

**"BE READY FOR THE LORD'S D-DAY!"**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

*May the Lord ... give you inward strength to be holy and without fault before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones!* {1 Thess 3:12-13}

Fellow Watchers of "THE DAY",

It was released on July 24, 1998. Tom Hanks played a captain named John Miller with the orders to take his men behind enemy lines to find a soldier whose 3 other brothers were already killed in combat. The film was called "*Saving Private Ryan*". The opening ½ hour was extremely graphic as it portrayed the casualties of war on what was known as **D-Day**, June 6, 1944...the day of the Normandy Invasion when Allied Invasion troops stormed Omaha Beach to liberate mainland Europe from Nazi occupation in World War II. As I recall, we even had a few STP members who were part of that conflict and shared their stories on Vets' night.

How ironic that Veterans' Day is this Tuesday. This is a day when we honor all veterans of all conflicts be they on the frontlines of battle or be they support/supply troops or readied forces based on camps all over the country. For them, any day is D-Day when our enemies could attack from anywhere in the world. They have to be on constant alert, ready to defend our country and its citizens. To all of you veterans here today, on behalf of a grateful nation and church, we say "**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**"

There is another "D-Day" that's on the horizon for which we need to be prepared for. And that's what the End times themes are meant to do for us ~ help us **get prepared** and **stay prepared** for the inevitable return of our Lord on Judgment Day!

Paul understood the importance of being prepared, so he withholds no punches in warning and encouraging God's people to.....

**"BE READY FOR THE LORD'S D-DAY!"**

1. A Day of Destruction
2. A Day of Deliverance

1

The thought of a day when Jesus will return to Judge the living and the dead makes a lot of people [including Christians] nervous. That's the day we meet our Maker, the Creator God in all His glory and holiness! And who wants to stand before their Maker with all those **deep, dark, secret** sins stashed in your souls from the past and present? Who wants to set themselves before God knowing He already knows our innermost transgressions? That's the worst D-Day one can imagine. It makes the Normandy invasion look like a stroll on a resort beach in the summer compared to that. It makes me nervous just preaching about it.

So Paul writes these words for all of us to **BE READY FOR THE LORD'S D-DAY!** His first point is a warning...because the Lord's D-Day could be a **DAY OF DESTRUCTION!**

1

That's where our text kicks in. God's timetable, his calendar of the day He arrives is not known by anyone, not even the angels, not even Jesus **as true Man**. Matthew writes: **NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THAT DAY OR HOUR, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS IN HEAVEN, NOR THE SON, BUT ONLY THE FATHER.** {Matt 24:36} As much as our curiosity is peaked by this question, our wise Father in heaven does not reveal the times and dates. And that's a blessing because if we knew – we would just eat, drink, and be merry and then shape up the week before. But because we don't know we are moved by **a sense of urgency** to be ready for the Lord's D-Day so it is not **a day of destruction** for us.

**THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT. WHILE PEOPLE ARE SAYING, "PEACE AND SAFETY", DESTRUCTION WILL COME ON THEM SUDDENLY, AS LABOR PAINS ON A PREGNANT WOMAN, AND THEY WILL NOT ESCAPE.** The warning is clear. You don't know when a thief will hit your home. The uncertainty of **not if / but when** it happens leads us to take some precautions. But just when you led down your guard, forget to shut the garage door, lock the back door, lock the car door, then the thief arrives and your house is ransacked or vandalized and your purse or computer in the car is gone. Playing a guessing game about the Lord's return is foolishness for the same reasons.

To be sure, God has given us signs of the times when Jesus will come back, but all those signs are in place and have been since He left this earth. Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, many put to death, many abandoning the faith, false prophets appearing, the love of many growing cold ~ the signs are all there. **There's absolutely no reason not to be ready for D-Day! WE'VE BEEN WARNED!**

But let's admit it – we're not much better than most people. Sin and Satan get us to rest too much on our laurels thinking this will never happen to us. And so we join many in thinking **PEACE AND SAFETY** which is the same thing as saying "all is well with God---I don't have to be concerned about what I believe or do. Life's good – I've got my job, my home, my family, my money, my hunting rifle, my boat, an ATV, yadda, yadda, yadda". Then creeps in a false sense of security and D-Day turns into a **day of destruction**.

