



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Don't Be Discouraged, Jesus is Coming

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Bob Bradley

- 1 Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 1 Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica. The two letters here he wrote, the two letters to the Thessalonians; the main theme of these two letters is the return of Jesus Christ. If you read the story about Paul, if you read in Acts, chapter 16, we know that Paul, his friends, his co-workers were preaching and teaching. As you read chapter 16, you will find out that Paul saw a man. There was a vision given unto Paul. A man said this. "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Do you remember reading that? That is in the book of Acts chapter 16. You will find out they start towards that direction. They go to Philippi. Do you remember what happens in Philippi? Some other things happened as they traveled, but when they get to Philippi one of the familiar stories is the Philippian jailer. Do you remember? Paul and Silas get thrown in jail. They sing and pray. We know the Lord came in a great way and gave them deliverance. We also know the Philippian jailer and his family were saved. We know that Paul leaves there.

He is on his way to Thessalonica. A hundred miles away or so. He travels. He leaves some of the fellows behind here. He goes on and he comes to Thessalonica. Everywhere he goes, we know he preaches, he teaches. Here at Thessalonica there was a church established here. Everywhere Paul went and churches were established. One of Paul's messages was that Jesus Christ was going to return. He was going to return to planet earth.

We know that false teachers would come behind and try to persuade the people that this is a bunch of garbage. The Lord is never going to come back or He has already come back; or whatever. They tried to discourage people.

That has not changed any. The message may have been a little bit different, but do you know what the enemy is trying to do? He is trying to discourage people today. He is trying to discredit God's people. He is trying to discredit—above all—the Word of Almighty God. You know, he can't do that. He might be able to do that in the lives of a few people. However, do you know what you are not going to do? You are not going to get rid of the Word of God. You are not going to change the Word of God.

Jesus Christ said, on the very night He was betrayed, He was going to go away. Do you know what He also said? He was going to come again. Do you know what I know? I know He is going to do that. The next great event no doubt, in my mind, and as we look at prophecy, the next great event probably that has happened in a long time and maybe the greatest event that will ever happen that mankind can see will be the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is coming back to planet earth. I don't know the day or the hour. I don't know when He is going to come. I do know that He is going to come back here. He has made us a promise that He is going to come back and get us. I know that He is going to do that. Again, it is going to be an amazing thing. I don't think we can imagine in our minds how great, and how wonderful those events are going to be. It is going to be a spectacular event when Jesus Christ comes back to planet earth.

I don't think we can over emphasize how important and how that event is going to be. If He doesn't come and appear in the clouds, do you know what is not going to happen? We aren't going to heaven because He has to come and get us. If He doesn't come and appear in the clouds, then we are not going to go to heaven. However, do you know what I know? I know that He is going to come back. He told me He was going to come back. He is going to appear. I know He is going to take the faithful. I know that He is going to take the saved to heaven. That is a great thing to know. Isn't it?

The reason that is so important is this. If we know—we have been taught. We have been preached to. We have read the Word of God. We have studied it for ourselves. We know that Jesus Christ is going to come back. We have read. We have heard it preached. We have heard it taught. We know that God has done so many great things and made that aware to you and me. He is going to come back to planet earth. He is going to come back and appear in the clouds, also. Since that is the fact, do you know what that does in the life a genuine believer? That energizes me every day. That makes me want to live better every day. That puts me in a place, in a spot that I want to make sure that my life is pleasing to Him because He may come today. If you know that it will promote godliness in your life. If you know beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus Christ, and the return of Jesus Christ is eminent; what that means is that it can happen anytime. If you really know that and believe that it will promote a life of godliness if you really believe that. Amen! If you don't believe that then it doesn't really

matter. Genuine, born again, believers today; they are looking for the return of Jesus Christ.

One of the problems here at Thessalonica was that some people were teaching that the rapture had already taken place and that the return of Jesus had already taken place. Some of the people were being discouraged by that.

Paul wants us to understand, “Hey, you know better than that. You have been taught better than that. You know what I have taught you. You know what you have been taught and what you have been instructed. You know some things are going to happen before Jesus Christ comes. You know those things.”

