



# THE THIRD SUNDAY OF END TIME – LAST JUDGMENT

## Light of the Valley Lutheran Church

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### That'll Be the Day

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (NIV)

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup>for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. <sup>9</sup>For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup>He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Did you know that the Pentagon has a defense plan on the shelves in the possible scenario of a zombie apocalypse? No joke. They actually have one; you can google it...when you get home. The CDC, Center for Disease and Control, have used the concept of a zombie apocalypse to promote disaster preparedness. Amazon sells kits for it, and I'm not talking about gag gifts. They have legitimate survival equipment marketed for this kind of an event. A UK based company offers to contract and build a zombie fortification cabin. (Actually, knowing some of our outdoorsmen and hunters in our congregation, you should check it out. It's a pretty sweet set-up.) But really? Does anyone really think that the zombie apocalypse is enough of a threat that you would build a home specifically to withstand that kind of "natural disaster"? We watch shows like Doomsday Preppers and think, "I can't believe that they prepare for that! That'll be the day!"

That phrase: "That'll be the day," we say it to blow off something as being completely ridiculous, something that we shouldn't even give a second thought to, something that will never happen. From some people, when they hear about our concept for consideration for today – Last Judgment, that the end of the world is coming and that an almighty spiritual being will judge the whole world sending one side to eternal bliss heaven and the other side to eternal suffering of hell, when people hear that concept they say, "Yeah. That'll be the day." Sure, we've got pollution, depleting ozone, too much waste, destruction of forests, but we are going to be lasting for some time yet. Last Judgment? The end of the world? That'll be the day. It's like people saying "Peace and safety," thinking that everything is going good, and that we got nothing to worry about.

The unbelievers who bothered the Thessalonian Christians were saying it. "You Christians think the end of the world is coming? Look around you. Everything is fine. We got nothing to worry about. Your God is not coming back anytime soon – if he ever comes back at all. Judgment Day – pfft. That'll be the day."

Even with, or maybe even especially with, the naysayers, the Thessalonian Christians had to wonder when Jesus was going to return. Probably soon, right? What if? What if It Jesus had already come and they missed it? What if they had missed the resurrection of the dead? Are they stuck here on earth to suffer through a miserable life because God had left them behind? Is this hell? No wonder people around them were saying "Peace and safety" whenever they talked about Judgment Day and the end of the world. It wasn't coming. Everything was fine. They woke up morning after morning and the world was still turning. God coming to end it all and judge all – that'll be the day.

While the world lives in ignorance, blowing off the idea that Last Judgment is coming, we know that the end of the world will come like a thief in the night. We don't know the time or date, but Paul says we don't need to know. If you did know the date, would it change what you do? Would you change how many times you call your Mom or Dad, or how often you get together with your brothers and sisters? Would you change how much you gave to charity or to church? Would it affect how you used your free time? Would you take as much "me time" as possible or spend every moment you could doing things for other people? Would you be in church every day, wearing out your knees as you prayed for God to have mercy on your soul or say I've got a short time left and I have to enjoy every minute of it?

For the most part, we live each day as if there's for sure going to be a tomorrow and a day after that and a day after that. We don't live expecting tomorrow to be our last. This mentality suckers us into putting off the good things we know we should do today thinking that there's always tomorrow. Have you become one of those people saying, "Peace and safety," putting off good deeds

because you have adopted the saying, “That’ll be the day” about Jesus’ return to judge the world? Will destruction come on you suddenly, leaving you with no escape as you try to ignore Last Judgment?

To act as if the end of the world and Last Judgment are not coming is to be like those people who belong to the night and belong to the darkness. Paul says that these people are sleeping, unaware of the world and events around them and unaware of what is going to happen. They don’t believe God’s Word. They don’t take God seriously. These are the people that Paul says are the ones who are getting drunk. They are dulling their senses, drowning their concerns in a bottle, ignoring the reality that there is a day of reckoning coming for them.

Paul told the Thessalonian Christians, you don’t need to worry about times and dates. Why? Because “you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” (verse 2) You didn’t miss the Last Judgment because you’re looking for it. “You are all children of the light and children of the day.” (verse 5)

We have been awakened from a spiritual slumber, like the Thessalonian Christians before us. The message of Christ’s substitutionary death made us alive. The truth came to us, through God’s Word, through our baptisms. “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (verse 9) This message made us alive; it awakened us spiritually.

God’s Word is a lamp to your feet and a light for your path. You clearly see that day coming because God has told you as much and has lighted your way with his Word. You are awake and looking for him to return because that’s the forward thinking that comes from knowing that Christ “died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.” (verse 10)

What do we do while we watch and wait for that day that will come like a thief in the night? For the Thessalonians, Paul told them to watch and wait this way: “Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (verse 11) Push each other to seize the day to help one another. Don’t put off doing good today to leave it for another day because we know that this day of Last Judgment will come at any time.

As children of the light and children of the day, we are told to encourage one another and build each other up. You are already doing this. I see your light shine. The brightness of your light shines in the way you encourage each other to come to church and come to Bible study. I see it in the hugs that are given to each other – a family of unrelated people who come together in the name of their Lord Jesus Christ. I see that in how people check in with each other, compliment one another, take the time to listen to the heartaches, the woes, the triumphs, and the joys that you all have. You rejoice with each other, cry with each other. You pray for one another knowing that God will listen to these prayers and help my Christian brothers and sisters. You are seizing the day to do good for one another, and this is how God wants us to act as we await his return and our judgment. This is being children of the light and of the day, showing people the goodness of God and the salvation he appointed for all of us to receive.

Paul saw that the Thessalonians were shining their light already by encouraging each other and building each other up. He told them to not only keep on doing all of that, but to do more. As children of the light, we are called to the same standard. It’s not good enough to put off the good you can do for each other today to wait for tomorrow. If you have an opportunity to pray for someone, to compliment them, to encourage them, to counsel them, to listen to them, to laugh with them, to rejoice with them, to share Jesus with them, take it. Don’t ignore the fact that this Last Day and final judgment are coming. Take those opportunities you see to build up and encourage each other today!

“Since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” (verse 8) We encourage and build up each other today because we know our last judgment, the verdict God will give us on the Last Day. God appointed us to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ because he died for us. This message is for all people, whether they are awake or asleep, whether they have been made children of the light or they are still stuck in darkness, whether someone believes in God or they don’t, he appointed all people to receive salvation.

The day of Last Judgment is coming. So, take today. Encourage one another. Build each other up. We have been appointed not to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (verse 9) With this message, shine God’s love to each other and this world by what you do, proclaiming the fact that God has appointed us to receive salvation. We will have it when our Last Judgment comes. That’ll be the day when we live forever with our God. Amen.