

A thief, a birth, a day

So, next questions: When will we see Christ? When will he return? When will I enjoy a reunion with my grandfather, and you with Christians whose deaths you grieve?

He will come like...

Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 1-2

- ❓ *What had Paul clearly already told this church about Christ's return (v 2)?*

Burglars do not leave a calling card, informing you of their plans. They come suddenly, unannounced. So will Jesus. The question is: *are we ready?*

No

Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 3

- ❓ *What are people saying?*

In other words: *We're fine. Things are on the up. There's no need to think about God.*

- ❓ *But what will happen one day?*

When a woman is pregnant, she knows labour pains will come. She does not know when. But she does know that once they've started, there's no turning back! The question is not *Will it happen?* but *Is she ready?*

Yes

Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 4-9

Christ's return won't be (or shouldn't be) a surprise for his people (v 4). It is as though we live in the dawn; and while those around us are thinking it's still night, and behaving as such (v 7) as though the day isn't coming, we belong to the day, we look forward to it, and we live as though it's here (v 6, 8).

Paul chooses drunkenness and sobriety as an example of his point.

- ❓ *Why is getting drunk a very present-focused activity?*
- ❓ *Why is staying sober a more tomorrow-focused activity?*

Paul is saying: *As you live in today, remember tomorrow. As you live in the dawn, remember the day is coming. Live as though Jesus is already here, standing in front of you.*

- ❓ *Why can we look forward to the coming of the "day", instead of fearing it (v 9)?*

Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 10-11

"Awake or asleep" could be referring back to 4 v 13-18—living Christians and dead Christians. But it might also be referring back to 5 v 6—future-focused Christians, and sleepy, worldly Christians who are fixated on their present. If you have forgotten your future and live as though this world is all there is, Jesus still died for you... but now wake up!

- ❓ *How should we respond (v 11)?*

Apply

"Encourage" has the sense of a comforting word and a sharp prod.

- ❓ *Which do you need this passage to do for you today?*
- ❓ *Who could you share these truths with as a word of comfort? Does any Christian you know need a sharp, loving prod?*