

Bible Study Series on.....

*The Letters
to the*

THESSALONIANS

12 Lessons

**Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2005

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Lesson One

“Introduction to 1 Thessalonians”

(Reading—1 Thessalonians 1:1)

1 Thessalonians is the first of Paul’s letters that we have any record of. It is unusual in that it was written only a short time after the Apostle had left the city—possibly not over six months in time. It is one of the most gentle and affectionate of his letters. On Paul’s 2nd mission trip, three churches were established in Macedonia according to the book of Acts: Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The church was established in the midst of turmoil and problems in the city.

THE CITY OF THESSALONICA

The city received its name from Cassander, King of Macedon, who gave its title in honor of his wife, Thessalonice. It was located about 100 miles from Philippi with a large population of Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It was one of the chief cities of the province and the residing place of the Proconsul and Questor, the person who cared for the Emperor’s revenues. At this time, the city was free—being governed by Politarchs who were elected by the people; however, they were still responsible to the Roman Proconsul. The people worshipped many gods, but Jupiter was the main one. The city had an amphitheatre, gladiatorial shows for the amusements of the citizens, and a circus for public games. It was a thriving commercial city in which Paul readily found employment.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

In Acts 16:40, we find Paul and Silas leaving the prison in the city of Philippi and entering the house of Lydia. They comfort the brethren and then depart. The evidence shows that Luke stays as well as Timothy. For neither of them are mentioned at Thessalonica, or at Berea until Paul is ready to leave the city of Berea, then only Timothy is mentioned. Thessalonica had a Synagogue and many Jews and proselytes, thus the two men went first to preach to them. A few of the Jews were converted, as well as Greek proselytes (Acts 17:4). Leaving the Synagogue, they continued to preach among the Gentiles—converted quite a few of the chief women (17:4) and idol worshippers (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The unbelieving Jews could not stand any more, so they got together a group of lewd fellows and stirred up the city against Paul and Silas. Not being able to find Paul and Silas in the home of Jason, they dragged the owner and other brethren before the rulers and falsely accused Paul and Silas. The rulers took security of Jason and the others with the assurance that these uproars would cease. Thus, it was necessary that Paul and Silas leave the city. The infant church was then left without further instructions from an Apostle or one of his helpers. This was a continual concern of the Apostle until finally he wrote his letter to them. A very interesting note is pointed out from the findings of Archaeology: a marble slab was uncovered in the city that had served as an ancient triumphal arch over the principle street, with seven names of Politarchs engraved thereon. Three of these seven names are the same as Paul’s fellow-laborers: Sosipator, Secundus, and Gaius (Acts 19:29; 20:4).

THE DATE OF WRITING

Leaving Luke and Timothy at Philippi, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica to preach the Gospel (Acts 16:40; 17:1). After only a relatively short time there, they were forced to leave and go to Berea (17:10). Again, Paul's work was cut comparatively short because of Jews coming from Thessalonica to stir up trouble. However, he left Silas and Timothy at Berea. It is evident that Timothy must have joined the other two before Paul had to leave Berea (17:14). As soon as Paul decided to stay at Athens, he sent word back by the brethren who had accompanied him that Timothy and Silas were to join him immediately (17:15). We know that Timothy came immediately, but about Silas we are not certain, for Paul decided to send Timothy back to Thessalonica to see about their condition and to comfort them even though it meant being alone in a strange city himself (1 Thessalonians 3:1-8). It is suggested that Silas did come and was sent to Philippi, because of Paul's statement about the churches of Macedonia sending money by the hands of the brethren that came to him at Corinth, which brethren we believed to have been Timothy and Silas (18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9). However, Timothy and Silas came to Paul from Macedonia: Timothy with word concerning the condition of the church at Thessalonica; Silas, possibly with the money. It was because of Timothy's report and Paul's inability to go to Thessalonica that he chose to write his first letter to them about six months after the church was established. This would make the date approximately AD 52.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Paul had tried time and again to visit Thessalonica, but was hindered by "Satan." When Timothy brought word of their condition, it was a great source of comfort to him to know how well this infant church was doing. They were progressing in the faith, steadfast even in view of persecution. The Jews, as well as the Greeks, were trying to discourage the new Christians, and some misunderstandings had arisen about the second coming of Christ, and great concern therefore over their dead loved ones. His purposes for writing evidently were: (1) To send greetings; (2) To encourage them in the midst of persecution and trials to be steadfast; (3) To correct their misunderstandings about the second coming of Christ; (4) To point out the duty of the disorderly; and (5) To show that their enemies' arguments could be easily answered.

BASIC OUTLINE OF 1 THESSALONIANS

- I. PAUL'S PRAISE OF THE CHURCH (1:1-10)**
- II. PAUL'S BEHAVIOR AMONG THEM (2:1-20)**
- III. TIMOTHY'S REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH (3:1-13)**
- IV. THE LORD'S COMING (4:1-18)**
- V. EXHORTATION TO WATCHFULNESS (5:1-28)**

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Things that stand out about this church is its faithfulness in view of immediate persecution being brought upon it, and their being examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. They also sounded out the word of the Lord in that area and they had great faith.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. This 1 Thessalonian Letter is Paul's 2nd letter that he had written to churches.**
- 2. The date for the letter is AD 65.**
- 3. The church was one of three churches started in Macedonia on this mission trip.**
- 4. Jason and some other brethren were dragged before the rulers by the unbelieving Jews.**
- 5. Three of Paul's companions could possibly have been Politarchs in Thessalonica.**
- 6. When Paul & Silas were forced to leave Thessalonica, Timothy stayed with the church.**
- 7. This letter was possibly written about six months after the establishment of the church at Thessalonica.**
- 8. Paul sent Timothy and Silas back to Thessalonica to check on the church.**
- 9. The church had some confusion over the second coming of Christ.**
- 10. The church was known for its faith in the midst of persecution.**

Lesson Two

***“The Reception of the Gospel
and it’s Effect”***
(1 Thessalonians 1:2-10)

The preaching that Paul did in the synagogue of the Jews in this city resulted in some Jews believing, but a large number of devout Greeks and chief women also believed. This did not set well with the unbelieving Jews and they began stirring up trouble, which led to Paul & Silas having to leave the city by night and go to the next city to work. Because of having to leave so soon and with no one to leave with them from among his fellow-workers, the church became a concern of Paul. A little later Timothy was sent back up to find out about them and brought good news to the Apostle—who by then had moved on to the city of Corinth. This letter was written about AD 52 (from Corinth) after hearing of their condition. But, this was probably only about six months after the church had been established.

PAUL EXPRESSES HIS CONCERN FOR THEM (1:2-4)

A. He sends greetings from himself, Silas, & timothy (1:1)

- 1) All three men had worked with the church at one time or another, evidently.
- 2) Those who had been converted to Christ were in fellowship with both the Father and the Son.
- 3) This shows the special relationship to Deity upon their baptism.

B. His thanksgiving expressed for them (1:2)

- 1) The church had been continually upon Paul’s mind.
- 2) He wanted to know that they were remaining faithful.

C. He was especially happy that he could remember good things about them (1:3-4)

- 1) Their work of faith.
 - a) Faith that was active—living righteous lives and engaged in good works.
 - b) Not a dead faith, but a living faith.
- 2) Their labor of love
 - a) Labor produced by love for others.
 - b) Kindness expressed towards those about them...especially in need.
- 3) Patience of Hope
 - a) Patience in trials showing you have Hope.
 - b) Hope that maintains and sustains in the midst of affliction.
 - c) This hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ—the only basis for true hope.
 - d) This hope we can have with assurance—even in the presence of God!
- 4) Paul was assured of their election by God
 - a) He knew that his Gospel was from God.
 - b) They had received that Gospel.
 - c) They were remaining steadfast in that Gospel.
 - d) Therefore, this was a manifest token of their being God’s elect.

THEIR RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL (1:5-6)

A. He talks about how the Gospel came to them.

- 1) It came not in word only
 - a) It was not just spoken words that were dead and had no power.
 - b) It was more—it was words that affect people’s lives for good.
- 2) It came in power
 - a) It produced a powerful effect on their hearts & lives.
 - b) Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12
 - c) It was convert the soul to God, if allowed free reign.
- 3) In the Holy Spirit
 - a) 1 Corinthians 2:4—*“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*
 - b) It was the message of the Holy Spirit—it came from God.
 - c) The Holy Spirit inspired the message.
 - d) The Holy Spirit confirmed the message with signs & wonders.
- 4) And in much assurance
 - a) They were fully persuaded, convicted, of its truthfulness.
 - b) Their strong reception accounts for their zeal in following Christ.

B. He briefly looks at the lives of those who preached to them.

- 1) This was a common thing in Paul’s letters.
- 2) He was aware of his need of being sincere.
- 3) He showed it—also, those with him showed it, as well.
- 4) They were living what they taught.
- 5) Thus, even their lives had an impact upon the hearers.

C. He talks about their reception of the message.

- 1) They became followers of Paul & company.
 - a) They were imitating the manner of life of Paul & his fellow-workers.
 - b) They followed them, as they followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- 2) They became followers of the Lord
 - a) They imitated Jesus’ life.
 - b) Paul’s preaching showed the manner of Jesus’ life.
 - c) It had its effect upon sinners.
 - d) The contrast of his unselfish life to their selfish life brought results.
- 3) They received the word in much affliction
 - a) Much opposition came from the unbelieving Jews (Acts 17:5-8).
 - b) The harassment of Jason and others.
 - c) They were converted in the midst of trials and persecution.
 - d) They were the better Christians because of such.
 - e) They had joy in the midst of sorrow.
 - Joy produced by the words of the Holy Spirit and the blessings that came into their lives.
 - They received forgiveness and hope in a dark world.

EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL IN THEIR LIVES (1:7-10)

A. They became examples to others (1:7)

- 1) They showed to all the kind of firmness with which the Gospel should be received.
- 2) They showed fidelity in the midst of trials.
- 3) They showed zeal in the spreading of their new found faith.
- 4) They became a MODEL, TYPE, PATTERN for others to follow.
- 5) Their influence was spoken of and felt throughout this area.

B. Word sounded out from them (1:8).

- 1) The Good News was spread from them throughout Macedonia, Achaia, & other areas.
- 2) As people traveled, news would spread by word of mouth.
- 3) But, they consciously made an effort to spread the Gospel.
- 4) The news had traveled so far and fast that:
 - a) Their faith in God was well-known to all;
 - b) And Paul didn't have to tell others, they told him.

C. They had turn from idols to the living God (1:9).

- 1) Gentiles were idol worshippers—thus, many Gentiles were converted.
- 2) They turned to the living God.
 - a) Idols were dead, dumb, and blind—they were nothing but metal, stone, or wood.
 - b) Idols are an insult to the true & living God.

D. They were looking & waiting for the Lord's return (1:10).

- 1) Paul's preaching had dealt with the return of the Lord someday.
- 2) It is mentioned several times in his two letters to them.
- 3) The church had gotten the message—Jesus is coming again!
- 4) They were waiting in hope for His return.
- 5) The basis of this hope was—Jesus was raised from the dead.
- 6) Belief in Jesus' return had a value to them as well as us:
 - a) It comforts hearts in sorrow, bereavement, sickness.
 - b) It leads to watchfulness.
 - c) It helps us to die to the world and live as children of light.
 - d) It can also arouse sinners to repentance.
 - e) And cause Christians to deny self & spread the Gospel to others.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is right to commend those who do well—Paul did it by inspiration from God! The zeal we have as Christians often depends upon how we received the Gospel. The influence of a church should be felt, not only in its city, but surrounding areas. Our hope of Jesus' return is based on well-founded evidences.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Paul was able to preach in a synagogue in Thessalonica.**
- 2. The church was made up of Jews, devout Greeks and “chief” women.**
- 3. It was the unbelieving Jews that helped to forced Paul & Silas out of the city.**
- 4. Paul praised the church for their work of faith only.**
- 5. Paul called them the elect of God.**
- 6. Paul Did miracles at Thessalonica.**
- 7. Immediate persecution came on these new Christians.**
- 8. The church became a model for others to follow.**
- 9. Some in the church at Thessalonica had been idol worshippers.**
- 10. They knew about Jesus’ 2nd coming.**

Lesson Three

“The Ideal Conduct for Preachers”

(Reading—1 Thessalonians 2:1-16)

Paul wrote these letters by inspiration of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). These letters can be depended upon to give insights about the conditions of the church that are being written to, even without specifically stated such. What is said and dealt with often gives an insight to the problems that the churches had to deal with. The following things may reasonably be inferred from chapter two about the conditions or problems at Thessalonica:

- 1) Someone may have accused Paul of being dictatorial or authoritative;
- 2) Inferring that He desired influence and power over people;
- 3) That Paul did not like to work with his own hands;
- 4) That his teaching was contrary to the Will of God;
- 5) That their leaving too quickly showed their fearfulness of being found out.

The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write this chapter in defense of his life and actions among them. Thus, Paul’s true conduct becomes the ideal conduct for preachers today!

PAUL’S CONDUCT & PREACHING STATED (2:1-2)

A. You know full well our coming into your midst.

- 1) You can know what influenced us.
- 2) You can recall that our efforts were not in vain—you accepted the Gospel.
- 3) Our work was very fruitful among both Jews and Gentiles.

B. In fact, persecution did not stop us from preaching to you.

- 1) We were shamefully treated by officials at Philippi.
- 2) We were beaten & cast into prison without trial—such was done unlawfully.
- 3) They tried to stop us from preaching, but it didn’t work.
- 4) It just made us bolder than before.
- 5) And when we came to Thessalonica, it didn’t stop us there either—even in the midst of contention.

THINGS TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT IN PREACHING (2:3-6)

A. What his preaching did not involve or contain:

- 1) Deceit—Sophistry—no desire to delude or deceive—or to teach error.
- 2) Uncleanness—Not to corrupt or lead people into impure living, but holy lives. His motives were not impure motives.
- 3) Guile—Craftiness & tricks to get you or mislead you. Their motives could undergo close scrutiny and come out clean!

B. What his preaching did contain:

- 1) It contained the Word of God.
- 2) They had been entrusted with that heavenly message & were faithful to that trust.
- 3) Their desire was to please God, not the whims of men.
- 4) God is a witness to Paul’s motives.

C. He clearly defines what his approach in preaching was not!

- 1) It was not with flattering words.
 - a) He did not praise the good and overlook the bad.
 - b) He did not try to get on the good side by flattery.
 - c) He openly declared their need of the Grace of God.
 - d) He did not compromise the demands of the Gospel to win their approval.
- 2) It was not with a cloak of covetousness.
 - a) He did not preach just to make a living—but lived to preach the Gospel.
 - b) He did not disguise his true intentions.
 - c) He wanted them, not what they possessed.
 - d) God will bear testimony to our pure motives in preaching.
- 3) It was not to secure the praise of men.
 - a) The love of applause did not influence him.
 - b) Love of fame was not his motivating impulse in preaching.
- 4) He did not ask them for support for him to preach to them.
 - a) As an Apostle, he had the right of support.
 - b) But Paul's plan was to forego support from a new church being started.
 - c) While there, he did receive support from the Philippian church.
 - d) And even later, after leaving, received support from the churches of Macedonia (which probably included Thessalonica).

PAUL'S CONDUCT CLEARLY DEFINED (2:7-12)

A. He was like an affectionate mother nursing her child (2:7)

- 1) He was gentle and tender to them.
- 2) He was earnest and sincere in his concern for them.

B. As one willing to lay down his life to preach to them (2:8).

- 1) Paul's life was endangered everywhere he went and preached.
- 2) Yet, he went to preach in spite of the danger.
- 3) Paul did not leave them so quickly because of the fear of death for himself.
- 4) But more because of what might happen to them, if he did not leave.

C. He reminds them of his willingness to work with his hands to earn his bread (2:9)

- 1) He labored night & day at times to support himself and others with him.
- 2) When support came from Philippi, he labored night & day to teach them.

D. Paul's life was an open book to them (2:10).

- 1) He lived a holy life—he was just in his actions—so that no legitimate accusation could be placed against him.
- 2) Both they and God are witnesses to his life.

E. He treated them like a father would his own children (2:11).

- 1) He exhorted them—appealed to them earnestly.
- 2) He comforted them—consoled them and gave them hope.
- 3) He charged them—He showed them God's Will and challenged them to do it.

F. The purpose of all his exhortations (2:12):

- 1) That they would walk worthy of the Lord.
- 2) To bring honor to the Lord, not reproach to His Name.
- 3) To be obedient, faithful children of God.

HIS WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT & RE-ASSURANCE (2:13-16)

A. He expresses again his thankfulness for their reception of the Gospel.

- 1) They received the Message as the Word of God, not the word of men.
- 2) If people receive the Message for any other reason—it will not stand the test.
 - a) If because of parents, family, friends....
 - b) If they turned, then you will turn!
- 3) If received because it is the Truth, then you will stand the test.
- 4) And....it is this Truth that is making a big difference in your lives for good.

B. You are like your brethren in Judea:

- 1) They have severely suffered at the hands of their own countrymen.
- 2) And so have you—so your situation is not unusual!

C. Just remind yourself of what these unbelieving Jews have done:

- 1) They killed the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) They killed their own prophets sent to warn them of their coming doom.
- 3) And now, they persecute those of us who are preaching Christ to the Jews & Gentiles.
- 4) They are trying to stop us from preaching to such.
- 5) But, in general, they act contrary to all men.
 - a) Not to Christians alone.
 - b) But to all others, as well.
 - c) Historically, this was their characteristic way of acting.

D. how does God look upon them?

- 1) They absolutely do not please God.
- 2) They are building up the wrath of God against themselves.
- 3) Their actions only aggravate this sinful condition before God.
- 4) God's wrath is to be poured out upon them.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Preaching must be done with sincerity and love for people. It should not be done to please the whims of men, but to please God. Preaching should be with gentleness, tenderness and affection. Preachers should be willing to work and support themselves where needed. The preacher's primary reward is souls in heaven some day!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Certain conditions can often be inferred from things that are written to correct problems among the churches.**
- 2. The preaching at Thessalonica was very fruitful.**
- 3. Paul said he did not use deceit in his preaching to them.**
- 4. Paul said that God was a witness to his motives for preaching to them.**
- 5. Paul did not feel it was wrong to want the praise of men.**
- 6. Paul expected support of the church while he was with them that caused some problems.**
- 7. Paul did work with his own hands to support himself at Thessalonica.**
- 8. He did receive support from Philippi to support him at Thessalonica.**
- 9. Paul said that he acted like a nursing mother towards the Thessalonians.**
- 10. The brethren in Judea had suffered in a similar way as the Thessalonians.**

Lesson Four

“Vain Labor versus Stabilization”

(Reading—1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13)

This first letter to the Christians at Thessalonica gives some personal insights to Paul’s life and character. Chapter two stressed how he conducted himself and preached while in their midst. Chapter three continues to show his concern for the church. He stresses some things that he shared in common with the brethren there: (1) A common bond of love that existed between them; and (2) A common desire of wanting to see each other. But one thing Paul stressed above all—he wanted them to be stabilized in the Faith. All is lost and worthless and vain unless they endure faithfully to the end. The tension of waiting was too much for Paul, so he sent Timothy back to check on their condition. Chapter three emphasizes: (1) Timothy’s visit; (2) The results of that visit; and (3) Paul’s continual prayer for their growth and endurance.

