

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark!

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today's devotion is about a very special day—so special, it's the only one of its kind. It's the day when Jesus is going to come back to our world. It hasn't happened yet, and we don't know when it's going to happen exactly. But here's a clue: "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." It will come like someone who is trying to break into your home. Why is nighttime the best time of the day to do that? Because it's dark, and a thief hopes you're asleep and won't be able to see him. That is a scary thought! A lot of people are afraid of the dark because they are afraid of what they can't see.

If you can't see this big day of Jesus' return, should you be afraid? Absolutely not! Today's devotion gives three really good reasons why you shouldn't be afraid.

1. We are children of the light and of the day. We don't fear the dark because we don't live in the darkness. We live in the light of Jesus! If we are near to Jesus, we can be surrounded by darkness, but it can't touch us. He is always there with us.
2. We have faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. A breastplate is a piece of armor that protects your heart. A helmet protects your head. If you are wearing those two things, you are covered! Our faith in Jesus and what he did for us is like a breastplate. The love that he shows to us, self-sacrificing love, covers and protects us. And we have the hope of salvation! Paul says God has salvation waiting for us on the last day, not punishment. Because Jesus died for us, we get to look forward to living with him. So we should see salvation coming!
3. We have encouragement from each other. If you are ever afraid of that coming day, just turn to another follower of Jesus for some strength and encouragement. And share that same kind of encouragement with them! Build each other up with the good news that we can look forward to salvation!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Sometimes darkness is scary. Are you afraid of the dark? Give at least one reason why.
- The next time you are in the dark, what is one thing you can remember in your head that will help to lessen your fear?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Paul mentions we should wear “faith and love as a breastplate” and “the hope of salvation as a helmet.” How do faith, love, and hope protect us in a dark world?
- Paul calls us “children of the light and of the day.” Does that fact make it harder or easier to stay awake and clear-minded?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- After today’s devotion, what would you say to someone who says, “We don’t know when Jesus will come back, so we shouldn’t think about it at all”?
- Why is it important for Christians to encourage and build each other up before Jesus returns?

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, you tell us the last day will come like a thief in the night. Help us to be children of the light who are not frightened or afraid of that day, but people who are looking forward to the salvation you will bring to all whose faith is in Jesus and the death he died for them.
Amen.