The Last Judgment 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
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*CW-S – "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

"You Know Very Well…" (But Don't Forget!)
I. That the Last Judgment is indeed coming.
II. How we should live in these last days.
III. That we can confidently look forward to the Last Judgment.

Dear Christian friends,

"Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you, for you yourselves know VERY WELL that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." As the end of another church year **draws near** we are once again focused on the **coming end** of the world. Today I can say to you just as Paul wrote to these Thessalonian Christians, ***"You yourselves know very well."*** Yes, YOU KNOW VERY WELL – BUT DON'T FORGET! Don't forget 1)that the **Last Judgment** is indeed coming. You ***"know very well"*** – but DON'T FORGET! 2)How we should live in these **last days** and 3)that we can confidently look forward to the **Last Judgment**.

I. That the Last Judgment is indeed coming.

"Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you, for you yourselves know VERY WELL that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." We should know that ***"very well"*** because God's WORD SO CLEARLY teaches that again and again – in both the OT and NT – in the gospels and **epistles** and the book of Revelation. So EVERY WEEK in church we confess and remind ourselves that Jesus "will come again in glory TO JUDGE the living and the dead."

God's Word clearly and emphatically teaches that ONE DAY this world **as we now know** it will end. That LAST day of this world will be JUDGMENT day. Go back to what we were told in the gospel reading. ***"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him"*** (that will be QUITE THE SIGHT, won't it!) ***"He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in His presence, and He will separate them one from another."***

God's Word clearly and emphatically teaches that on **Judgment Day** Jesus really will tell all unbelievers, ***"Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels."*** And lest anyone think God WON'T REALLY do that Jesus added, ***"And they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*** Clinging by faith to Jesus we Christians will hear that PRICELESS INVITATION, ***"Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*** We may not know the EXACT DAY of the Last Judgment but ***"you know very well"*** that THAT DAY is already ON ITS WAY!

Others – the MAJORITY of people – are totally oblivious to it. **Life** just goes on for them. They're more worried about getting COVID 19 than Judgment Day – more concerned about GLOBAL WARMING that ending up in the **fires** of hell. They're busy working and ***"storing up treasures on earth"*** rather than ***"in heaven."*** They're more interested in having a GOOD TIME NOW than in getting ready for Judgment Day. They're ALL WRAPPED UP in this life and NOT WORRIED about the **life to come**. But ignoring and denying the Last Judgment doesn't change it one bit. ***"When people are saying, 'Peace and security,' destruction will suddenly come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will CERTAINLY NOT escape."***

"You know very well" that the **Last Judgment** is coming – BUT DON'T FORGET it! Knowing that you then also ***"know very well…"***

II. How we should live in these last days.

"But you, brothers, are not in the dark so that this day takes you by surprise like a thief." The unbeliever is "IN THE DARK" about the coming of Judgment Day and that shows in their daily lives. Their priorities in life – their goals in life – their **morals** and **values** are ALL MESSED UP. Living and working with **such messed-up** people it's SO EASY for us to start living **just like** them. That happens so often! Do you know some people who USED to come to church but they don't anymore – they're TOO BUSY – they don't want to BE BOTHERED with it – they've heard it ALL BEFORE? Do you **know some people** whom you wonder IF they really are prepared for the Last Judgment?

We are ***"not in the dark"*** about the COMING judgment and so we know HOW we **should live** in these last days. ***"You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then let us not sleep like everyone else, but rather let us remain alert and sober*** (or self-controlled)***."***

Living in these **last days** we live in a SPIRITUALLY DARK world. People are **"in the dark"** about God – His Word – His will and **plans**. When it's dark out it's easy to GET SLEEPY – to fall asleep. When we're asleep **most** of us are OUT OF IT – we're totally unaware of what's going on around us. **Why** do we have smoke alarms in our homes? Some of us could sleep right through a fire – not wake up UNTIL it's **too late**.

In these SPIRITUALLY DARK **last days** we need to stay awake and ***"alert."*** There's ONLY ONE WAY that can happen – by **each one** of us faithfully being in God's Word – coming to church or watching on the internet – reading and studying our Bibles – having those **daily devotions** at home. NOBODY CAN DO that for you. YOU CAN'T DO that for anybody else – **not for** your spouse, your children, grandchildren, friends, etc. God gave us His Word as ***"a lamp to our feet and a light for our path"*** through these dark days. God's **Word** keeps us focused on Jesus – keeps us close to our Savior. God's **Word alone** warns us about sin and guides us in GOD-PLEASING ways. You ***"know that very well"*** but DON'T FORGET it!

