

11/28/99

1Thessalonians 5:12-28

One of the greatest aspects of Paul's ministry is that he was very practical, even as we will see in the closing of this epistle.

- He first gave us the personal and historical account. Ch. 1-3

- He then gave us the instructional and practical. Ch. 4-5

There are too many Christians today professing or trying to be spiritual without being practical.

And when I say practical, I mean obedient to the full council of God, every aspect of God's Word.

Last time, we said that chapter five gave to us the coming of Christ in relation to God's wrath, and we saw that very vividly in the first eleven versus, pertaining to the non-believer.

But let me suggest to you that in this closing section Paul gives to us equally some of the things that displease God, in the believer. 1Thess. 5:12-28

5:12-15 Regarding the leadership.

5:12 The responsibility of the people in the church towards the leadership.

- 1) To recognize them.
 - a) It means to acknowledge who they are for the call and office.
 - b) It means to know who they are, who are called and serve in the office.
 - c) It means to know, in terms of their value to the church.
 - d) He is addressing the Christian body, "brethren".
 - e) He addresses them with a sense of urgency.
 - * These are elders, the aged men and bishops who oversee the church body.
- 2) The men were those who labor among them. 1Pet. 5:2
 - a) Those who labor with them, in their midst and for them.
 - b) The word labor, means to toil till weary.
- 3) The men were those who are over them, in the Lord.
 - a) In authority to handle the situations that arise.
 - b) In authority to make decision's regarding church matters. 1Tim. 5:17-18
 - c) In authority to oversee the church body for protection and order. Acts 20:17; 21:18

* Vested to them by Jesus and limited by the Scriptures, not beyond them!

- 4) The men were those who admonish them.
 - a) The word admonish “noutheteo” has the idea of strong encouragement bringing to mind what they know or for failure based on knowledge possessed, for repentant obedience.
 - * It is translated “warn you”, in verse fourteen.
 - b) These are most likely elders, but we must include delegated authority to other men, deacons, etc.
 - 1) Men as any other yet called to be accountable. 1Pet. 5:1-5
 - 2) Men who had to meet certain qualifications. 1Tim. 3; Tit. 1
 - * It is interesting that despite of only being there three weeks, elders and leadership had been set up.
 - 3) In the first missionary journey they ordained elders. Acts 14:23
 - 4) Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain elders. Tit. 1:5
 - 5) The pattern comes from the Old Testament, when God placed his spirit in 70 men to help Moses lead and oversee the people. Num. 11:25

6) A group of men accompanied Saul after his anointing, whose heart God had touched. 1Sam. 10:26

5:13 The attitude of the people towards leadership.

- 1) To esteem them very highly in love.
 - a) The word esteem “hegeomai” means to deem, consider, account or to think towards them.
 - b) The degree is “highly in love”, with the love of God “agape”.
 - c) The reason is, for their works' sake, in leading, overseeing, admonishing and teaching.
 - d) Accusations are to not be brought forth lightly or flippantly, nor the laying of hands on anyone to lead. 1Tim. 5:19-22
 - * Because they do this for their good and protection, as God has called them!
- 2) To be at peace among themselves. Rom. 12:18
 - a) The people with the leadership.
 - b) The leadership with them people.
 - c) The people with the others in the body.
 - b) Don't stir strife and dissension among the brethren.
 - 1)) This if for mutual good relations. Heb. 12:14; 13:17

- 2)) No one is to receive an accusation against an elder, but before two or three witnesses. 1Tim. 5:19

5:14-15 Regarding Body ministry

5:14 The responsibility is primarily of the leaders but every believer is to exercise this in love by way of encouragement.

- 1) To warn those who are unruly.
 - a) The word unruly “ataktos” means the disorderly.
 - 1)) The term is used in the Greek for a military soldier who would not keep his rank.
 - 2)) The term was also used in Greek society for those who did not show up for work. 1Thess. 4:11-12;
2Thess. 3:6-15
 - b) The responsibility is to warn “noutheteo”, which means to confront, reproof and rebuke if need to have them repent and give the proper directive. Gal. 6:1
- 2) To comfort the fainthearted.
 - a) The word fainthearted “oligapsychos” means of little soul, those who are discourage easy in adversity, feeble minded. 1Thess. 4:18
 - b) Those who perhaps by the persecution were shaken up. 1Thess. 2:14

- 3) To uphold the weak.
 - a) The word uphold “ “ means to hold oneself against or opposite of another so as to sustain him.
 - b) The reference is regarding those who are weak in their faith due to being new born or lack of maturity or weak in conscience regarding their liberty.
 - c) Paul addressed this regarding meats and various other things, such as days, meats, drinks. Rom. 14:1; 15:1; 1Cor. 8:9, 11-13
- 4) To be patient with all.
 - a) Those mentioned be patient “makrothumeite”, even tempered or long-suffering by God’s Spirit. Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12
 - b) All others that have to be dealt with regarding their Scriptural responsibility.
 - c) The unbeliever also is included. 1Pet. 2:17

5:15 The character of the believer.