Do you know what? That is really true today. We look around today, we have to know that Jesus Christ and His appearing is eminent. We have to know when we look at what we are seeing as signs and what we are seeing in our world how wicked and vile our world is and how people are so down on God and on Christianity. We must know that Jesus Christ is coming very soon.

Paul says here in the first verse...

1 Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Everybody wants to know when He is going to come. Paul says, I don't know when He is coming. When He comes, He is going to come as a thief in the night. He also says...

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

This is the verse we are going to start with, is verse 4.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

He is talking to people who are saved, people who are born again. He says you guys are not living in darkness, or ignorance. You guys are not living in sin. The word darkness means ignorance. You guys are just not walking around here not knowing what was going on. I have preached to you. I have talked to you. You know what is going to take place. You know some things that are going to happen. You guys are not in ignorance of that. Listen. The church of Jesus Christ today—those that are genuinely born again—we are not in ignorance about the fact that Jesus Christ come very soon. We know that. We are not walking in darkness. We are not ignorant people. We are not walking around in sin. We are saved. We are born again. The God of heaven; He has come into our hearts in the person of the Holy Ghost. Do you know what He does? He teaches us. He blesses us. He encourages us. Do you know what I am glad of? I'm glad that every now and then that He will whisper our ear, Hey, I

love you. I'm glad that God loves me enough that He does that for all of us and not just me. God does that. Since that is the case, we are not in ignorance about what God is doing. We don't know the details. We don't know the day nor the hour. We are saved. We are not in darkness. We are not ignorant. We have read the Bible. We believe the Bible. We believe the Word of God. We know what has been taught. We know that Jesus Christ is coming again. Genuine, born again believers know that Jesus Christ is coming back to planet earth. Not the day nor the hour, but we know He is coming. That is something we need to know.

Paul says you guys know this. The reason Paul was so pressed to help these along was because they were being discouraged. They were being led astray. The false teachers were there. Things were happening that was causing all kinds of issues for them. Paul wants them to understand. You guys are saved. You guys are born again. You guys are people of Almighty God. He has done some things for you. You are not in darkness.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Darkness brings out the idea of sin. Sin is darkness. We are not walking around in sin today. Genuine, born again believers are not walking in sin. Church members do a lot of times. People that may be religious are doing that. However, people who are genuine, born again, children of God, that are indwelled by the Holy Ghost; we are not ignorant. We are not walking in darkness. Thank God. We are not walking in sin. Amen! Everybody should say amen on that one.

Listen. I got a phone call not very long, well, a correspondence from someone. They made the statement; you shouldn't be talking about people being genuine. You should just talk about people that go to church. Listen. If we are going to go to heaven, we are going to have to be genuine. We are going to have to be genuine, born again, genuine from top to bottom. We are going to have to be indwelled by the Holy Ghost if we are going to go to heaven. Being genuine means everything. It doesn't matter what this individual... I'm sure that they probably meant well. But they didn't think I should use the word genuine.

Here is the thing. The greatest way in the world to live is to be genuine. It is to be real. It is to just be who you are. God has saved us. We are born again. We have the indwelling of His spirit. Then do you know what we should be? We should be genuine people, people that are real, Christian people that are real and not living in the shadows, not living in the darkness, not walking around in sin. We should be and will be, if we are genuine; we will be people that are doing what is right.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Do you know what is not going to happen to a genuine born-again Christian? A Christian that is born again, living in the will of God; they are not going to be surprised

on the day that Jesus Christ comes. A thief here brings out the idea when he comes to your house; he usually is going to come when you are not looking for him. He is going to come when you are not home, or when you are asleep. I talked to someone last Sunday, that their house was broken into and their garage was broken into while they were inside the house sleeping. Do you know what? A genuine born-again child of God, that is filled with the Holy Ghost, is not going to be surprised on the day that Jesus Christ comes and He gives a shout. Do you know why? Because I am going to be looking for Him. We are going to be looking for Him. We are not going to be caught as a thief when Jesus Christ comes. Amen!

