

A Scared World Needs a FEARLESS CHURCH
Peoples Church Wednesday Evening Teaching Series
081518
Pastor Jän

First Section

1Thessalonians 3:6-10 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Good news about your faith and love...you always have pleasant memories (v. 6): this, of course, is where Paul is referencing and validating one of the most important Christian virtues; namely, gratitude. Gratitude is a core mental and spiritual action that is the drainplug for resentment, envy and bitterness.

2Timothy 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Christians should be aware of how unhealthy ingratitude is for the individual and how destructive it is to a culture. Ingratitude dissolves social cohesion—it is a way of discrediting our forefathers and cutting ourselves off from their wisdom.

Ephesians 5:4 Nor should there be (“among you”) obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

It is exciting to realize that there is a worldwide movement to throw off the bondage of negativism and ingratitude that would create a society of bitter individuals. Instead, people are embracing the blessings of tradition.

Now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord (v. 8): Paul’s joy was that the Thessalonians were not shaken or weakened by the threat of persecution. In fact, they had stood strong.

Supply what is lacking in your faith (v. 10): Paul’s prayer was that he would have a chance to teach the Thessalonians again and deepen their understanding of doctrine (i.e. “the faith once delivered unto the saints” Jude 1:3).

Second Section

1Thessalonians 3:11-13 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus (vv. 11-13) Paul breaks into a written prayer asking for three things: 1) that he might return to the Thessalonians; 2) that their love for others might overflow; and 3) that they might be blameless at Christ’s coming.

The last two requests have to do with the inward and outward aspects of a Christ-like life. The two Christian virtues classically associated with these are temperance and charity.

Titus 2:1-6 You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. ² Teach the older men to be **temperate**, worthy of respect, **self-controlled**, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. ³ Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be **self-controlled** and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. ⁶ Similarly, encourage the young men to be **self-controlled**. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good.

When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones (v. 13): when one actually tunes in, it is surprising how often Paul refers to Christ's second coming. His mentality appears to be that the Christian should live in the light of Christ's imminent return.

Third Section

1Thessalonians 4:1-8 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Learn to control your own body...not in passionate lust (v. 4-5): Paul returns to the topic of self-control in more detail. This kind of teaching is now disparaged as Puritanical, judgmental and out of line with modern "tolerant" sensibilities.

Does not reject a human being but God, the very God... (v.8): However, biblical moral teaching is based on "natural law" (i.e. the way things "are") that are described explicitly in the OT divine law. Biblical sexual ethics safeguard the family and foster a healthy environment for raising of children. Meanwhile, post-modern secular ethics create an anti-natalist culture characterized by plummeting birthrates and societal self-destruction.