

St. Mary's Sermons

Date of Sermon: 30th March 2020

1 Thessalonians 5

New Living Translation (NLT)

¹Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. ²For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. ³When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labour pains begin. And there will be no escape.

⁴But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief.^[b] ⁵For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. ⁶So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. ⁷Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. ⁸But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armour of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.

⁹For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. ¹⁰Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. ¹¹So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Whenever there is a world crisis, like we are experiencing at the minute, it is inevitable that some people immediately reach for their bibles and turn to the prophecies concerning the end of the world and the second coming of Jesus. They search every detail in order to try to work out exactly where we are at this moment in time in an attempt to pinpoint exactly when these prophecies will be fulfilled. This inevitably plays on the fears of many people.

Paul is adamant that we should not be drawn into this type of speculation. He perceived it to be a total waste of time. While of course, he would agree that we are living in the end times, (but then that is nothing new, we have been living in the last days since the Lord returned to heaven) he was very clear, just as Jesus himself was, that none knows the day or the hour when the Lord will return. That is the privilege of the Father alone.

Paul says that there is only one thing that we actually need to do and that is to live each and every day in a state of readiness, so that if this

just happens to be the day when Christ returns we will not be caught out. If we are always prepared for the Lord's return then it is impossible for us to miss out, whether that takes place next week, next year, or, in another 100 years' time.

Without doubt these are days of great opportunity. Many people who have been simply getting on living their lives without thinking about spiritual matters at all have been forced to stop and question. So we should also be ready to share something of the hope that we have, pointing them to Jesus the one who can deal with all our fears and give us genuine hope for the future.

This weeks suggested hymns for our 12 noon prayer times:

Tuesday our God is greater

Wednesday in Christ alone

Thursday Sovereign over us

Friday Christ is made the sure foundation

Saturday What a beautiful name

Palm Sunday Ride on ride on in majesty

Monday 10,000 reasons