

Coming, ready or not

Notes on 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

- Having addressed earlier in the letter what happens to Christians who die before Jesus returns, here Paul points out that this in a sense doesn't matter. Jesus' death and resurrection means that 'whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him'. This is the hope that encourages and unites us.
- For an oppressed and occupied people, the military imagery in this passage carries great resonance, as does the promise of salvation. Life, and faith, can be a battle, yet all the armour mentioned in this passage is defensive: it is our faith, hope and love that will protect us as we work out our salvation. It affirms the Thessalonians' security as the children of light who maintain their faith, hope and love.
- For those of us who are left awaiting 'the day of the Lord', Paul appeals to us to 'keep awake and be sober' and not to 'fall asleep as others do'. The gradual erosion of faith by life and its distractions was as much a danger in Paul's time as it is for us today.

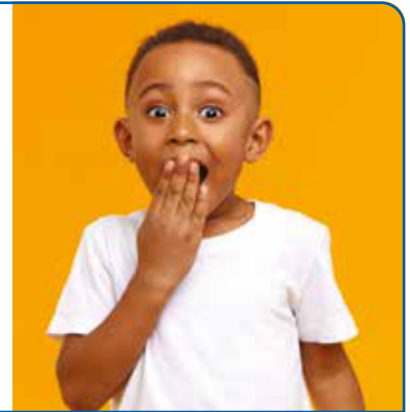
Mindful awareness

All too often our minds are busy reviewing the past, rehearsing the future or being distracted with the business of daily life. Use this very simple exercise to raise mindful awareness of the present moment. Walk or look, in silence, slowly around the room. Look at items or images or anything that catches your eye – e.g. a fleeting 'trick' of the light; the proximity of items not previously noticed; something that is or looks different today. If appropriate, look at other people too – notice their clothes, hair and anything that is different from normal.

FREE [worship at home](#) resources, including up-to-the-minute reflection on this week's Bible reading, available at: www.rootsontheweb.com

Questions for reflection

- ▶ When have you been completely surprised by something or someone?
- ▶ How do you feel about the idea of something coming like a 'thief in the night'?
- ▶ How might we be better prepared to live as children of light?



A prayer of approach

*Turning towards you, O God,
we also turn towards ourselves.
We think of what we bring, and what we don't.
And we know that even though you call us to be ready,
you also support us in bringing the little we have,
whether we feel ready or not.
O God of readiness, ready us, as we pray. Amen.*

A prayer for others

*We pray to God, who is always ready –
for those overtaken with demands: give rest, O Lord.
For those overburdened with anxieties: give rest, O Lord.
For those overcome with debt: give relief, O Lord.
For those oppressed by powers that despise them: give salvation,
O Lord.
For those in situations they cannot see a way out of: give freedom,
O Lord.
For those in need of hope: give hope, O Lord.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

Jesus, you were always ready to hear the needs of those around you. You turned to those who were used to being ignored. I am sometimes ready and sometimes not. And I am sometimes ignored and sometimes not. In all these times, nurture my heart so that I may seek you, and share you, all around. Because you are all around. Amen.

Live your faith

Make and donate a 'grab bag' of essentials for people in need – e.g. a local food bank, a refugee project or a Christmas Shoebox appeal.