If you are not looking for Him today, then you may be walking in darkness. You may be walking in sin.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Ye are children of light. Genuine, born again, people, children of God; we are children of light. Get this. When you look at that do you know what it actually means? It actually means something that I did not know until I started looking it up. It actually means this. It means sons. He says here we are children of light. When you read 1 John 1:5; do you know what you will find out? God is light. In Him is no darkness at all. Do you know what that means? Since God is light and we are children of light, then we are the children of Almighty God. If we are light and He is light; He has born us into His family, thank God, we are children of light because we serve a God that is light. Amen! That is who we are.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

You are the children of light and the children of the day. We are not living in darkness. You guys are children of the God of heaven. He is light. He has given you light. He has given you knowledge. He has given you understanding. That is what the word light really means. He has given you revelation. He has given you some things that you understand that the world doesn't understand. We are children of light. We are children of day. We are not walking in darkness. We are not walking in sin. We don't have our whole lives here surrounded by this world and all that is going on. We are children of Almighty God. Our hopes and dreams and aspirations are set on heaven and not on this earth. Amen!

1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

I think we can look at this and examine our own lives. How are we really living? What is really going on in life? What are we focusing on? What do we think about every day? Are we so involved with the world and what is going on in the world and the darkness, and the blackness and the sin that is in the world, that we really forget what is important in life? I think sometimes we do that. I think sometimes we get so involved in this world and all that is going on in this world that we all the enemy—we are going to talk about

this in a minute if we have time—to infiltrate our minds and we get our thinking off so much that we forget about what is important. Do you know what is important? People getting saved.

I read something on a sign yesterday. I wished I would have taken a picture of it. I don't remember exactly how it said it, but it was in a big building. They had all kinds of signs on this wall. It had to do with attitude. One of them said, I love Monday, when most people don't like Mondays but they had a big sign up here; I love Monday. It talked about all kinds of different attitudes and what attitudes did. How our attitudes affect people. One sign said this; Don't believe everything that your mind thinks. Amen!

If I believe everything my mind thinks, I'm the most mixed up guy in the world, because we think about all kinds of junk. Do you know that? We are not living in darkness. That is what happens to our lives sometimes. We get so involved with everything that is going on that we allow the enemy to infiltrate our minds with all kinds of junk. Do you know what human nature says? Human nature does not need proof. Human nature just needs gossip. Human nature just needs someone to be supposing to be this way. Do you know what we do? Our minds believe it. We take off running with it and we make an idiot out of ourselves. That is really what happens.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

The word *sleep* here is a good word. It has to do here—if you are asleep, you are not aware of what is going on around you. When you go home and you go to sleep tonight, you are out of it. You are not alert. You don't know what is going on around you. You don't know what is happening. You don't see what is happening.

Paul is talking about spiritual sleep. Spiritual sleep—people go to sleep spiritually. That is a dangerous thing to do. when we go to sleep spiritually then we get ourselves in some problems. Sleep, a person is not aware of what is going on. He is not aware of what is going on around him. He is not concerned. Someone that is in spiritual sleep is not concerned about the things of God because we don't get concerned, and we are not involved with things that are going on around us.

I can go in the house up there when Deb is asleep. She is in the bed and I can go in there a flip the light on. I can go in the bathroom and I can take a shower. I can get dressed and dry my hair. I can go over and get clothes out. I can do all that stuff. She is not aware of it at all. She is asleep. She is asleep.

We do that sometimes, I think, in our spiritual lives. We go to sleep. We are not aware. We are not alert. We are not involved with any spiritual thing that is going on around us. He says this...

1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

Do you know what that means? Some of them were asleep. Some of them were spiritually asleep. They were not involved in spiritual things. There were not involved in what was going on around them. They were not alert. They were not attentive of what was going on around them. Do you know what happens when Christians get that way? We make ourselves a wide-open target for satan. Because when we are asleep, and we are not involved in spiritual things, when we are not involved in what God is doing then we become a target for satan. He targets us. he targets our minds. He targets the way we think and what we do and how we act. After a while, we just doze off and go to sleep. All along, all around us our family, our grandchildren, our husbands, or wives, our co-workers are dying in sin. Yet, do you know what we are doing? We are asleep. We are spiritually asleep. We are not involved in their lives. We don't try to persuade them to get saved. We don't invite them to come to church.

