Hi,

Today is the 75th anniversary of VE-Day, i.e. “Victory in Europe.” It was a high mark in the willingness of good men and good women to stand up and defeat those who do unimaginable evil.

* In my Sunday class at noon we’ll be in the second part of the series, *God and the Pandemic*. As with all my on-line classes, we will meet on [my personal Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/scottengle).
* The links to my on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://www.scottengle.org/). All of this week’s videos and podcasts have been posted.
* Keep sending in those movie and book recommendations.

Today, I bring another of the messages that Lauren Sandstedt is sending each week to the Episcopal Parish School community. Lauren just finished her first year at Perkins Seminary and will be interning with St. Andrew this summer. We will be much blessed for it.

***“For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” 1 Thessalonians 5:2***

I have always been enamored with any prospect of hosting out-of-town visitors to our home. Growing up, this was common, as the majority of my family lived out of state. As a little girl, I would hurriedly complete my chores, in hopes that I’d be have enough time to sit in front of our dining room windows . . . just anxiously waiting to see the arriving vehicle pull up to our house. It was an adrenaline rush that brought simultaneous feelings of excitement and relief. If this is how so many of us feel waiting for guests to arrive, how are we to feel awaiting the return of Christ?

In my studies I have found that an extremely *underrated* and unrecognized aspect of the New Testament letters, is the reality that many of these people expected Jesus to return *during their lifetimes*. When we read scripture in 2020, it can be so difficult to choose to dive into the world with our “antiquity glasses” on, seeing the first century Greco-Roman world in its own context. I imagine these glasses are similar to the 3D glasses that Cinemark gave me when I saw Toy Story 4 in theaters. You too, can have your own pair. Put on your antiquity glasses with me, so that they can magnify everything to make it abundantly clear. In Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, he writes to a community whom he stayed with as a minister for some time. In the text, we learn that the Thessalonians have experienced great loss: secular persecution, leadership changes, and death of the members in their community. The more they embody the Christian way of life, the more difficult the persecution is to endure. Not to mention, these recently converted Christians are now fearful and concerned about life after death. Paul’s response (4:13-17) is an incredible hope; encouragement that as followers of Christ, they will be with the Lord until the return of Christ and we are all resurrected, bodily. This is his comfort in the midst of loss. Even more eye-opening, was the verse that followed. The unexpectedness of Christ’s return would be swift, urgent, and (as they expected) *soon.* The Greek word for this return is “*parousia”*. The parousia, in my humble opinion, is so often neglected in Christianity 101. I myself was shocked to realize such great hope, when I began really reading scripture. There is a complex beauty in the parousia: when we recognize the magnitude of this, with our 3D antiquity glasses on, we see just how urgent the return of Christ was for these followers who lived within generations of Jesus. The sweetness, trustworthiness, and servanthood of Jesus must have been so much more*incredible in person* to experience than our human brains can even fathom. So magnificent, that Paul reminds us to be *ready.* Ready for such an encounter, with the God who formed us, who loved us enough to pay the price on a cross.

I never felt *totally* ready for our houseguests to arrive. There was always just one more thing I could have done to prepare! Lay a mint on the pillow, hand-pick flowers to put on the table, draw a welcome sign . . . pretty much anything you can imagine an over-eager seven year old would love to do in welcoming someone home. What I love about Paul’s urgency, is that I know the feeling. Preparing, waiting, then watching. This week, in light of Covid-19, how will we prepare to be ready for Christ’s return? Where will we see God this week? Let us prayerfully prepare together.

*Movie recommendation*

John Laing recommended to me the Netflix series, *Waco*. Patti and I gave it a try this week and, wow, we thought it was excellent. It is six episodes and is based on two books, one by the lead FBI negotiator and another by a survivor of the final assault.

*Book recommendation*

As I promised yesterday, the second history of Christmas that I’ve read is *Christmas: A Candid History* but Bruce David Forbes. It is both candid and fascinating.

‘til Monday, grace and peace,

Scott