

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 7TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

ROMANTIC LOVE (1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8)

"ADDITIONALLY THEN..."

Paul closed out the portion of his letter where defended himself, explained his absence, and his reason for sending Timothy. Now he moves into practical instruction on how God wants His people to live.

- We should always examine scripture for the practical applications for how we live our lives in the present world.

"...DO THIS EVEN MORE..."

Paul recognized that the young church received instruction on how to live and responded in obedience. However, he still urged them to do "this" even more.

- As Christians we should never be satisfied with the bare minimum, but always "go the extra mile" and give more than what is required. (Matt. 5:41)

WITHOUT EXCUSE

Paul says, "for you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus." Meaning you know how you should conduct yourselves, so you are without excuse.

- With the affluence we have as a nation and the availability of the Word, we are absolutely without excuse.

SEXUAL PURITY

The instruction from Paul for the Thessalonians to remain sexually pure was given in a 1st century Roman culture that was known for its sexual immorality.

- Though the virtues we are to uphold may be foreign to our society, we take our standards of sexual morality from God and not from the culture around us.

Paul made it very clear what the will of God was for Christians. Our sanctification was to be set apart from the sexual immorality of the world to be used for the work of God.

- We are to abstain from any sexual immorality (Gk. porneia), therefore living differently than those "who do not know God."

REASON #1 FOR SEXUAL PURITY

God is an "avenger of all these offenses." We can trust that God will punish sexual immorality, and that no one gets away with this sin, even if it is undiscovered by man.

- "For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known and come to light." (Luke 8:17)

REASON #2 FOR SEXUAL PURITY

God has not "called us to impurity but to live in holiness." Our call is to holiness and not uncleanness, therefore sexual immorality is inconsistent with who we are in Christ.

- This thought was shared by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:9-20, where he concludes with, "You are not your own, for you were bought at a price, so glorify God with your body."

REASON #3 FOR SEXUAL PURITY

To reject God's call for sexual purity is not a rejection of man, but of God Himself. Despite the ways to try to justify or rationalize sexual immorality, we still reject God and His design when we sin this way.

- God created sex to be a holy union between husband and wife, and anything outside of His design creates destruction.

REASON #4 FOR SEXUAL PURITY

We have been given "His Holy Spirit," Who empowers the willing, trusting Christian to overcome sexual sin.

- Through His Spirit we have the resources necessary for freedom over such things We are responsible for using those resources, while taking care not to grieve the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:30)

BROTHERLY LOVE (1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12)

NO NEED TO WRITE...

Paul commended the Thessalonians, saying that when it came to brotherly love, he did not need to say a thing.

- The Greek word Philia used here is an affection marked by strong action (1Jn 3:18). This word describes a people who meet the needs of others, with more than empty speech or superficial socializing.

DIRECT WORK OF GOD

The Thessalonians did not need Paul to instruct them on brotherly love, not only because they were already living it out, but because God had already taught them.

- This refers to the direct ministry of God by His Spirit to those who belong to Him. "God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (Rom 5:5)

"DO THIS EVEN MORE"

Once again, Paul urges this young church to love more radically than they had already been doing. This again speaks to the reality that spiritual maturation never ends.

- There will always be the challenge to move forward and do more of what Christ has commanded. We all need to keep growing in love.

LIVE A LIFE OF GOOD WORK

Paul teaches that we should "seek to lead a quiet life." This means we should have properly guided aspirations or ambitions in life that lead to peace and contentment.

- The seeking should be for the kingdom of God, knowing that everything else will be provided (Matt. 6:32-33) including true contentment (Phil. 4-12-13).

Paul turns his attention to the problem of meddlesomeness, reminding the Thessalonians to "mind [their] own business."

- "There is a great difference between the Christian duty of putting the interest of others first and the busybody's compulsive itch to put other people right." (Bruce)

Paul tells the Thessalonians to work hard so that those who are "outsiders" will see our example and be influenced to become followers of Jesus.

- We don't labor to receive favor from God or earn our salvation, but we work in a way that people take note of and glorify God (1 Peter 2:12).

HIS RETURN (1 THESSALONIANS 13-18)

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Paul wanted to clear up some misunderstandings that the Thessalonian church had about death and the return of Christ Jesus.

- Apparently, this young group of believers felt that if someone died before the return of Christ, they would miss out and were at a disadvantage.

Sleep was a common way to describe death in the ancient world. However, the pagan world viewed this as eternal.

- Paul encouraged these young believers, to not be sorrowful, like the pagans "who have no hope," but have assurance that Christians who have died still live. "To be absent from the body means to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. 5:8)

THE CONTRAST

Notice when Paul describes the death of a believer, he calls it sleep, but did not soften Jesus' death by calling it sleep.

- This tells us that because He died and rose again, we will certainly live, because He has conquered sin and death. Therefore, we do not sorrow, but have a hope that says, "death where is your sting?"

CLARIFICATION

What Paul is not speaking to is the timeline of these events, but by saying that those "who are alive will not precede those who have fallen asleep," he is saying that there is no disadvantage to those who are asleep.

- God will allow for those who are asleep to share in the glory of the "coming of the Lord."

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

Paul said we are to "encourage one another with these words." The hope of Christ's return was meant to inspire us to live differently, to love differently, and persevere during hardships.

- Instead, we take passages of hope out of context and allow them to cause division and arguments.

INVENTORY

- **Are we willing to give more than what is required for God, Who gave it all?**
- **Are we making excuses for our conduct?**
- **Is the hope and expectation of Jesus' return enough to inspire us to live and love differently than the decaying culture around us?**
- Romans 8:38-39