- 1) The believer is to see that he or she renders evil to no one.
 - a) Not to the unbeliever.
 - b) Not to the believer. Matt. 5:38-42;
Rom. 12:14; 1Cor. 4:12; 6:7
* The eye for eye and tooth for tooth was a limitation on one’s

retaliation not a command to do so! Ex. 21:23

c) We are not to retaliate. Rom. 12:9, 17-21; 13:10

* Not rendering evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 1Pet. 3:9

6) The believer is to always pursue what is good, meaning profitable and beneficial, both for himself and for all.

a) This is the discipline of obedience to God's word by a consistent practice.

1) Jesus said, "What do you more than others or the tax-collectors?" Matt. 5:47

2) The word pursue "diokete" means eager to do all in one's energies in seeking the good, literally to chase.

b) This is done by yielding to both the power and love of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22

1) The Thessalonians were the persecuted church. Heb. 13:21

2) Jesus said, "Love one another even as I have loved you!" Jn. 15:12

5:16-22 Regarding The Christian life.

5:16 The daily challenge.

1) The believer is to rejoice.

a) Joy is the by product of the Holy Spirit of God and often comes through tribulations. Rom. 5:3-5

b) Joy is the first manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22

c) Joy is not premised on outward circumstances or situations.

d) Joy is distinct from happiness, which is based on feelings and emotions related exterior circumstances and situations. Jn. 16:22

2) The command is qualified by the word always.

a) The command is possible. 2Pet. 1:3-4
* Paul tells the Philippians, "Rejoice always and again I say rejoice, Paul was in a Roman prison!" Phil. 4:4

b) The command expresses our rejoicing in God for His faithfulness, not over the tragedy or sad event.

* Nehemiah says, "The joy of the Lord is our strength." Neh. 8:10g

5:17 The life line of the believer.

1) The believer is to pray, again an imperative command.

a) Prayer is a privilege and essential and is comparable to breathing.

- b) We should have a set time to pray.
- c) We need to pray as the need arises.
- 2) Prayer is qualified, without ceasing.
 - a) This does not mean twenty-four hours a day.
 - b) This means we need to walk in attitude of prayer. 1Thess. 1:2; 2:13
 - c) This part of the amour of God. Eph. 6:18
 - d) This means that we are to be ever dependent on God for everything.
 - * 1Thess. 3:11-13; 2Thess. 2:16, 17

5:18 The perspective of the believer.

- 1) In everything give thanks. Rom. 8:28
 - a) Seeing that God is in control of the believer's life.
 - b) This presupposes a walk of obedience not perfection.
 - c) Knowing God is working for the good of the believer.
 - d) Thanks reveals our attitudes and gratitude towards God!
- 2) This is the will of God.
 - a) He expresses His will but does not force us against our wills.
 - b) His will is to be the utmost priority of the believer's life. Rom. 12:1-2
 - c) The unbeliever in his sinful nature is unthankful. Rom. 1:21

5:19 The constant potential of the believer.

- 1) Do not quench the Spirit is in the present imperative, literally, stop putting out the Spirit's fire, a practice going on.
 - a) The believer still possesses a sin nature, throughout his life.
 - b) The believer can live above the domination of sin, only by yielding to the Holy Spirit.
- 2) The imagery is vivid.
 - a) As if to put water over a fire.
 - b) The application is don't limit or oppose what the Holy Spirit wants to do.
 - c) Paul tells the Ephesians to not grieve the Holy Spirit, not to bring pain to it. Eph. 4:30
 - * It is a lot harder to change my attitude than my actions, if a change my attitude, then the actions go away!

5:20 The contempt of the believer.

- 1) Do not despise prophecies.
 - a) d) Perhaps some in the church were questioning the gifts and even repressing the use of gifts, as well as despising the proclamation of the word? 1Cor. 12-14

- b) Prophecy in its primary function, even in the Old Testament was speaking forth the mind of God.
- c) The secondary function was to forth-tell future events.

2) The command is in the New Testament but it still has the same priority.

- a) It applies to the speaking forth of God's word through preaching and teaching.
- b) Its function is three-fold; for edification, exhortation and comfort. 1Cor. 14:3
- c) Its function for future Biblical revelation, in addition to the present canon which is inerrant and infallible is no longer valid but for people personally, God still speaks, even as Agabus the prophet revealed the suffering of Paul. Acts 21:11
- d) Paul places prophets next to the apostles according to God's order in the church, but being the foundation of the church, in one sense. 1Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20

5:21 The precaution of the believer.

1) Test all things.