For those living in unbelief or even Christians living a life of religious hypocrisy claim faith in Christ, and yet their lives do not let his shine at all. The spiritual bulb looks good on the outside, but it's burned out on the inside. There are those who feel pretty comfortable in their routine. Everything is fine to them. Everything seems stable... **peace and security**...even though they are living a life of sin. "I don't need to go to church." "I can live unmarried in this relationship with the opposite sex ---who cares? It's nobody's business." "I can talk the way I want, gossip the way I want, drink the way I want, run around the way I want." Know someone like this? A parent, a sibling, a son, a friend, yourself? (Take by ears-wake UP)!

Hear the arrogance? Hear the defiance against God's will? Sense the peace and security which will be wiped away with one swoosh of Christ's return **on D-Day? THEN IT WILL BE TOO LATE.** Like a woman in a birthing room, once labor begins – she can't back out and claim '**I've changed my mind; I don't want to be pregnant; I don't want to give birth, ...stop the labor – I'm outta here!**' By then, it's too late and there's no escape, no turning back.

The point is anyone who is not ready for the Lord's D-Day cannot change their minds or their faithless condition when destruction comes. It will be too late. They will not escape because the door to heaven is shut to them and the only door open is the one to hell through which they will pass to suffer God's wrath and punishment forever. Ignorance and arrogance will get you nowhere with God on D-Day. Unforgiven sin brings judgment of a just God. **A life without Christ now is an eternity without him in hell.** Like Paul writes: **Those who sleep, sleep at night, those who get drunk, get drunk at night.** A day of destruction awaits anyone who snoozes through his/her time of grace or is intoxicated with the brandy of the world's treasures and pleasures. And if you don't believe that – then wait for D-Day and see what happens! Because on that day of destruction, you can't say: "I didn't know!!"

## 2

Is your heart rate up a tiny bit? Are we as ready as Paul says? If so, then **the Lord's D-Day will be a day of deliverance, not destruction.**

How do you prepare for Judgment Day? After all, we are spiritually weak and tired. We're no match for Satan. We're like Play-Doh in his hands – he shapes us any way he wants. He gets us thinking there's no D-Day coming...I've been hearing this for 40-50-60-70 & it hasn't happened. And soon we are concentrating on the journey through this life more than on the journey's end of this life. Life's problems, pleasures, trials, treasures, sorrows joys consume our hearts and then we fall asleep at the wheel on our path to heaven. How do we change that?

Paul says: **You put on God's armor.** **4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.**

Paul uses the imagery of a Roman soldier dressed for battle. The breastplate covered the body on both sides from the neck to the middle and protected the heart and vital internal organs. Putting on faith and love as a breastplate wraps yourself with faith in Christ as our Savior knowing He suffered for our sins and gave his life as our ransom payment to God. That gracious work points to His gracious love that holds us in the palm of his hand to protect us **from the roaring lion who is prowling around looking for someone to devour.** {1 Peter 5:8}

With faith in our dear Savior, Jesus, and protected by His love, we have the hope of salvation as our helmet to wear as children of God. Jesus paved our path to heaven and when He comes back on D-Day, He will finally deliver us from this vale of sorrows to bring us **to that dear land of rest.** Faith trusts Jesus. Love reflects Jesus in how we live. Hope sustains us to look forward to Judgment Day with spiritual peace and security.

So remain **ALERT AND SELF-CONTROLLED.** **WAKE UP**-the day is drawing near. Keep watch. Stay prepared for Jesus' arrival by staying awake in God's Word and sacraments, feast on His grace and mercy, and bask in His promises. In other words, keep doing what you're doing right now right here!

**When D-Day comes, will it be a day of destruction or deliverance for you?** Only YOU can answer that for yourself. But I pray that your answer is:

***"No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from his hand;  
Till he returns or calls me home, Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.***

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**AMEN**