PAUL’S EXPLANATION OF WHY HE HAD NOT RETURNED TO THEM (2:17-20)

A. He had been taken from them against his will.

- 1) He was only away from them in body, but his heart was still with them.
- 2) It had only been about six months that he had been gone.

B. He continually desired to see them.

- 1) His absence was not a lack of love for them.
- 2) But he was hindered beyond his control
- 3) Paul said that “Satan hindered him.” He recognized his work in trying to discourage the preaching of the Gospel and the efforts to stabilize the church.

C. He assured them that their faithfulness to the end:

- 1) Would be his reward, his joy, and his crown.
- 2) It was his greatest hope for them.

REASONS FOR SENDING TIMOTHY (3:1-4)

A. He could not return himself, but Timothy could.

- 1) We don’t have full insight as to why Paul couldn’t go back.
- 2) The bad circumstances that caused him to leave quickly may have still prevailed that would bring greater hardship upon the church..
- 3) Timothy’s visit should not be a problem for them.

B. Paul said: “When I could forbear no longer...”

- 1) No warmer love could be expressed, or deeper interest shown by any Christian for another than what Paul showed to them.
- 2) He could wait no longer to learn of their condition.
 - a) He may have hoped for someone that would be traveling through from there to give some insight.
 - b) But no news came.

- 3) Timothy had to be sent back to find out.
 - a) This meant that Paul would be left alone at Athens.
 - It was a great city of philosophy and learning.
 - The city was wholly given over to Idolatry.
 - It was quite an awesome thing to approach such a city of people with the Gospel...by one's self alone.
 - But...at a great loss to himself, he sent Timothy back.
 - b) Background:
 - Paul & Silas had had to leave Thessalonica quickly by night because of the threat to the church.
 - They went on to Berea.
 - Timothy later joins them.
 - After successfully establishing the church at Berea, trouble came from the Jews at Thessalonica.
 - Paul is taken to Athens by some brethren.
 - Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea for a short time.
 - Paul sends word for them to join him in Athens.
 - Acts 17:15-16
 - Upon arriving, Paul relented and sent both back to Macedonia—Timothy to Thessalonica and Silas possibly to Philippi.

C. Why send Timothy?

- 1) He is a brother—"dear, as a brother!"
- 2) He is a minister of the Gospel—quite capable & qualified to instruct them.
- 3) He is a fellow-laborer in the Gospel—whose help Paul greatly needed, but felt a great need to send him back to them.

D. Paul explained why he had sent Timothy back to them.

- 1) To establish you—Strengthen, make firm, help their faith to be steadfast in trials.
- 2) To comfort your faith—To reassure them of the necessity of enduring trials.
- 3) To see that you are not turned from the faith—To encourage them not to renounce Christ because of afflictions.
 - a) For Christians are appointed to be persecuted (22 Timothy 3:12).
 - b) We even forewarned you of such when we were with you.

TIMOTHY'S GOOD REPORT (3:5-8)

A. Again, he emphasizes his desire to know of their condition.

- 1) He had sent Timothy to learn of their faith, fidelity, and steadfastness in the faith.
- 2) He wanted to be sure the Devil hadn't pulled them away.
 - a) Satan desires to allure us into apostasy by our heathen friends.
 - b) By false teachings & teachers.
 - c) By severity of suffering.
 - d) Paul was not sure that his efforts had been successful in stabilizing them.
- 3) Less our labor be in vain.
 - a) If they had been turned away, his efforts were vain among them.
 - b) At least, with regard to their salvation.

B. Timothy's report:

- 1) By the time Timothy came back, Paul had left Athens & gone to Corinth.
- 2) Both Timothy & Silas rejoin Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5).
- 3) His report:
 - a) He brought good tidings, good news, and favorable news.
 - b) Their faith and love were strong.
 - c) And, their remembrance of Paul was with affectionate regard...desiring greatly to see him.

C. Results of the report:

- 1) Paul was comforted—great relief to learn these things about them.
- 2) Their faithfulness to the Lord makes Paul's life meaningful & worthwhile.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THEM (3:9-13)

A. Paul could now offer new thanksgiving to God on their behalf.

- 1) Because of their steadfastness.
- 2) But also, the joy that such had brought to Paul.

B. His prayers have been and would continue to be in their behalf.

- 1) He wanted to see them.
- 2) He wanted to be able to perfect what might be lacking in their faith.
 - a) In quality, in objects, in efficacy, and in steadfastness.
 - b) Make it complete in trust, in God's truth, in endurance.
- 3) He prayed that God would open a door for him to return.
- 4) And, that they would increase and abound in their love:
 - a) Not only towards one another....
 - b) But to all men!
- 5) That their hearts would be established unblameable in holiness before God at the coming of the Lord with His angels.
 - a) If love was there and abounded:
 - They would be unblameable.
 - There would be no room for charges or accusations.
 - They would be holy in word, deed, and heart.
 - b) And they will be prepared for the Lord's coming.
 - With His saints (holy angels??)
 - With his holy ones....elect angels?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

At the judgment, the honors of the world will appear small and insignificant. At the judgment, the wealth of the earth will be worthless. At the judgment, the pleasures of this life will be beneath notice. The thing that will really count in that Day is a holy life and a heart that has learned to love and express it towards God and man. Happy will be those who have thus prepared themselves. Are you prepared?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Paul desire greatly that the church be stabilized in the faith.**
- 2. Paul stated that Satan had hindered him from visiting them himself.**
- 3. For some reason Timothy could go there, but not Paul.**
- 4. Paul had to go into Athens alone, by himself, since he sent Timothy & Silas to Thessalonica and possibly Philippi.**
- 5. Timothy was sent to not only establish them in the faith, but to comfort them.**
- 6. There was no danger to Paul's labor among them being in vain.**
- 7. Timothy said that the Christians at Thessalonica had a kind and affectionate remembrance of Paul.**
- 8. Their faithfulness made Paul's life meaningful & worthwhile.**
- 9. Paul had been praying for them all along.**
- 10. The Lord is coming with "His saints."**

Lesson Five

“The Worthy Walk of the Christian”

(Reading—1 Thessalonians 4:1-12)

The Christian is exhorted to walk worthy of his calling—live a godly, righteous life! When people are reached from all walks of life and have participated in all kinds of sinful practices, it calls for some big changes. Without those changes, Christianity would lose its effectiveness in society. The church at Thessalonica needed to be exhorted to change their lives for the better—to walk worthy of the Name of Jesus Christ. The practical aspects of Christianity are dealt with now in some detail.

WALK, SO AS TO PLEASE GOD (4:1-2)

When Paul was there the first time, he gave them the Lord’s commandments on how they should live. Now, he beseeches and exhorts them to live up to those commandments. When he exhorts them to abound more and more, he is letting them know that they had not yet arrived at perfection. The Christian life is ever onward and upward—to keep on following the teachings of Christ more fully.

AVOID DEFILING YOUR BODIES (4:3-5)

God desires and commands for all his people to be holy. Sanctification involves holy living after being cleansed of sins. God is calling for abstinence from debasing vices that degrade the soul. We are to cease to do evil and learn to do righteousness. He keys in on fornication, which is all immorality. We are to abstain from all forms of immorality. It was a great vice of the Gentile world then and now. They must guard against being pulled back into such practices. We are to keep our vessel (body) pure, holy, respected—not debased, polluted, or dishonored in lustful indulgences. We are to honor our bodies as a noble work of God and employ it in pure purposes—not in lustful gratification of the flesh.

DEFRAUD NOT YOUR BROTHER (4:6-7)

To defraud is to go beyond, too far, and oppress our brother or take advantage of him. To defraud is to cheat, to make a gain of, or to oppress. It is to take advantage of one in dire circumstances. It is to deprive one of what they have or of their rights. How? In any way!! But, in particular, in committing fornication is to defraud a person. But any attempt to deprive another of his rights or possessions is wrong also. He issues a warning that the Lord is the avenger of those who do such things. He will be punished. Paul had already warned them of these dangers when he was with them. He makes an appeal to them by reminding them that they have not been called to walk in uncleanness, but in holiness—a clean life. They were not to live lives of impurity, lewdness, or pollution, but lives that are set apart to serve the true and living God.

DO NOT DESPISE GOD'S MESSAGE (4:8)

These are not the words of some men, but the Words of God and should be so treated. Paul had received his message directly from God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For men to disregard or despise or reject these words is the same as rejecting God!

CONTINUE TO GROW IN LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER (4:9-10)

He is speaking about brotherly love—an affection and special concern for another Christian. It is a natural love (a family love). We are born of the same Father. We are in the same family (the family of God). We have the same ideals, purposes, life, and hope. We should not have to be told to have this love—it should be automatic. And, the church at Thessalonica had shown that they understood this concept. They had shown it to all their brethren in Macedonia. This is a common sense love that is taught of God. God loved us when we were unworthy to be loved. So, we ought to love our brothers in the same family (1 John 3:14-16). This love needs to grow and be more fully expressed in word and action to one another.