- a) The command is to prove and discern the legitimacy of what is heard of seen, source and origin of the

prophecy, checking to see if it is Scriptural and if it bears witness with what God is doing in one's life and to wait and let God fulfill it not oneself. 1Cor. 12:2-3

- 1) This is not the gift of discerning of spirits as some teach but a mere practical command to judge everything by the Scriptures.
- 2) The gift of discerning of spirit deals with the occult and familiar spirit, able to discern demon possession and exorcism. 1Cor. 12:10

b) The source of all things, anything attempting to be passed off to be of God, be it new revelation, experience oriented theology that is based on emotionalism, which clearly contradicts the Scriptures.

2) Hold fast what is good.

- a) The command focuses on personal tenacity based on responsibility, "hold fast".
- b) The Scriptures are the standard not a person. 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Pet. 1:20-21
- c) The wise thing to be is a good Berean. Acts 17:11
- d) The reason being is that not every spirit confesses that Jesus is coming in the flesh. 1Jn. 4:1-3

5:22 The obligation of all believers.

- 1) Abstain from every form of evil.
 - a) It refers to every kind of activity that would call one's faith to question.
 - b) In the context, it must refer to false doctrine proclaimed and quenching of the Spirit.
 - c) Any and every appearance that would detract from our relation to Christ should be shunned, for the sake of not giving a wrong understanding of Christianity. 1Cor. 5:5
 - d) It implies that there is to be a difference between the believer and the non-believer. 1Thess. 4:3
- 2) The reason being is that we are a new creature. 2Cor. 5:17
 - a) We are the salt of the earth. Matt. 5:13
 - 1)) Salt stops the breakdown of decay.
 - 2)) Salt preserves from decay.
 - b) We are the light of the world. Matt. 5:14
 - 1)) Light attracts.
 - 2)) Light dispels darkness.
 - 3)) Light exposed what is hidden.

5:23-28 **Regarding the closing exhortations and benediction.**

5:23 The prayer of Paul and the goal of the God of peace for the believer.

- 1) To sanctify the believer completely. 1Thess. 5:23
 - a) The word sanctify means to set apart for God, through and through. 1Thess. 4:9-12
 - b) The degree is completely, entirely in every area and life duration, through the truth of God's word, not a portion of one's life. Jn. 17:17
- 2) He qualifies the sanctification specifically.
 - a) Your whole spirit, being uppermost, the new creature.
 - b) Your whole soul, involving the intellect, emotions and the will being submissive to the word and will of God.
 - * Conscience is callused, darkened and seared in life and it must be recalibrated to God's word!
 - c) Your body is physical instrument that manifests is used to yield to sin or God. Rom. 12:1
- 3) He gives the purpose, to be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a) The word blameless "amemptos" means unrepachable, without charge or cause for censure.

- b) The possibility is not a person's perfection but the ongoing confessing of sin to Christ. 1Jn. 1:9; 2:1
- c) The time is at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - * The word for coming is "parousia", used of a royal visit by an emperor. 1Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23
- 4) This will all be the result of;
 - a) Submitting to leadership. 1Thess. 5:12-13
 - b) Accountability. 1Thess. 5:14-15
 - c) Scriptural and right attitude. 1Thess. 5:16-18
 - d) Ongoing obedience. 1Thess. 5:19-22
 - e) Complete sanctification. 1Thess. 5:23
 - f) By God doing it. 1Thess. 5:24

5:24 The confidence of the believer.

- 1) The assurance of God's faithfulness as Creator and redeemer, regardless of the difficulties. Rom. 8:29-31; Phil. 1:6; 1Pet. 4:19; Jude 24
- 2) The yielding co-participation of the believer. Phil. 2:12-13

5:25 Paul's closing request.

- 1) It is addressed to the brethren, those who know Jesus and have audience with Him.

- 2) It involves prayer for himself and those with him.
 - a) Paul saw himself as one of the members of the body, in need of help.
 - b) Paul always asked and depended on prayer from others. Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3; 2Thess. 3:1

5:26 The closing benediction.

- 1) Paul requests that they greet all the brethren with a holy kiss for them. Rom. 16:16; 1Cor. 16:20; 2Cor. 13:12; 1Pet. 5:14
 - a) It is a sign of family affection.
 - b) It is to be done so with all purity, in the Lord by the word "holy".
- 2) Paul's blessing in the centuries became perverted and had to be limited to men or men and women to women.

5:27 Paul orders to the recipients.

- 1) Paul commands them to read the epistle to all the brethren.
 - a) The word charge "is a strong word of command to read epistle.
 - b) This is a spiritual order from one of God's leading generals.
- 2) Paul's command is implying the letter to be read before the entire church.
 - a) This is the practice that we often find in the New Testament letters.

- b) There are those letters that were addressed to individuals, like Philemon but were the exception.

5:28 The closing blessing.

- 1) Paul pronounces the grace of God to be with the Thessalonians as he began the letter. 1Thess. 1:2
- 2) Paul knew that grace alone can accomplish the will and purposes of God.
- 3) Paul also knew that the challenges of the church could not be face apart from the grace of God, the source of all we receive!