I want to challenge us all here tonight. I mean this. I want to make a challenge. I probably have never done this here before. I want to challenge all of us here this evening. How many people are here tonight Tim? 79 people. I want to challenge us between now and Sunday to invite two people to come to church. Just invite two. If you invite 10, that's great. Invite somebody to come to church. Let somebody know that you are concerned about them. I'm not talking about getting people that goes to some other church. I'm not talking about that. If they go to another church we want to thank God for them, pray for them and hope God blesses them and that God sends them a revival that a thousand people gets saved. That is what we should be doing. However, people that do not go to church, people that are not saved, people that have gone to sleep spiritually; let's invite them to the house of God. I challenge you to do that. I challenge you to invite them to the house of God. Do you know what?

Get this. If you invite somebody, make sure you are here. Okay. It has happened before. I promise you, right here are Campbell Chapel, not too long ago; we had a visitor come through the back door. I did not know who they were. They said is so and so here. I said, no they are not here tonight. They said, they invited me to come. I said, I'm sorry but they are not here. Therefore, if you are going to invite someone to come, then make sure you are here. It doesn't look good if you invite someone and you are not here. Amen!

He says here...

1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

Watch means to be alert. The word *watch* means to guard, and to keep our eyes open spiritually. We have some control in our life. We have some control over this body. We have some control over our mind. We have control over all the passions and desires that we have. It says here we need to live that way.

We need to watch, let us watch and be sober. Genuine, born again, people that are living in the will of God are going to be watching. Do you know why we are going to be

watching? One thing is that we know Jesus Christ is going to return. Not only that but also, we are going to be watching because the enemy is out there trying to destroy us and tear us down and trip us up and get us involved in something we don't need to be in. He is trying to get us to be out of control. That is why genuine born-again children of God; their lives are under control.

Not church members. I did not say that. I did not say that because you have been baptized, your life is under control. I did not say because your name is on the book that your life is under control. I did not say that. Genuine, born again, children of God that is living in the will of God; their life is under control. You should say amen, on that because that is truth.

1 Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

That makes sense. Doesn't it? People do things—if they are going to get drunk they usually get drunk at night. People that are going to sleep, they usually do at night. Don't they?

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

We are children of the day. We are children of Almighty God. We are children of light. Get this. Since we are children of light, and we are children of the day; we know that God is light. We know that the Bible says, ye are light of the world; talking about us, talking about the disciples. Since we know that, it tells me that one day; since we are saved, we are children of light, we are children of the day, we are children of Almighty God, I'm going to go to heaven. I have got a promise of that. I'm going to go to heaven. I have the promise that we are going to go to heaven.

Do you know what that should do? That should bless you from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. To know that you have been born again, you have been forgiven of your sin, you are not going to spend eternity in a lake of fire. If that doesn't excite you then I don't know what would. Amen! Hell is a real place. I'm not going to go there. Not because I'm good. No. I'm not going to go there because I am saved. Amen! I'm not going to go to heaven because I'm good. Truth! If you go to the lake of fire, you are not going to go there because you are bad. Truth! If you are going to go to heaven, you are going to go because you are born-again. If you are going to hell, you are going to go because you are not born again. Truth! Very true!

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Be in control. Have some stability in your life. Since you are a child of God, you are born again, God is your Father. We have the hope of heaven. We know He is going to come back and get us. Since we know all of that then why do we have—what could be going on in life that could make us out of control? Truth! Really! Think about that.

Since we are saved, born again, genuinely saved, living in the will of God; if we are then the Holy Spirit is in our lives. He is helping us, directing us, keeping us in control. If that is the case then our life is not out of control. I know a lot of people who goes to church whose life is out of control. I know that. I'm not being judgmental when I say that. I'm not being mean when I say that. I want people to understand that just because we come to church doesn't mean we are going to go to heaven.