EXHORTATIONS TO QUIETNESS & INDUSTRY (4:11-12)

- 1) Paul encourages the church to make a diligent effort to live a quiet, orderly, peaceful life.
- 2) He wanted them to obey the laws of the land, avoid tumults or disorderly situations in the community, and calmly pursue their regular occupations.
- 3) By all means keep away from the idle, the restless, and the dissatisfied.
- 4) Take care of your own affairs and don't stick your nose into other people's business.
- 5) Work with your own hands—earn your own living. Paul had commanded them to do this when he was with them. He saw a danger among the Christians and felt the need to warn them to be engaged in a useful occupation.
- 6) Walk honestly before all—showing kindness, courtesy, respectfulness.
- 7) Study to do these things. Make it a point of honor, a sacred duty to do these things. Learn how to put these things into practice in your lives.
- 8) So you will lack of nothing or won't be beholding to anyone—unless made so by circumstances beyond your control.
- 9) Put a value on these admonitions—they will promote good order and happiness in society. Our lives will reflect for good to those out of the church.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What a difference Christianity would make in any society, if followed! The greatest blessing that man could have in this life is that everyone would live the Christian life. But we also have a promise of something far better after this life is over—eternal life with God. Why not add your life to the emphasis of Christianity if you have not already done so!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Christians are called upon to walk worthy of our calling.**
- 2. Sanctification means that we abstain from immoral actions.**
- 3. To defraud someone is to go too far.**
- 4. Committing fornication is to defraud someone.**
- 5. To despise God's message is not necessarily despising God.**
- 6. Brotherly love is a natural love that one has for family.**
- 7. Paul makes it clear that a Christian should not be idle and dissatisfied.**
- 8. We need to learn about what is going on in other's lives.**
- 9. We should not be beholding to anyone unless it is beyond our control.**
- 10. The greatest life is the Christian life.**

Lesson Six

“What Happens to Christians at Jesus’ Return?”

(Reading—1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11)

Jesus said, *“The truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:32). Ignorance of truth keeps men in darkness, superstition, and error. One of man’s chief problems in life is his ignorance of the Truth of God. Men need to be fully informed of God’s ways to remove their ignorance. The Thessalonian Christians were experiencing some problems because of this ignorance. They may have even been taught the truth, but it didn’t register fully. God’s truth needs to be re-emphasized to us over and over so that it can find lodgment in our minds and hearts. The false ideas keep us enslaved, but the Truth can set us free!

THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM (4:13)

A. It had to do with their dead loved ones or friends that were Christians.

- 1) They were not sure what would happen with them.
- 2) Would they be raised at the time Jesus returns, or just when would they be raised?
- 3) Do they not have any hope in the grave?
- 4) Whatever the problem was—it was robbing them of the consolation of those already dead among them.
- 5) They needed to be re-assured about them.

B. Paul first says: *“Don’t worry”* and *“Don’t sorry as those without hope.”*

- 1) Don’t act like unbelievers which have no hope.
 - a) They have no hope in death.
 - b) They have no evidence upon which to build their hope.
 - c) They bury their hopes in the grave.
- 2) But it is not true of the Christian.
 - a) The Christian has a bright & glorious hope after death.
 - b) A hope of re-union with dead loved ones.
 - c) This hope lessens the sorrow of death.

THE SOLUTION (4:14-18)

A. The dead are awaiting the Lord’s return also.

- 1) He refers to them as those that are asleep.
 - a) But more...”Asleep in Jesus.”
 - b) Desirable term for death for the Christian.
 - c) It is like going to sleep and awakening when the Lord returns.
 - d) “In Jesus”—a place of security—sleep in hope through Him.
 - e) A gentle repose of the body, but comfort to the soul.
- 2) The spirits of the dead go into the Hadean realm.
 - a) For the Christian, it is a place of comfort.
 - b) It is a place of hope as well.

B. The Lord's Return.

- 1) Described:
 - a) It will be the Lord, Himself that comes.
 - b) He will come with His holy angels (Matt. 25:31).
 - c) He will come with a shout—a cry of excitement—multitudes lifting up their voices.
 - d) He will come with the voice of an archangel—chief angel—ruling angel—1st over others??
 - e) He will come with the trumpet sound—important occasion!
- 2) But some will still be alive at Jesus' coming.
 - a) What will happen to them?
 - b) Be changed in a moment (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).
 - c) The living Christian will not precede the dead Christian.

C. The Resurrection of the Dead.

- 1) Jesus is mankind's hope of a resurrection.
- 2) But it will be a resurrection either to life or death (John 5:28-29).
- 3) But here, Paul is only talking about the living and dead Christians.
- 4) The dead Christian will be raised first.
- 5) The living Christian will be changed.
- 6) It does not state what that body will be like in 1 Thessalonians—but it does say in 1 Cor. 15:50-52.
 - a) Both will be given a new body, a spiritual body, one fit for their eternal abode.
 - b) So, the living will have no advantage over the dead.

D. They will be caught up together to be with the Lord.

- 1) This is a general statement of an event, but does not go into the details involved.
- 2) Upon a resurrection, there will be a Judgment Day for all (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).
- 3) After the Judgment, there will be the sentencing—either to life or death.
- 4) The saved will go to be with the Lord forever.

E. Comfort one another with these words.

- 1) Tell these truths to give comfort to believers.
- 2) It will be no comfort to unbelievers...as long as they remain in unbelief or disobedience.
- 3) Such helps to alleviate sorrow of the heart.
- 4) Only Christ and His Gospel can give true hope and assurance in death.
- 5) Someone may claim to give hope—but where is their evidence??????
- 6) We need to dwell on this bright and glorious hope for the believer.

WARNING AND COMFORT IN VIEW OF THE LORD'S RETURN (5:1-11)

A. Warning to the unbelievers (5:1-3)

- 1) The Lord has not given the time of His return to us.
- 2) He will return like a thief—unexpected—unannounced ahead of time.

B. Comfort to Christians (5:4-11)

- 1) In the first place, we are children of light and not darkness.
- 2) We should be prepared for His coming at any time.

- 3) Christians should not be like unbelievers:
 - a) We should be wide awake, fully aware, and watching for His return.
 - b) We should be prepared with the great protection of faith in God's promises.
 - c) We should be fully assured of God's love for us (Rom. 8:28-39).
 - d) We should be fully assured of our salvation in Christ.
- 4) God does not want us to be lost, but rather to be saved.
 - a) Jesus died to make this possible.
 - b) So, whether we are dead or alive at His coming, we will live with him.
 - c) We need to comfort and build each other up with these great truths.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Christian's Hope in death is based upon: (1) The fact of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 17:30-31) and (2) The promise of God in His Word for He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). What can an unbeliever base his hope in death upon? If you are not a Christian (not having obeyed the Gospel and remaining faithful), you have no basis for having this hope.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Ignorance is no basis for having surety in hope.**
- 2. The Christian is the only one that will be raised from the grave.**
- 3. The dead Christian is already with the Lord and does not have to wait for His return.**
- 4. The use of the word "asleep" indicates that the soul is asleep in death.**
- 5. The spirit of the dead go into Hades.**
- 6. The Lord's return for His people will be secretive and quite.**
- 7. The righteous dead will be raised first before the unrighteous dead.**
- 8. The living Christian will precede the dead Christian.**
- 9. We have been given sufficient information to know when the Lord will return.**
- 10. Our hope of a resurrection unto life is based upon Jesus' dead for us and His resurrection.**

Lesson Seven

“A Religion That Counts”**(Reading—1 Thessalonians 5:12-28)**

The word “religion” occurs at least three times in the King James Version of the New Testament (Acts 26:5; James 1:26; 1:27). The word “religious” occurs two times (James 1:26; Acts 13:43). The basic meaning of the term means “to bind back again.” It generally is that conduct of the mind and life that brings one into a relationship (fellowship) with God and makes him fit for living with God eternally. We can have a religion that is defiled and vain or one that is pure and undefiled. A religion that does not affect one’s life for the better is worthless! The religion of Christ has basic teachings that are critical to the whole structure of Christianity, but at the same time, it is a practical religion—it works, for it applies to one’s everyday life. In this last part of this letter Paul gives a lot of exhortations and admonitions on how the Christian is to live.

ATTITUDES & ACTIONS TOWARD OTHERS (5:12-15)**A. Toward Leaders in the church. (12-13)**

- 1) To know them—Not to be a stranger to them—show concern for—recognize them and their work by your attitude and actions.
- 2) To esteem them—To show them respect—show appreciation for them.
- 3) Very highly in love—special esteem and affection.
- 4) For their work’s sake—So their work won’t be done in vain—because of the kind of work they are doing—when done right it leads to saving souls.
- 5) The kind of work:
 - a) They labor among you—preaching, teaching, admonishing, encouraging you on your way to heaven.
 - b) They are over you—In the capacity in which they serve. They are showing a concern for your soul.

B. Toward one another. (13-15)

- 1) Be at peace among yourselves—Be peace-makers and peace-keepers. Avoid discord and a divisive spirit. Conduct your life as a peaceful person.
- 2) Warn the unruly—Admonish strongly the disorderly person. Those who are out of step with the will of God. Those who are out of line in their manner of life.
- 3) Comfort the feeble-minded—Encourage the faint-hearted, the disheartened, the downcast. Give a word of encouragement to the troubled, those ready to give up, and the dejected.
- 4) Support the weak—Give a helping hand to the waverer. Assist with understanding and directions.
- 5) Be patient toward all men—Give people time to grow and develop. Don’t expect too much too soon. Try to be understanding of them and their situation.
- 6) Don’t render evil for evil—Do not take revenge yourself. We are wrong when we return evil for evil. Do not take the law into your own hands.
- 7) Follow that which is good toward all—Show a kind, just, generous, and benevolent spirit toward all.

