

Warn the Unruly, Comfort the Faint, Uphold the Weak; Patience w/ All: 1 Thess 5:12–28

Dr. John Niemelä Grace Chapel www.mol316.com January 21, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Author of 1 Thessalonians: Paul

Recipients of 1 Thessalonians: A new church in Thessalonica comprised of new believers

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica: Acts 17:1–10: November 50–January 51 (cf. earlier messages)

Dates of First and Second Thessalonians: 1 Thess: Early summer 51 2 Thess: Summer 51

Occasion of First Thessalonians:

After Paul left Thessalonica, the church came under strong persecution. Opponents charged that Paul had fleeced & abandoned them. Furthermore, some within the congregation died. They feared that the tribulation had begun and about whether they would be reunited with deceased believers.

Thematic Statement: 1:9–10

<i>How you turned to God from idols</i>	(2:1–3:13)	The relationship between Paul & them
<i>to serve the living and true God</i>	(4:1–12)	Continue serving the Lord
<i>and to wait for His Son from heaven</i>	(4:13–5:11)	Expect the pre-trib rapture

Review

(1:2–10) Paul prays thankfully because they apply the word in love, await the Lord's deliverance & are elect; specifically, his message had power & assurance by the Holy Spirit, which they perceived in Paul's demeanor among them; so they followed Paul & God, after receiving that message in affliction, so they became examples to believers in Greece & elsewhere, so others speak of their faith: specifically, of Paul's entrance to the Thessalonians who now serve God & patiently await the rapture

(2:1–12) Paul's entry to Thess was productive, despite sufferings because, God entrusted Him to share truth, so Paul pleases God (bels' judge); he did not flatter (for gain) nor seek \$ befitting an apostle, but was gentle as a nursing mother w/ own infant, seeking to impart word & his very life, because he loves them, evidenced by his laboring to avoid burdening them; they know his integrity among them as a father directing his own children to live worth of God who calls them to the kingdom

(2:13–16) Paul thanks God that they welcomed His word, in which they were like Judean churches in facing persecution by their countrymen who opposed God & people, killing & hindering those God sent

(2:17–20) Paul tried to return to Thess, but anticipates being w/ them in kingdom, because he loves them

(3:1–13) After leaving Thessalonica, Paul sent Timothy to establish and encourage them, so their afflictions (to which—as Paul had said—bels are appointed) would not deter them (that Satan had not caused defection that would nullify Paul's sufferings & labor that they be rewardable); Timothy returned to Paul with good news which encouraged Paul, who rejoices that they stand firm and who prays that he may come to edify them and also prays that their mutual love increase, so the Lord will establish them in preparation to returning with Him at second advent

(4:1–12) [Based upon their initial response to Paul coming & their progress, he urges them to abound still more in obedience; [specifically], they are to abound still more obeying God's will (to be [sexually] holy) by abstaining from sexual immorality; [specifically,] bels are to gain (sexual) control of their own bodies in sanctification and honor, rather than being controlled by passionate lust as w/ Gunbels; lest we defraud brethren in this, because God (who called us to holiness, not to uncleanness) disciplines, as He warns; this, rejecting this isn't merely rejecting man's word, but the word of God who gave us the HS Paul does not need to inform them of the command to love one another, because they are already God-taught to love the brethren & their love abounds for Macedonian bels, but it should abound still more, that they aspire for a quiet life, being occupied with their own business & in productive work, as Paul commands, that they would conduct themselves properly toward unbelievers & would not lack

(4:13–18) We should know about bels who sleep (die) lest we grieve (hopelessly) as unbels who lack expectancy; belief that JC rose certifies that God will (w/ Christ) raise dead bels; that is, bels who remain on earth [at rapture] will not precede dead bels; that is, JC will descend audibly; dead bels will rise 1st, then bels who remain will be caught up w/ JC in clouds to meet JC in air, so we will be w/ JC always; so rapture should comfort bels

(5:1–11) They had no need for teaching on the times & seasons, because they already knew that the DoL will come w/o warning: that is, inescapable destruction will come suddenly when people say *Peace & safety!*; they are not in darkness, so DoL cannot overtake them, because they are sons of light; bels must not be lethargic (as unbelievers are), but alert & sober, because lethargy and drunkenness are night activities; so bels should remain sober by putting on faith, love & expectation of pre-trib rapture, because God did not appoint us for wrath (DoL), but to obtain (pre-trib) deliverance thru LJC, that we should live together w/ Him (whether we are alert or lethargic); we should comfort & edify one another (with these words) as the Thessalonians did

NEW EXPOSITION**(5:12–13) Bels ought to recognize and esteem their leaders & be at peace w/ one another**

Harmony with leadership

Leaders are those who labor among them, who are over them, and who admonish

Harmony with each other

(5:14) Leaders (and others, as appropriate) should patiently warn the unruly, patiently comfort the fainthearted, patiently uphold the weak

To whom is this verse addressed?

How did Paul describe leaders?

How do we balance this?

(5:15) Leaders (and others, as appropriate) should be sure that believers do not retaliate, but edify themselves and one another**(5:16–18) Believers should rejoice, pray, and give thanks [to God] in all things (as the Lord wills for us in Christ Jesus)**

(5:19–22) Believers should not quench the (Holy) Spirit (that is, they should not despise prophecies that originate from Him), they should test all things (said), holding onto good, (prophetic content), but abstaining from bad (prophetic content)

Quenching the Holy Spirit must be interpreted contextually

At the time 1 Thessalonians was written, there were still NT prophets

Today, there are no prophets, but we still possess Scripture written by NT prophets

How would they test prophetic content?

1 Thessalonians does not talk about this, but two other NT passages discuss this issue

1 Corinthians 12:10

1 John 4:1–3

EXCURSUS 1

Point 1: The gift of prophecy ceased in the first century

Point 2: Apostles and prophets were the foundational gifts (who wrote the NT)

Thus, even though no prophets live today, their writings do

END OF EXCURSUS 1

(5:23–24) Paul prays that God will sanctify them entirely at the *parousia* of the Lord, which our faithful God (who called them) will do (this for faithful believers)

They have eternal security. This passage speaks of rewardability.

Spirit, soul, and body is another way of saying “whole person”

EXCURSUS 2 (Paul does not here tell us about the meaning of spirit)

Body = physical body

Soul = seat of life

Spirit = the part of a person with awareness

1 Corinthians 2:10–11

END OF EXCURSUS 2

(5:25–26) They were to pray for Paul and to greet all the brethren in an appropriate way

(In the U.S.A., a handshake or a hug is fine)

(5:27–28) They were to read the letter to all the holy brethren (believers); to whom Paul wishes grace from the Lord Jesus Christ

CONCLUSION

They are to respect their leaders; to be at peace with each other; to edify one another; to rejoice, pray, and give thanks to God; to embrace biblical revelation, while shunning false content; that they may be sanctified fully at the *parousia* of the Lord