We can look and see a lot of things in life, but here is the thing I want you to remember. Saved people are going to heaven. Born again people are going to heaven. A lot of church members are not going to be there.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Get this. "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love..." if you want something—a breast plate for a soldier, and Paul used the analogy of a soldier many times, athlete, farmer, accountant; he used a lot of different ones here. However, here he uses the breastplate. A breastplate was something that went across their chest. Get this. Do you know what it protected? It protected your heart. There is nothing that will protect your heart like love. Amen! If you want your heart protected, then live by faith knowing you are saved, knowing that Jesus Christ died and you have accepted Him by faith and love everybody; listen, your heart will be protected. Amen!

Here is the thing. We make our hearts and our lives a target for the enemy when we don't have any faith in God, when we don't have any faith in God, what God has done, and what God is doing. We don't love like we say that we love. Do you know what happens? We open up our lives for the enemy.

Do you know what he does? He comes along and shoots. He has all kinds of fiery darts that he shoots at us. Do you know what? If we are living by faith, and living with a heart of love; do you know what we are able to do? We are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Aren't you glad for that tonight? Aren't you glad he says here, "Be sober putting on the breastplate of faith and love," Get this.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

"For an helmet, the hope of salvation..." your mind. You have heard me say this here so many times and I hope you never forget it. The greatest battles that you will ever face as a Christian, are the battles you face in your mind. The greatest battles that you will ever face as a Christian will be the battles that you face in your mind. The battles fought up here. If you can conquer the battles that are up here then do you know what you don't have to worry about? The battles getting down here. Amen!

If you conquer the battles up here then you will not have to worry about them getting down here. If you can keep them out of here then this here will be under control. From the abundance of the heart, our mouth speaks; the Bible says. We conquer the battles

here. Not everything I think is right. Not every thought you have is right. Not everything we hear is right.

Many times, the thinking that we have is because of what we listen to. The battles we face in our minds are because of the things we listen to—I'm talking about music. I'm talking about a lot of things that we listen to that are just pure garbage. There are a lot of things that we plug into our mind.

I was talking to a pastor today, dealing with a child, just a young child. He is going through withdrawals. He got out of control. His life was completely out of control. They had to do some things with him. They took away from this child his electronic devices; all the games, all the garbage, all the junk he played with every day. They had to in order to try to get his life back under control. Now this young man, this young person is going through withdrawals from his electronic devices. In talking to this guy—and this guy is a smart dude...he knows what he is talking about—he says that things like electronic devices, children get involved with them and get addicted to them and so do adults. However, the same part of our brain that gets addicted, when people use drugs, is the same part of our brain that kids and people get addicted to on these electronic devices.

You might surely think that doesn't happen. It does happen. We sit and let our kids play with this stuff. They shoot one another. They stab one another. There is all kinds of blood and guts everywhere then they wonder why they can't sleep when they go to bed at night. Amen! Truth! Amen or ouch guys. That is really true. We allow that stuff to go on but the battle is really here guys. If we conquer here, then our life will be under control.

I'm going to tell you this. If we don't conquer this here then it is going to get here. It is not going to be very long that it is going to work out here, and emotions then it is really going to come out up here. Then our life is out of control. It proves who we are when we do those things. Genuine, born again, Christians will live by faith and have love for everybody. You get saved, you love everybody. I don't love what everybody does but I love everybody. There is not a person...that I don't love tonight. I don't love what they do. I don't love how they act sometimes. I can genuinely say, I can get on my face before Almighty God and pray and ask God to help them, bless them and save them. I can do that. There was a time I couldn't do that. God has helped me with that. Live by faith. Love people. Win the battles up here. The hope of salvation you know who you are. You can win that battle. If you do that do you know what you can do? you will keep this body under control.

If you are here this evening and you need to come and pray it would be a great time for you to come and pray. The Lord loves us. Jesus died for us that we might be able to be saved. We have a great hope of heaven tonight if you are saved. If you are not saved, it would be a great time for you to come. Call upon the God of heaven. Ask the Lord to forgive you of your sin. Ask God to save you tonight. It would be a great time

for you to do that. He can change your life today. He can make you a brand-new creature in Christ tonight. Come and pray—