GENERAL EXHORTATIONS (5:16-22)

A. Rejoice evermore (16).

- 1) Be happy in your faith at all times.
- 2) Always be joyful—no matter what the circumstances.
- 3) Do not lose the joy of being a child of God even in the midst of afflictions.

B. Pray without ceasing (17).

- 1) Don't give up on prayer—persevere in it continually.
- 2) Don't allow your praying to be interrupted and become unimportant to you.
- 3) Be willing and able to pray at all times and in all situations.

C. In every thing give thanks (18).

- 1) Always find something to be thankful for in all situations of life.
- 2) Under all circumstances, give thanks to God.
- 3) Thank God, whatever happens.
- 4) Even thankful for trials and tribulations.

D. Quench not the Spirit (19).

- 1) Possible application:
 - a) Don't stop using the gifts of the Spirit among you.
 - b) Don't shut out His work in your life (through disobedience to His Word)
- 2) Today—let His influence in your life be seen by submission to His Teachings in the Word of God.

E. Despise not prophesying (20).

- 1) Don't over-rate other miraculous gifts above prophesying.
- 2) Do not reject or put down the preaching of the Word of God in plain language.
- 3) Preaching is God's means of converting the world (Romans 1:16).

F. Prove all things (21).

- 1) Test all you hear by the Divine Standard of God's Word.
- 2) Do not accept it because of the person or persons, but because it is God's truth.
- 3) Once proven, then hold on to truth no matter what others think.

G. Abstain from all appearance of evil (22).

- 1) Shun or reject or stay away from all forms of evil.
- 2) Have nothing to do with any kind of wickedness or wrong-doing.

FINAL REMARKS (5:23-28)

A. The God of Peace (23)

- 1) The one who is peace, who gives peace to mankind, and the one who makes peace possible.....
- 2) Sanctify you wholly—Make you clean through and through by the cleansing blood of Jesus upon your submission to the Will of God.
- 3) Your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless—Man is a triune being. Our whole being is responsible to God—to live right. If we will live right, God will preserve us in the Day of Judgment. We will be in a forgiven state—no blame attached to us at Jesus' return.

B. God is faithful (24).

- 1) What He says, He will do.
- 2) He can be depended upon.
- 3) He who calls you will not fail you.

C. Pray for us (25).

- 1) Paul was a man of like-passions as we are.
- 2) He needed the grace and forgiveness of God.
- 3) He wanted God's people to pray for him before the throne of God.
- 4) He, too, faced temptations, trials, tribulations, oppositions, discouragement, etc.

D. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss (26).

- 1) Show affection and concern for your brothers & sisters in Christ.
- 2) Keep your greeting towards each other on a high and sincere level.

E. Let this letter be read to all the holy brethren (27)

- 1) All needed to hear this read in their assembly—even other congregations.
- 2) Don't suppress its message—it is from God.
- 3) Let all have access to the Word of God.

G. The grace of our Lord be with you (28).

- 1) God's grace is continually needed in the life of the Christian.
- 2) It comes to those who continually submit themselves to the will of God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is not enough to profess religion, but we must live it. Religion is designed to change us all for the better and for our benefit here and hereafter. The Word of God gives clear instructions on how that is to be done. James warns us about hearing and not doing, believing and not obeying. Such is worthless!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. We are exhorted to know (become well-acquainted) with our leaders.
- ___ 2. We are to esteem them because of the position they hold.
- ___ 3. We are to write-off those that are weak and sickly.
- ___ 4. It is alright to return unto a person the same evil he brings upon you.
- ___ 5. It is a sin to let a man get away with doing evil.
- ___ 6. We are to rejoice in all situations or circumstances in life.
- ___ 7. A Christian cannot quench the Holy Spirit in his life.
- ___ 8. The phrase "appearance of evil" is not in the original language.
- ___ 9. God cannot be a God of peace and still punish evil men.
- ___ 10. Even Christians need the grace of God in their lives.

*Lesson Eight***“Introduction to 2 Thessalonians”****(Reading—2 Thessalonians 1:1-3)**

People like Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:5-13), through the centuries, have appealed to man’s curiosity about the things beyond this world...and especially about the future. These people often create great excitement in the minds of lots of people, and generally make a lot of money in the process from gullible people. This curiosity about the unusual and the future is in the realm of religion as well. There is not a one of us that is not concerned about what will happen to us after death. We all know one thing for certain—we will die! (Hebrews 9:27). But then what? What lies beyond death’s door for us? Is there any way to know for certain? The Word of God is the only reliable guide to give us the information that we need to know concerning future events. However, someone at Thessalonica, was trying to deceive people about things in the future in a similar way as Simon the Sorcerer—at least, trying to make a following. There is a good possibility that someone was pretending to have received a revelation “through the Spirit” (2:2) about future events that was not correct. Someone may have been claiming to be an Apostle or had a forged letter from an Apostle (2:2) that was not according to the teachings of the Holy Spirit of God. This needed to be corrected immediately—and so it was by a second letter to the Thessalonians.

THE DATE OF WRITING

The Apostle Paul was compelled to leave Thessalonica before he wanted to without being able to leave a fellow-laborer to continue to establish them in the faith. This concern continued to grow until he finally wrote his first letter to them from Corinth just a few months after the establishment of the church.

It is evident that the messenger that delivered the first letter gave a report of the condition then existing and the result of the first letter upon the church. Even though the first letter settled their minds somewhat about their dead loved ones, it did not stop the erroneous ideas of the second coming of Christ. If anything, it seemed to have fostered their idea that the coming of Christ was imminent. Somehow, one or more persons in their midst, had convinced many that Jesus would return at any time—so excitement was high. Persecution had not ceased and the coming of Christ would put an end to this. Some commentators suggest that some of the members of the church had actually quit work just waiting the Lord’s return. I have much reservation about this concept because of what the Apostle stated in the first letter. He saw that some were lazy and tended to want to live off of others. He warned them about such, strongly exhorted them to work with their own hands (like he had done among them), and they should tend to their own business—not everybody else’s (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). In the 2nd letter the Apostle reminds them of his example and what he had commanded, even then, that if a man will not work neither should he eat (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Paul would still be at Corinth (he was there for 18 months—1 Corinthians 18:11) when he wrote this second letter. It seems to again be only a few months in between the two letters. The date would be about AD 53.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING

The purpose for writing seems to be quite evident in view of what is stated in the letter. At least four things stand out:

- 1) To comfort them in persecutions;
- 2) To show Christ will not come until after the falling away and the man of sin be revealed;
- 3) To exhort them to steadfastness and obedience to that which HE had taught them;
- 4) And to admonish the disorderly and idle.

Even though the first letter and his preaching were quite clear on these matters, it seems that the Apostle had some opposition that was confusing the church. The 2nd letter seems to have done the job! One of the main attractions of this second letter is the revealing of the coming of the great apostasy and the vivid description of the man of sin that would help to bring about this apostasy. The first twelve verses of chapter two is work a detail study.

OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

I. PAUL AGAIN ENCOURAGES THE CHURCH (1:1-12)

- 1) Greetings and commends their growth
- 2) His prayer for them.

II. THE SECOND COMING CLARIFIED (2:1-17)

- 1) Falling away to precede Jesus' 2nd coming.
- 2) The reasons for the falling away.
- 3) Paul's thanksgiving for them and encouragement to stand fast.

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD DISORDERLY (3:1-18)

- 1) Paul's request for prayer and his confidence in them stated.
- 2) How to treat the disorderly and why.
- 3) Attitudes towards the disorderly.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

These two letters illustrate very clearly that all of God's teachings is not contained in one letter. It actually required two letters to give a fuller picture of the Lord's 2nd coming. But, even with two letters, all is not given on this important subject. Let's remember, it is important that we read and study from all of God's Word so that we can have a complete and correct understanding of things. Part of the problem at Thessalonica may have been that the first letter did not give enough information which opened the door for false teachers to teach and deceive God's people on such matters.

The study on the falling away before the Lord's return can be verified from history and we can clearly see the outcome of such. Studying about this and also about man's attempt to come back to God to believe and do His bidding is an exciting one.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The two letters to the church at Thessalonica were Paul's first two letters.**
- 2. Both letters talk about the Lord's imminent return.**
- 3. The letters indicate that members had stopped working because they believed that the Lord's return was imminent.**
- 4. The church's growth impressed the Apostle.**
- 5. The date for this letter was about AD 59.**
- 6. One of the reasons for the letter was over false teaching on worshipping Angels.**
- 7. Paul said that some in the church were busy bodies.**
- 8. It is possible that someone may have forged a letter from the Apostle to the church.**
- 9. The letter discusses the question of fellowshipping and disfellowshipping of people.**
- 10. Simon the Sorcerer had been teaching in this church.**

Lesson Nine

“Patient Faithfulness Greatly Rewarded”**(Reading—2 Thessalonians 1:3-12)**

The concern that the Apostle Paul shows for the church at Thessalonica is remarkable. Even with some of the problems that the church had, Paul was able to express his joy over them and their faithfulness to the Lord—especially in view of continued persecution. The first letter was sent to them by the hands of Timothy, who would have tried to help the church and then report on any problems that he was not able to help to finalize with them. So, a letter from an Apostle would be appropriate. This is what seems to have happened—another letter was needed. And it was sent soon after the first letter.

