Jesus' Name. Amen.