“The Last Day” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 24
November 8, 2026

I. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** – previously read

II. **Are you ready for Jesus to return on the Last Day**?

a. Depending on all kinds of different factors, you need to answer that question from your own perspective.
   i. If you are young, maybe you think of yourself as ready, but you would like to experience a bit more of life here on earth.
   ii. If you are middle aged, maybe you want a few more years to see your grandchildren born or check items off your bucket list.
   iii. If you are late in life, maybe you feel like you’ve left some loose ends in relationships, or you still have some life to live.
   iv. It’s not that these are bad things to want or to experience, but we cannot become so attached to the temporal things of life that we lose sight of the eternal blessings that Jesus promises.

b. It’s not that you don’t want Jesus to return, but can I be honest? We get comfortable in our misery.
   i. I don’t mean that everything in life is a misery… but I mean that we often get comfortable living in a sinful, broken world in which satan prospers… death is everywhere… and sickness, crime, and suffering never go away.
   ii. In some ways we are like a person in a terrible relationship and has little hope of getting out – because we depend on the other person, or we make excuses to say that “at least I have a roof over my head,” or we magnify the little bit of good and pretend like the bad isn’t too bad.
      1. We become so comfortable with the world… the devil… and the brokenness around us that we just stop longing for more… allowing these things to claim us rather than remembering the claim God has on us in Jesus Christ.
      2. In many ways, this is common with addicts and alcoholics as they become comfortable in their misery… and in time they lose hope… there is no light at the end of the tunnel because the struggle is all consuming.
      3. In the same way, some people are so preoccupied with what’s going on in the world that they don’t really look forward to the return of Christ and the Last Day – either because they don’t see it happening in their lifetime… or they couldn’t care less.

c. Yet, the reality for every single person – alive or dead – is that Jesus will return and all things will be made new.
   i. It doesn’t matter how attached you are to this world and the things in it… they will all be gone in an instant when the Lord returns.

ii. It doesn't matter how comfortable you are in this brokenness, the Lord is coming back to bring an eternal joy and life that has no sin… no death… no evil constantly harassing you.
iii. And even if you are afraid of dying or what will happen when Jesus comes back… the current world has no hope or true life compared to what is in store for those who love Him. (Romans 8:18; 1 Cor. 2:9)

III. **In Thessalonians**, the Bible tells us that we never lose hope like people without faith in Jesus Christ.

a. The reading today is about the return of Jesus… but just before our reading is a section that declares our lives have changed… our behaviors and our care for others… because we have faith in Jesus Christ….
   i. The people around us and the world have no hope of living without sin, death, and the devil… but we are people of the new covenant… we are God's people who live in the Holy Spirit.
   ii. When the world sees sexual sin as normal and good, we see it for what it is and do not partake in it.
   iii. If the masses want to turn away from the Bible as the basis for their faith and life, we turn to the Bible all the more!
   iv. We are encouraged to lead a life of love and charity, quietly working in the background to bring healing and relief… to love others.
   v. This is where God speaks through the Old Testament prophet, Amos – as He declares I don't want your empty worship while you run around acting like pagans and unbelievers… I want justice and righteousness to flow from you like a river.
      1. In a sense, God says your hearts, Israel, are far from the Lord, and your actions prove it… you walk in unbelief and do not trust in Me, so when the Last Day comes it will not be good for you.

b. Now, we make a wonderful transition in Thessalonians, as it seems that people from that church wondered what happens when we die… especially what happens to those who are dead and buried.
   i. So the Bible tells us that a word came to Paul from the Lord Himself that the dead will rise before those of us who are alive are caught up.
   ii. And Jesus will certainly not come in a quiet, spiritual way, but we will hear a great command… the voice of an archangel… and the trumpet call will sound so that all the earth – even those dead and buried will respond.
      1. And this cry of command is like when Lazarus was brought forth from the tomb by Jesus… (John 11:43-44)
      2. It's like when Jesus says in John 5:25, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
      3. It's the same command when God spoke everything into being… as He said, "Let there be…" and it was. (Genesis 1)

iii. In that glorious Last Day when Jesus returns, the dead will rise up out of their graves… and then we and all who believe in Jesus Christ will be grabbed up… the word in our reading is caught up… but the Greek has the idea of almost yanking us out of here… to meet Jesus.

c. In that Day, the Last Day, we will have zero cares of the world in mind… and we will know with certainty that Jesus Christ wins the victory.

IV. **When it comes to being ready**, the only thing that matters is faith in Christ.

a. You see, when we were brought to faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we were raised to a new life spiritually.
   i. Even more so, we are reminded in Romans 6:3-5 that the Baptism into Jesus is not only a connection to His death, but also His resurrection… because He lives, we also will live.
   ii. In fact, going back to Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus told Lazarus' sister, Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)
   iii. That is our question as well, "Do you believe this?" and if the answer is, "Yes Lord, I believe," then you are ready by grace through faith for the Last Day.

b. It may still shock you if you happen to be alive and the Last Day arrives, but always remember that we have nothing to fear because of the work that Jesus did for us on the cross.
   i. As the world faced endless darkness – endless sin, death, and evil – our God had no intention of allowing these things to have the final word… so the Father sent His Son to live in the brokenness with us.
   ii. He faced sin, death, and satan every day, but He lived a perfect life… even when He was betrayed by His own… arrested by the ones who should have celebrated His presence… and executed under the worldly power of Rome.
   iii. His death paid for our sins, yes, but death was not the end… because He rose from the dead in victory… sin does not win the day… death cannot hold us in the grave… and satan has no real power over us.
      1. The victory that Jesus won for us is now ours by grace through faith… and that victory will come to its completion when Jesus returns in glory on the Last Day.

c. The great victory of Jesus is not some fairy tale to make us feel better… He is real and His promises are real… which means there will come a day when all things in this world come to an end… except us who believe.

V. **So, back to our question… are you ready for Jesus to return**?

a. You see, we can become so comfortable with this broken world that we forget something far better is coming.

b. Through faith in Christ, we have nothing to fear on the Last Day… and everything to look forward to!
c. So rather than clinging to the things of this world, we can live each day with joyful expectation… knowing that whenever Jesus returns, whether we are alive or have already died, we belong to Him, and we will live with Him forever.