While the first letter dealt primarily with what will happen with dead Christians when Jesus returns, it does not go into any great detail like other letters were designed to do (1 Corinthians 15, 2 Peter 2-3, etc.). For some reason a wrong understanding about the coming of the Lord was still being advocated that would not cease. So, this 2nd letter from an Apostle had to be written to clarify and stop the wrong teaching.

PAUL EXPRESSES HIS ELATION OVER THEIR CONDITION (1:3-5)**A. Elation over their growth.**

- 1) Their faith in the Lord was becoming stronger and stronger.
- 2) Their love for one another was continuing to be expressed in a greater way.
- 3) Their growth so impressed Paul that he boasted of them to other churches.
 - a) He did not boast in their social rank, riches, or numbers.
 - b) But in what God’s grace had help to bring about in their lives.
- 4) To tell of what other churches are doing to serve God is:
 - a) Good, right, and proper.
 - b) It has a value in promoting the spiritual welfare of those who hear of such.

B. Elation over their patient & faithful endurance of affliction.

- 1) To be a faithful Christian in good times is commendable.
- 2) But to be faithful in times of affliction is praise worthy.
- 3) Their patience was shown by:
 - 1) Steadfast endurance in spite of persecutions.
 - 2) Calm submission to God’s will in view of their hope.
- 4) Their faithfulness was shown by:
 - 1) Their unwavering confidence in God.
 - 2) Their unwavering faith in the salvation to be found only in Christ.

C. Elation over the reasons for affliction.

- 1) Their patiently & faithfully enduring persecutions shows:
 - a) How JUST will be God’s judgment of their persecutors.
 - b) Clearly the need for God’s just judgment.
- 2) It also shows that they were worthy to be in the kingdom of God.
 - a) Not a matter of their meriting or deserving it.....
 - b) But they were living up to the call of God.

GOD'S JUDGMENT SOME DAY SHOWN TO BE RIGHTEOUS & JUST (1:6-10)

A. His Judgment of the unrighteous is just (6-7)

- 1) Rewards & punishments are not fully & properly carried out in this life.
 - a) The unrighteous prosper and escape punishment in this life.
 - b) The righteous suffer & are often persecuted.
 - c) Complete justice needs to be done....and it will come!
- 2) Punishment will be a righteous (proper) thing for God to do.
 - a) Their punishment will be richly deserved.
 - b) It will not be right for them to go unpunished.
- 3) Christians can take comfort in knowing that they will not go unavenged.
 - a) Souls under the altar crying, ***"How long, O Lord, will you not avenge..."***
 - b) Christians can rest in the assurance of God's just judgment to come.
 - c) They can find peace of mind, even in the midst of persecution, knowing they will not go unavenged.

B. The particulars of this judgment (7-9)

- 1) When will this punishment come?
 - a) When the Lord returns....when He is revealed in the heavens.
 - b) He will personally come and every eye shall behold Him.
 - c) Jesus first came as the Son of Man to seek and save the lost.
 - d) Then, He will come as the Risen Son of God to judge the world in righteousness.
 - e) He will come with his mighty angels:
 - He will come in power
 - He will raise all the dead
 - He will bring all into judgment
 - He will consign them to their eternal destiny.
- 2) What kind of punishment will it be?
 - a) In flaming fire (or possibly flaming glory)
 - b) He will take vengeance—do justice—it will be righteous judgment.
 - c) To mete out appropriate justice and punishment to the unrighteous.
 - d) It will be everlasting destruction—not annihilation.
 - It is appropriate punishment—eternal in its nature.
 - Eternal ruin of the soul.
 - e) From the presence of the Lord.
 - They cannot be in the special presence and keeping of God.
 - They will have no benefits that the righteous will have.
- 3) Who will be punished?
 - a) Those who know not God....they could have known, but chose not to.
 - b) They have no desire to know of Him or have a relationship with Him.
 - c) That obeyed not the Gospel—ignore his demands—reject his offer of salvation.

C. His judgment of the righteous will be just (10).

- 1) Reward for them will be proper and right.

- 2) When He returns:
 - a) He will be glorified in His saints (church—redeemed ones).
 - b) He will be admired by His saints—wondered at—praised.
 - c) Because He was believed on by the saints—They will partake of His glory.

PAUL EXPRESSES HIS WISH FOR THEM (1:11-12)

A. That God would count them worthy of His calling in that day.

- 1) Their calling by God through the Gospel was only the beginning of their road to glorification.
- 2) God called them, but they had to respond and live a life worthy of this calling.
- 3) They had to be steadfast to the end.
- 4) So...keep your life in harmony with your calling.

B. That God would fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness to them.

- 1) God is good to all men in a general way.
- 2) But to those who are His called, there is a fullness of His goodness to be given.
- 3) Paul wished for them that fullness.

C. That God would fulfill the work of faith with power.

- 1) That God's powerful blessings would come upon them because of their faith that was full of works.
- 2) Not a dead faith, but a working faith that brings God's power upon their lives.

D. That the name of Jesus be glorified in you.

- 1) His name may become more glorious by your faithful life in Christ.
- 2) That Jesus may be honored by the way we live.

E. That you may be also glorified in Christ.

- 1) The world does not honor you, nor Christ, now....
- 2) But in that day, both you and the Name of Jesus will be held in great honor.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The day of reward and punishment is coming. We have been given the assurance of such by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. We can be among the glorified ones at Jesus' appearing, or suffer the punishment of God because of our unbelief or disobedience. To be ready, we must live worthy of our calling.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. Paul actually boasted of these Christians to other churches.
2. He was especially impressed with their patient and faithful endurance of affliction.
3. When the Christian suffers, it shows his worthiness to be in the kingdom.
4. Punishment will be a righteous thing for God to do.
5. Everlasting destruction is defined as being away from the presence of God.
6. Obedience to the Gospel is necessary for one to be saved.
7. God will be glorified in His people in the Day of Judgment.
8. God is good to all men, but in a special way to His called people.
9. Both Jesus and Christians will be glorified in the Day of Judgment.
10. We should not expect the world to honor us in this life.

Lesson Ten

“The Great Apostasy Foretold”**(Reading—2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)**

Pride is what seems to have been a big reason for the fall of Satan (1 Timothy 3:6); but, it is also one of man’s greatest problems to deal with. So much emphasis is placed on man giving recognition to his true position in the eyes of God and man. God calls upon man to humble himself before Him (James 4:10). The wise man warns us that pride is what leads to man’s downfall also (Proverbs 16:18). The man of pride will bring about strife and hatred (Proverbs 13:10; 10:12). Jesus makes it very clear that a man must deal with his pride and become like a little child if he ever expects to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3). The humble are teachable, but the proud and haughty cannot be taught.

In these twelve verses is one of the best illustrations of the pride and haughtiness of man illustrated and spelled out clearly that will bring about a great falling away from God. These verses show that man can take something good and great and turn it into evil and wickedness for his own selfish, egotistical ends.

JESUS’ COMING IS NOT IMMINENT (2:1-3)**A. Don’t be alarmed or deceived into believing otherwise.**

- 1) He did not want their faith shaken by false ideas, especially about the 2nd coming.
- 2) Someone in their midst was advocating the immediate return of Christ and trying to use Paul’s statements and/or letters to back it up somehow.
- 3) He cautions them:
 - a) Don’t let anyone teach you falsely, claiming to have the Spirit of God;
 - b) Do not let anyone convince you that I have taught such false ideas;
 - c) Nor have I written a letter that teaches such.
- 4) Today, we have people just like these people:
 - a) They claim to know when the Lord will return.
 - b) They claim to have uncommon wisdom in interpreting obscure prophecies.

B. Before the Lord returns, there is to be a great apostasy.

- 1) A great defection from the faith is coming.
- 2) In order to fall away from something, you had to be a part of that something.
- 3) They were Christians, but they departed from the Truth.
- 4) This falling away would involve many, over a period of time—such is obvious in history.
- 5) It is a great tragedy when men will not listen to God and turn to their own ideas.

C. The man of sin will arise during this time of apostasy.

- 1) He will be revealed—made manifest—be made known....come to see his real self.
- 2) He is the incarnation of wickedness and lawlessness—a rebellious spirit.
- 3) His pre-eminence would come in the midst of apostasy.
- 4) It would be a gradual unfolding.

- 5) Not just a man, but a succession of men of the same purpose.
 - a) A single man could not accomplish what is described in the following verses.
 - b) He is to continue to the end of time.
 - c) All of them are of one mind—rebellion against the Divine Truth of God.
- 6) His (their) end is perdition—eternal ruin & punishment.
 - a) Be like Judas—claimed to be a follower of Christ, but betrayed Him.
 - b) Man of sin will claim to be a follower—but betray Christ for gain.
- 7) He is the embodiment of apostasy—and perpetuates it.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAN OF SIN (2:4)

A. He opposes God.

- 1) Ezekiel 28:2
- 2) He will openly oppose God's system of religion.
- 3) He will set up his own system of religion.
- 4) He will persecute and put to death those who oppose him.
- 5) NOTE: This is not a civil system, but a religious system.

B. He exalts himself above God.

- 1) He takes the derogatory of God.
- 2) He replaces God's Laws with his own laws.
- 3) He claims to have the authority of God—to be over God's people.
- 4) He also claims to be over kings, princes, magistrates, civil rulers.
- 5) His actions reflect his attitude—he is smarter and greater than God.
- 6) He accepts the worship that belongs only to God.