"Let us be alert and sober"- THAT IS not drunk – BUZZED – high, etc. When we're under the influence of **whatever** our thinking GETS MUDDLED. We don't think straight and can do **stupid things** we **later regret**. Instead of being **"under the influence"** of alcohol or **drugs** or **pornography** or **whatever** we ARE TO BE **"under the influence"** of the Holy Spirit and His Word. You ***"know that very well"*** but DON'T FORGET it.

"Putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." Can you picture a soldier going into battle WITHOUT his helmet, etc.? That's just plain stupid! He's leaving himself OPEN and EXPOSED to the **enemy's attacks**. NO SOLDIER is ready for battle without his armor. NO CHRISTIAN is ready to fight the DAILY BATTLES of the Christian life without ***"faith, hope, love."*** The ***"breastplate"*** protects the heart and **vital organs**. Our hearts need to be FILLED with and SHIELDED by Jesus' love for us and by a living faith in Jesus BEATING in them. The ***"helmet"*** protects the **head** and **brain**. We need ***"the helmet of salvation"*** – that eager longing for heaven – to protect our minds and **keep** our THINKING STRAIGHT. If our minds are distracted by ***"the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth"*** – if our hearts are filled with a love for ***"the things of this world"*** – then we are WIDE OPEN and EXPOSED to the **devil's attacks**. You ***"know this very well"*** but DON'T FORGET it.

You also ***"know very well…"***

III. That we can confidently look forward to the Last Judgment.

We CAN confidently look forward to the Last Judgment - ***"You see, God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** Aren't those words to SAVOR?! ***"God did not appoint us for wrath."*** We will be there in the Last Judgment. It will be you and me – our hearts and **lives** – our every thought and **word** and **action** – every minute and **every area** of our

lives JUDGED by the **all-seeing** and **all-knowing** God. Our lives judged by the God who said, ***"Be holy, for I am holy"*** – our lives judged by the very God who gave us those 10 Commandments and never took them back. That should scare the DAYLIGHTS out of us – EXCEPT we have Jesus. If we had to stand before God ON OUR OWN we would hear those DREADED words, ***"Depart from Me"*** – God telling us to "GET AWAY" from Him – to "GO to hell!"

SAVOR – **savor!** – ***"God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him"*** – with Him forever in heaven! TRUSTING in Jesus we can confidently look forward to Judgment Day. Jesus pleads our **case**. Jesus doesn't deny our sins or MAKE EXCUSES for them. He doesn't PLEAD INSANITY on our part **although** it is insane to think you CAN GET AWAY with **ignoring** and **defying** the living God. Jesus introduces NEW EVIDENCE in our defense – all that HE DID **in our place**. Yes, we owed God a WHOLE LIFE of **perfect love** – **trust** – **obedience**. IN OUR PLACE Jesus actually lived that perfect life for us. Yes, we deserved death and **eternal damnation** because of our sins. But carrying the sins of the whole world Jesus suffered and died on the cross. Jesus was punished **in our place** FOR ALL our sins. Jesus personally paid for all our sins **when** He sacrificed His holy life and shed His precious blood that first Good Friday. CLINGING to Jesus we already know now HOW GOD WILL RULE in our case – "Not guilty! **Innocent** of ALL charges!" Trusting in Jesus we CONFIDENTLY look forward to hearing God say, "COME LIVE with Me in the ***'new heavens and new earth,'*** I am about to make, ***'where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.'*** Yes, ***'Come, …inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*** And so we Christians will ***"enter into eternal life."*** You ***"know this very well"*** but DON'T EVER FORGET it! It's only by trusting in Jesus that we enjoy God's forgiveness and can CONFIDENTLY look forward to Judgment Day.

"Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you, for you yourselves KNOW VERY WELL that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." I'm pretty sure I **haven't told** you ANYTHING NEW this morning. You ***"know this VERY WELL"*** – just DON'T FORGET it! Amen.

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