

Till and by

Till (or “until”) means starting from one time and continuing to the stated time or event.

- I will go on waiting for you till/ until 5pm. (I will start waiting for you now. At 5pm, I will stop waiting and go)
- I will go on feeling hungry till/until I eat something. (I am hungry now. When I get some food, I will stop feeling hungry.)
- My hair is too long and I will not get it cut till/until Saturday. (My hair is too long now and it will still be too long right up to the time when I get it cut)

By means that something will happen/be completed any time from now but at or before the stated time. “By 5pm” means “at or before 5pm.”

- “Let me have your report by 5pm on Friday” (=give me your report some time before 5pm on Friday. Precisely at 5pm would be OK)
- “By Friday, I hope to have heard from Susie”. (I hope that Susie will contact me before Friday)

Try for yourself:

“I cannot see you until 2pm, but I must leave the office by 5pm”. (as 2pm is the earliest I can see you, and I have to go at, or before, 5pm, the only time period when we could meet would be:.....?)