C. He takes God's place in the temple of God (Church is the new temple).

- 1) He becomes Lord over the church—its supreme authority on earth.
- 2) He even claims Divine attributes of God—Divine names of God.
- 3) He receives the honors due only to God.
- 4) Displaces the authority of God's word for his own authoritative words.
- 5) NOTE: These things have been fulfilled to the highest degree!

WHEN WOULD THE MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED (2:5-8)

A. Paul stated....*"I told you these things when I was with you."*

- 1) His views had not changed since he was there the first time.
- 2) He had warned them of such coming dangers (important enough to be among the first things taught by the Apostle).

B. Something is restraining him from coming into power now, but he will rise to power later.

- 1) We are not directly told what the restraining power was.
 - a) Early writers all understood that it was the Roman Emperors & Empire that restrained the man of sin from being revealed.
 - b) As long as the Empire centered in Rome, the man of sin could not come

forth.

- c) But when the capital was moved to Constantinople, the door was open.
- d) There could be no supreme power over the church and nations until the Roman Empire began to wane.
- e) The early Christians knew that when the Roman Empire dissolved and divided into nations that the man of sin would be raised in its place as the “holy” Roman Empire.

2) Mystery of Iniquity (Lawlessness).....

- a) Hidden rebellion was already in its beginning stages that would lead to the great apostasy and the man of sin.
- b) It would be like the “underground”:
 - Secretly working to undermine the True Religion of God.
 - Many indications of such in the New Testament Letters.

C. The man of sin comes into full view when the restraining power is removed.

- 1) He will come into power as the supreme power over the church.
- 2) His true person will become obvious.
- 3) He will be seen for what he really is—the usurper of God!
- 4) But his reign will come to an end.
 - a) It will greatly be affected by True preach of Truth to mankind again.
 - b) The greatest threat to His power is God’s truth being made known.
 - c) It shows him up for what he really is.
- 5) His final destruction will come at Jesus’ return.
 - a) Even though he will be greatly affected by God’s Truth being preached.....
 - b) He will still continue to exist as the man of sin unto the 2nd coming.

THE MEANS USED TO ATTAIN & HOLD HIS POSITION (2:9-10)

A. He works like Satan does.

- 1) He is the tool & dupe of Satan and does his bidding.
- 2) He is accomplishing what Satan wants done.
- 3) He identifies with Satan...originated by Satan.

B. With Power, Signs, & Lying Wonders.

- 1) He gains and holds great power and authority over people to his own ends.
- 2) He is able to enforce his will upon people.
- 3) He uses deceptive signs & wonders to deceive people into following him.
- 4) He uses such to uphold his usurping claims of authority.

C. With all kinds of deception, using unrighteous means.

- 1) He is guilty of unrighteous acts.
- 2) But he uses such to deceive people into following him.

D. He catered to people who did not love God’s truth.

- 1) People who preferred evil than good.
- 2) Who wanted to live ungodly & still think they could go to heaven.
- 3) People who prefer this religious system of error & delusion over the simple & pure Gospel of God.

THE END OF SUCH PEOPLE (2:11-12)

A. God will send them a strong delusion.

- 1) God allows them to be tested as to whether they want the truth or a delusion.
- 2) God allows them to be deluded, because He does not force people to believe His truth.
- 3) If they prefer a lie, God will let them follow that way without restraining them.

B. They will be condemned.

- 1) Judged, sentenced, condemned, punished.
- 2) They will suffer the consequences of believing a lie instead of Truth.
- 3) If they want to indulge in unrighteousness, then they will suffer the consequences.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Papal power over a religious-political system known as the “holy Roman Empire” is evident to those who are willing to open their eyes to the facts. Thankfully, God’s Truth is available and is being taught today to those who want to hear it. We need to ask ourselves if we really love and want the Truth. We show our answer by our actions and reactions to God’s Truth.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Paul gave an event that was to occur and then Jesus would come.
- ___ 2. The word “apostasy” has reference to a falling away.
- ___ 3. The term “man of sin” is referring to just one man.
- ___ 4. The end of the man of sin is perdition, eternal punishment, ruin.
- ___ 5. The man of sin gradually sets up his own religion in the place of God’s religion.
- ___ 6. The man of sin takes God’s place in the church.
- ___ 7. Paul stated that the restraints over the man of sin being revealed had already been removed at the time of the writing of this letter.
- ___ 8. The man of sin is able to perform real miracles to help deceive people.
- ___ 9. The people who can be deceived are those who do not love the truth.
- ___ 10. The people who follow the man of sin will suffer the same condemnation that he will suffer.

Lesson Eleven

“Being Chosen by God Brings on Responsibilities”

(Reading—2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5)

“With blessings come responsibility!” Jesus said: *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*” (Luke 12:48). There is no question that the Christian has been greatly blessed by becoming the chosen or elect of God—there is no greater privilege! It would also stand to reason that much will be required of us or expected of us!

But, when one looks at the spiritual war that is going on and the expectation of a falling away from God, God’s people should be on their guard and feel keenly the responsibility to appreciate what God has done to save us and faithfully hold on to what we have been taught. Those who continue in the doctrine of Christ have both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

HE REMINDS & ENCOURAGES THEM TO STEADFASTNESS (2:13-15)

A. Paul was thankful God had chosen them to be saved.

- 1) This choice was made from the beginning (Ephesians 1:4).
- 2) God made the decision to provide salvation for sinful man.
- 3) Man had nothing to do with this decision in the beginning.
- 4) Emphasis is placed on God’s part in man’s salvation—it was first!
 - a) This is the great reason for rejoicing and giving of thanks to God.
 - b) If God had not made that decision, no one could be saved.
 - c) We owe everything to God.

B. How they became the chosen of God.

- 1) Through sanctification of the Spirit.
 - a) Man is made holy, clean, and pure by the cleansing blood of Jesus.
 - b) But the Spirit of God teaches man (through the preached word) what to do in order to be among those who are cleansed.
 - c) Man has no power to cleanse himself from past sinful acts.
 - d) Only God, through the Spirit, can do this.
- 2) Through belief of the truth.
 - a) Man’s part is to hear and believe what the Spirit teaches. (Hebrews 11:6).
 - b) Without faith in this message, we cannot be among the chosen.
 - c) We become the chosen or elect of God through our belief of the Truth.
 - d) But faith without works is dead (James 2:14-24).
 - e) Man is cleansed by an obedient faith to the Gospel (Romans 16:17-18).
- 3) Man was called by God to become His chosen.
 - a) God calls through the preaching of the Gospel.
 - b) When we answer that call, we become His elect.
 - c) This call is unto glory with God!

C. Encouragement in view of these things.

- 1) Stand fast!
 - a) In the midst of trials & temptations, don't be moved from these things.
 - b) You have an important part to play in your eternal reward—so be steadfast!
 - c) Be faithful! (Revelation 2:10).
- 2) Hold the traditions!
 - a) Traditions—that teaching that was handed down to them by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) That which Paul had taught while he was with them.
 - c) That which was inspired by God.
 - d) That which Paul had written to them by inspiration of God.
- 3) Do not hold to the traditions of men!
 - a) That which has no apostolic authority behind it.
 - b) 2 Timothy 3:16-17

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING & PRAYER FOR THEM (2:16-17)

A. His thanksgiving

- 1) For God's love.
 - a) It was manifested by the sending of His Son to save us.
 - b) Expressed in actions—"in deed and in truth."
- 2) For His giving unto them everlasting consolation.
 - a) It was not temporary or soon to be gone.
 - b) It was a consolation that would last throughout eternity.
 - c) It was not just in this life, but after death as well.
- 3) For giving us a good hope through His Grace.
 - a) It is a good and desirable hope.
 - b) It is a hope that saves us (Romans 8:24).
 - c) It is made possible by the grace & mercy of God.

B. His prayer for them:

- 1) That God would comfort their hearts.
 - a) In the midst of trials and tribulations—they needed reassurance.
 - b) God was the source of that consolation.
 - c) So, lay hold on God's promises.
- 2) That God would establish them.
 - a) Make them firm and steadfast in their faith.
 - b) Give them understanding from His Word to stabilize them.
- 3) In every good word and work.
 - a) In every true doctrine from God.
 - b) In good works that God commands. "Be ready unto every good work."

PAUL'S REQUEST FOR THEIR PRAYERS (3:1-2)

A. That the Word of the Lord may have free course.

- 1) That it may run freely, unabated—no obstructions—every hindrance removed.
- 2) That it may have free course in men's hearts.

- 3) That it may spread rapidly over the earth—free and unimpeded (Colossians 1:23).

B. That the Word of the Lord may be glorified.

- 1) To be honored, respected, held in high esteem by those who hear it.
- 2) That it may appear glorious to them.
- 3) That men may see it's beauty, desirability—and accept it.
- 4) Even as you brethren did and eagerly accepted it.

C. That those who preach it may be delivered from unreasonable & wicked men.

- 1) Unreasonable:
 - a) Unwilling to be reasoned with about such great truths.
 - b) Who have distorted views of the gospel & oppose it.
 - c) Among both Jews and Gentiles—such was common.
 - d) They were constant obstruction to the furtherance of the Gospel.
- 2) Wicked men:
 - a) Not sincere—men of bad character.
 - b) Such do not opposed the truth out of sincerity, but meanness.
- 3) Paul desired to be delivered from such people, so he could continue preaching this message to all who would receive it.
- 4) It is quite obvious that not all men have the disposition of mind & heart to receive it.

