



1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-4:18

Encouragement and Growth

Outline – 1 Thessalonians 1-3

- I. Comfort and Encouragement to Persevere in Adversity (1-3):
 - A. Salutation (1:1).
 - B. **Remembrance:** Be encouraged by remembering (1:2-2:16).
 - C. **Comfort:** The Thessalonians' spiritual well-being and persistence was once a cause of great concern to Paul, but it is now a source of great strength and comfort (2:17-3:13).
 - i. Thessalonians were Paul's concern & joy despite absence (2:17-20).
 - ii. Timothy was sent to instruct and encourage Thessalonians (3:1-5).
 - iii. Timothy brought an encouraging report of Thessalonians (3:6-8).
 - iv. Paul personally drew strength from their success and prayed for their further spiritual growth and maturity (3:9-13).

“All Things Work Together For Good”

1. [Robert] Why was Paul unable to personally visit the Thessalonians according to his desire? Explain.

But we, brethren, having been **taken away** from you for a **short time in presence, not in heart**, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you – even I, Paul, time and again – **but Satan hindered us.** (2:17-18)

- Could be many things, but none certain (e.g., difficulties with brethren in Corinth, false teachers, persecuting Judaizers, ... **2 Corinthians 12:7-9**)
- All hindrances can be used to learn trust in Christ, reflect His glory (**Romans 8:28; James 1:2-8**).

“No Greater Joy”

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. (2:19-20)

2. [Jeremy] How were the Thessalonians Paul’s hope, joy, glory, and crown of rejoicing? How does this reflect upon our own priorities?

For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 John 3-4)

- Joy in Salvation and Growth of Others – **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**
- Do we have similar joy and desire? How do we get it?

“No one should be shaken”

3. [Jim] How could they avoid being “shaken”? Lessons for us?

Therefore, when we could **no longer endure** it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and **sent Timothy**, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to ¹**establish you** and ²**encourage you concerning your faith**, that ³**no one should be shaken** by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that **we are appointed to this**. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. (**3:2-5**)

- Timothy was sent to encourage them to help prevent this (**James 1:21-25**).
- No surprise. They were warned in advance (**Matthew 5:10-16**).
- Can we be “shaken” today? How can we avoid it? Warned in advance!

How can we avoid being shaken?

*“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. **But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them**. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.” (John 16:1-4)*

*“These things I have spoken to you, **that in Me you may have peace**. In the world you will have tribulation; but **be of good cheer, I have overcome the world**.” (John 16:33)*

- **Inevitable Persecution** – Friend of God, not the world (**James 4:4; John 15:18-25; 2 Timothy 3:12**).
- **Double-Check Affections** (**2Cor. 6:12-7:3; 1Jn. 2:15-17; Mt. 6:19-24; 1Tm.6:9-10**).

Was Paul's Faith Dependent Upon Them?

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and **brought us good news of your ¹faith and ²love, and that ³you always have good remembrance of us, ⁴greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you – therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now **we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.** (3:6-8)**

4. [Stephen] How would Paul's life be **dependent** upon the Thessalonians' steadfastness? (Explain verse 8.)
 - No, Paul was capable of standing alone (**2 Timothy 4:16-17**). How?
 - Jesus set such an example for us (**John 16:32**).
 - We're never alone (**Hebrews 13:5-6**)!
 - Their lives were intertwined, "hearts knit together" (**1 Samuel 18:1-4; Colossians 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:19; Romans 12:15-16**).

Blessing Unto Blessing

5. [Nathan] What 3 things did Paul wish or pray for the Thessalonians, and how are they related?

For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, night and day praying exceedingly that we ¹may **see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?** Now ^{1-again}may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, **direct our way to you.** And ²may the Lord **make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all,** just as we do to you, so that He ³may **establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. (3:9-13)**

- Paul's visit could help them grow to maturity, but the Lord would help too...
- Church tremendous source of protection, encouragement, joy (**Eph.4:11-16**).
- As we bless each other in the local church, others in turn bless us.



1 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 4-5

Outline – 1 Thessalonians 1-5

- I. Comfort and Encouragement to Persevere in Adversity (1-3):
 - A. Salutation (1:1).
 - B. **Remembrance:** The Thessalonians' conversion was worth remembering, and they should be encouraged by it, as was Paul (1:2-2:16).
 - C. **Comfort:** The Thessalonians' spiritual well-being and persistence was once a cause of great concern to Paul, but it is now a source of great strength and comfort (2:17-3:13).
- II. Doctrinal Explanations and Moral Admonitions (4-5):
 - A. **Continue:** Abound in purity, holiness and love (4:1-12)
 - B. **Comfort:** Certainty and timing of Jesus' return (4:13-5:11)
 - C. **Distinguish:** Treat others based on status and stature (5:12-15)
 - D. **Revelation:** Cling to God's Word and reject error (5:16-22)
 - E. Closing and Benediction (5:23-28)

Applications in Purity and Self-Control

6. [Tony] What is the first basic command that Paul brings to remembrance?
How would they “*abound more and more*” in keeping this command?

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that ***you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God. (4:1-5)***

- Gentile background: Pagan and idolatrous → Promiscuity
- “***Flee sexual immorality***” – **1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Proverbs 6:24-28**
- “***Make no provision for the flesh***” – **Romans 13:12-14**



Applications in Purity and Self-Control

6. [Tony] What is the first basic command that Paul brings to remembrance?
How would they “*abound more and more*” in keeping this command?

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that ***you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God. (4:1-5)***

- Gentile background: Pagan and idolatrous → Promiscuity
- “***Flee sexual immorality***” – **1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Proverbs 6:24-28**
- “***Make no provision for the flesh***” – **Romans 13:12-14**
- Adultery in the ***heart*** – **Matthew 5:27-30; Philippians 4:8**

“A Peculiar People”

7. [Joshua] What virtue should characterize the Christian’s purpose, manner of life, or mission, as identified by Paul here (verse 7)?

For this is the will of God, **your sanctification**: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality**; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel **in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles** who do not know God. **that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.** For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in **holiness.** (4:3-7)

- **Sanctification** – act or state of being holy, set apart, special

But you are a **chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, His own **special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9; also, 1:16; Ex. 19:5-6; Titus 2:11-14)

- Our behavior will naturally separate us from everyone else (1 Peter 4:4).

“Taught by God”?

Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God**, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. But **concerning brotherly love** you have no need that I should write to you, for **you yourselves are taught by God to love one another**; (4:8-9)

8. [Lenoard] How were the Thessalonians “taught by God”? Can we receive the same today? If so, how?

- May refer to revelation by miraculous gifts (**1 Corinthians 12-14**).

Paul’s epistles represented God’s Word (**1 Corinthians 14:37-38; 1 John 4:1-6**).

- Therefore, **all** can today be “taught by God” (**John 6:45; Isaiah 2:3**).

Oh, how I love Your law! **It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies**; For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, **For Your testimonies are my meditation**. I understand more than the ancients, **Because I keep Your precepts**.
... for **You Yourself have taught me**. (Psalm 119:97-102)

“First Gave Themselves to the Lord”

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that **you increase more and more**; that you also aspire to lead a **quiet life**, to mind your own business, and **to work** with your own hands, as we **commanded you**, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing. (4:9-12)

9. [Larry] How might the Thessalonians have demonstrated love “toward all the brethren who are in Macedonia”?
- **Benevolence** – **2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:1-5**
- **Evangelism** – **1 Thessalonians 1:8; John 21:15-17**
- Success in these was coupled to quiet, diligent, thoughtful, mature life.