

THESSALONIANS SESSION 2

Review: Last week we went through the first two chapters of this first epistle to the Thessalonians. This letter begins much more personally than Galatians or Colossians. Paul recalls his missionary journey there and how they received the gospel. That the preaching came in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. He wrote of his great love for them and how he had tried to come back to them but was hindered. He also wrote of their behavior among them...how that they went above and beyond to not be a burden to them and to be gentle and nurturing.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. *When Paul knew he could not get there to help establish these people and encourage them in the faith, he sent Timothy. According to Acts, Paul was only there three weeks, and it was his custom to go back and visit the churches that had been planted and pour more into them. So, he sends Timothy to encourage these people who are in afflictions and to establish them (get them grounded on truth).*

1 Thessalonians 3:4-5 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. *Paul reminds them that he taught them while he was there the first time that it's normal for Christians to suffer tribulation. Don't think it strange. He was very concerned that the tribulation they were going through might derail their faith. Tribulation does not ruin a Christian, it reveals one.* **Matthew 13:20-21** But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: *Timothy brought back a good report of these people's faith and charity. Afflictions had not deterred them, and they had fond memories of Paul and the people that accompanied him. Timothy's report was a comfort to Paul in his afflictions.*

1 Thessalonians 3:8-11 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. *Paul's great joy and pleasure was the well-being of these churches. He rejoiced in them continuing in the faith in the face of persecution. He says here that he is praying night and day for an opportunity to visit them and edify their faith so that they go on to maturity.*

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. *This chapter begins with the instructions in sanctification. When a person is saved, they experience justification immediately which is being declared right in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Sanctification is the process after conversion where we learn how to please the Lord with how we live. Paul writes that the commandments he gave them came direct from the Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: *The first commandment to Christians concerning sanctification is to abstain from sexual immorality. The Gentiles (pagans) were infamous for fornication in so much that the name "Corinthian" became synonymous with "fornicator". The Gentiles viewed satisfying lust on the same plain with eating when you are hungry. It was a part of their idolatrous worship and public houses of prostitution were common. Plural marriage was also common in most Gentile countries as well. The first commandment in sanctification is to possess your vessel (body) in purity. God has sanctified the marriage bed because it's within the confines of covenant -* **Hebrews 13:4** *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

1 Thessalonians 4:6-7 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. *The first commandment is purity, the second is honesty. To defraud someone is to take something wrongfully from them by deception; to cheat or withhold wrongfully from another what is due to him. The Lord is greatly displeased with dishonesty of all kinds and the warning here is that he is the avenger of all that are defrauded...meaning he pays the defrauder back.*

1 Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. *Anyone that despises these commands has a problem with God, not men because it was God that gave them.*

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; *The first commandment is purity, the second is honesty, and the third is charity. Paul commends them for possessing and displaying brotherly love to all the brethren in their region and encourages them to increase in it.*

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing. *Make it your ambition to be quiet, and to do your own business which is in direct contrast to the world's ambition which is to make a big stir and be busybodies. Work with your own hands – this is reference to the idea that the Thessalonian's expectation of the appearing of Christ was so immediate that they were laying aside labor because of it. Paul admonishes them to work, to mind their own business and that they live honestly towards the unconverted as well as the brethren.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. *The remainder of the chapter is the revelation of the rapture of the church, also known as "the appearing of Christ". The Holy Spirit directs his writing of this event as a comfort to the saints who are grieving the loss of saved loved ones. The word "rapture" comes from the Latin word "rapturo" which means to seize, snatch, or carry away. The Greek word "harpazo" is translated as "caught up" in these verses and it signifies a forceful taking or removal, often implying sudden and swift action. Before the Bible was translated into English, it was translated into Latin and that's the origin of the word "rapture".*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. *The saints that have passed from this life are present with the Lord now. The body is what sleeps, not the soul. The soul is ever conscious, and it departs to be with the Christ, but the body is what is left behind and we plant it in hope of the resurrection. This is NOT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST but it's what is*

called “his appearing”. At his appearance, he descends in the clouds with a shout and the trumpet sounds. The Old Testament trumpet was sounded to call an assembly, to gather the people together. The trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ rise from the grave (uniting the soul with a glorified body) first and then we which are alive at that time, will be caught up together with them in the clouds instantaneously being translated from a mortal body to a glorified one and we leave this earth.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. *The appearance of Christ for his church, the resurrection and the reunion of saints is what is meant to comfort the grieving. When loved ones leave us that knew Christ as their Savior, it still hurts because we suffer loss. It’s healthy to grieve and part of the healing process...the Bible teaches it, but it’s unhealthy to sorrow like the lost which have no hope. Yes, we will miss them while we are separated but we are comforted knowing we will be reunited to never be separated again. Praise the Lord!*