SPECIAL THOUGHTS TO ENCOURAGE THEM (3:3-5)

A. The Lord can be trusted, for He is faithful.

- 1) Men are not always faithful, as God is!
 - a) We can see men reject the Gospel...show no interest in it.
 - b) We can see men who profess faith, but quickly fall away.
 - c) We can see those who profess faith, but do not really give themselves to the service of God.
- 2) Don't let that lead you to despondency.
 - a) Turn to God—look to Him for that faithfulness.
 - b) He is dependable:
 - c) He will establish you in the faith—if you will listen to Him.
 - d) He will keep you from the evil one's blotches—if you will listen to Him.

B. Paul expressed confidence in the Lord, and then in them.

- 1) He is assured of their obedience, now and in the future.
- 2) Not because they are so complete in themselves, but because they have the Lord working with and through them.
- 3) Paul's confidence in the Lord, helped him to be confident in them.
- 4) He was assured that they would be obedient to these commands.

C. Paul stated that the Lord would direct their hearts.

- 1) Into the Love of God or the love for God!
 - a) That their actions would spring out of love for God's mercy.
 - b) The highest motivation for obedience—Love for God!
- 2) Into patient waiting on Christ.
 - a) Same patience that Christ had at his trials, they needed such.
 - b) They needed patience to endure their trials in proper manner without wavering.
 - c) He was sure the Lord's help would make all of this possible.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is a great disappointment when people who respond to the glorious Gospel of Christ for a short time and then fall away. Every effort needs to be put forth to help people to be steadfast in the Truth. We are encouraged to help save a soul from death (James 5:20; Galatians 6:1).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. God chose to provide salvation for man before he ever created man.
2. Sanctification is the process of cleansing a person and setting them apart to serve God.
3. To stand fast and hold the traditions of men is the right thing to do.
4. God had given to these Christians everlasting consolation.
5. Paul says that hope can save a person.
6. Paul wanted the Gospel to have free course.
7. Paul wanted to be delivered from unreasonable and wicked persons.
8. Paul's confidence in the Lord helped him to be confident in the Thessalonian people.
9. Paul believed that God would direct their hearts into the love of God.
10. People can fall away from the truth and be lost.

Lesson Twelve

“Dealing with Disorderly Disciples”**(Reading—2 Thessalonians 3:6-18)**

Mankind has to struggle to have a balanced view and approach to some things. The usual practice at times is to go to extremes, rather than a balanced approach. It is these extremes that pose so much of our problems in society, in the home, but as well in the church. When trying to deal with the issue of using discipline to help correct the lives of God’s people, the reaction is often two-fold—one extreme or the other! People in the church will: (1) Ignore doing what they ought to do out of fear, etc.; or (2) be severe and nasty in exercising the discipline. We need a balanced view on how to discipline people to bring about the desired results of saving a soul from death. Inspiration gives us good instructions in this chapter on this issue.

GOD COMMANDS US TO WITHDRAW FROM CERTAIN PEOPLE (3:6)**A. A command:**

- 1) He had given a mild exhortation in his first letter to these people (1 Thess. 4:11-12).
- 2) Now, he is forced to come back with stronger language in regards to such.

B. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw yourself:

- 1) Do not forcefully throw him out of the church.
- 2) Do not injure his name or standing as a person.
- 3) Do not hold him up to ridicule or physical punishment.
- 4) Do not show a spirit of revenge towards him.
- 5) But withdraw yourself from him.
 - a) Cease to have fellowship with him.
 - b) Let him know that we cannot condone such actions on the part of a Christian.

C. From every brother who walks disorderly.

- 1) Not dealing with people in the world, but worldly-minded Christians.
- 2) Those who do not respect the headship of Christ and will not listen to His Will.
- 3) They are out of step—they walk contrary to the rules.
- 4) They will not follow the things handed down by the Apostles by inspiration.

PAUL’S EXAMPLE APPEALED TO (3:7-10)**A. They knew they should follow Paul’s example among them.**

- 1) They knew he was trying to be a devoted follower of Christ.
- 2) Such an example was worthy of being emulated.

B. His example detailed out in regards to this matter.

- 1) He behaved not disorderly among them.
 - a) His life was not out of step with the teachings of Christ.
 - b) He did not teach one thing, and do another.
- 2) He did not eat any man’s bread for naught.
 - a) He was not supported by the church to live in idleness.
 - b) He did receive support from Philippi—it was a blessing.
 - c) But Paul was not idle, but preached and taught the Gospel.

- d) In fact, most of the time, he worked night & day to earn money for his keep.
- e) The reason why he worked...so he would not be chargeable to any.
- f) He voluntarily did this, to be an example to them.
- 3) Not because we do not have the power to be supported.
 - a) Paul had the right to support while preaching the Gospel.
 - b) But, he gave up this right for a reason—for their good.
 - c) So that they would be impressed with this principle—“The responsibility to labor for what money we receive.”
- 4) The principle stated.
 - a) ***“If any would not work, neither should he eat.”***
 - b) He told them this when he was with them.
 - c) All who are able to work, must work.
 - d) We should not live off of others and be idle.
 - e) The church is not to support nor encourage such indolence.
 - f) Beggars, lazy people, bums, those living off others—reject.
 - g) Do not contribute to them to foster their indolence.

REASON FOR ADMONITION IN THIS LETTER (3:11)

A. Paul had seen and later heard about this condition among them.

- 1) The source is not directly revealed.
- 2) But Timothy & Silas both were in a position to pass this word on to Paul.

B. Had heard about some walking disorderly.

- 1) They were living irresponsibly.
- 2) “Not working at all.”
 - a) They were making no effort to work with their own hands.
 - b) Living off others.
 - c) Depending on others to sustain them.
- 3) “Were busybodies”
 - a) The idle have to find something to occupy their time.
 - b) They do not have their own work to do...so they butt into other people’s business.
 - c) Evidently---uninvited!
 - d) They failed to heed Paul’s advice in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.
 - To live quietly
 - Do your own business
 - Walk honestly towards all
 - So you will have lack of nothing needful.
 - e) Usually, this kind of people rarely do listen.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH TO DO ABOUT SUCH PEOPLE? (3:12-15)

A. Towards such people he has just been describing.

- 1) People who won’t listen to the plain teaching of God’s Word.
- 2) The following action is to be taken towards them.
- 3) It is to be done with the authority of Jesus behind it—in his name!

B. What such people are commanded to do about their own lives:

- 1) Work with quietness and calmness of spirit—not as busybodies, stirring up all kinds of commotions.
- 2) They are to eat their own bread that they have earned by their work—they were to be independent—be responsible.

C. What the church must do if they will not repent:

- 1) Don't be weary in well doing—don't become faint-hearted—don't be discouraged in doing right.
 - a) Don't be discouraged when you see brethren not doing right.
 - b) Don't let yourself become guilty of an attitude of disobedience also.
 - c) Even though some brethren are unworthy of being helped—don't let that keep you from helping those who are worthy.
- 2) Don't be discouraged because of problems...learn to discriminate.
- 3) Keep on doing well, right, helping those who deserve help.
- 4) This is a privilege and a blessing—it is like God, Himself.

D. What about those brethren who will not listen?

- 1) Note that man
 - a) Take note of such a person—be aware of his wrong actions.
 - b) Mark him out in your mind as a disobedient Christian.
- 2) Have no company with him.
 - a) Don't mingle with him as a brother in good fellowship.
 - b) Do not make him think he is a worthy member in good standing.
 - c) Do not consider him as an acceptable part of the group.
- 3) The Reason for such actions:
 - a) So that he may be ashamed.
 - Hopefully, he will be brought to his senses.
 - Make him aware of his ungodly type of living that brings shame on the name of Christ.
 - b) Yet, count him not as an enemy.
 - He is not an adversary.
 - He is not one to fight against as you would an enemy.
 - c) But, admonish him as a brother.
 - As an erring brother—one who has turned away from following Christ.
 - Show kindness, gentleness, and love—but firmness.
 - Our sympathy, pity, and prayers should be offered to and for him.
 - Our arms should be open to receive him back when he repents.

FINAL THOUGHTS (3:16-18)

A. Paul desired that the Lord of Peace would give them peace.

- 1) The church so desperately needed to be at peace.
- 2) The Lord was able to give it to them, if they would listen to Him.
- 3) His presence among them would be evident by their submission to His Will.
- 4) God's peace then could be continuous among them.

B. Paul signed the letter to authenticate it.

- 1) Whatever it was, they were able to recognize its authenticity.

2) Such guarded against forged letters.

C. He also desired God's grace to be with them.

- 1) God's people are continually in need of His Grace.
- 2) It continually comes to those who continually submit to His Will.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What an emphasis these verses give to:

- 1) The sanctity of labor;
- 2) The evil of being a busy-bodies;
- 3) The danger of becoming weary in doing right;
- 4) The need and value of right examples in doing God's Will;
- 5) The need of proper discipline for those who will not discipline themselves;
- 6) The great blessing of peace & grace to those who submit to God.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. A balance between two extremes is often not easy for people to see.
- ___ 2. God actually commands his people to withdraw our fellowship from certain persons in the church.
- ___ 3. Disorderly people are disobedient people.
- ___ 4. Paul used his own example on how to work and earn their own food.
- ___ 5. If a person can't work, he is not to be fed.
- ___ 6. Lazy people at Thessalonica were not a new thing to Paul.
- ___ 7. Paul did not want the faithful Christians to be discouraged from doing good by people who were not dependable.
- ___ 8. We are to try to shame the person who will not repent.
- ___ 9. He is to be treated like a heathen and unbeliever.
- ___ 10. Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who make for peace.

