

1 Thessalonians

Table of Contents

The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3

Chapter One

To the Church “In God” – 1:1

The Key to Life: Living it Backwards – 1:2-3

The Power of the Gospel – 1:4-10

The Power of the Gospel (part 1) – 1:4-5

The Power of the Gospel (part 2) – 1:6-10

Chapter Two

Why Do We Do What We Do? – 2:1-12

There’s Something About You – 2:13-20

Chapter Three

Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It! (3:1-8)

The Love of the Church – Chapter 4

Chapter Four

The Will of God for Your Life – 3:9-4:12

The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Why Is There a Rapture – 4:13-18

When Is The Rapture – 5:1-11

10 Reasons For the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church

The Travelers – 5:12-22

Easter 2021 (5:23-28)

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 1:1
Title: To the Church "In God"

I am excited to start this new book (epistle) and will use the first three verses as our introduction to this wonderful epistle.

1 Thessalonians 1:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.
Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 1:1 NKJV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1 - Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy –

Written by the Apostle Paul, and based on other passages, we can deduce First Thessalonians was written from Corinth during Paul's eighteen-month stay there, not long after Timothy came to Paul (1 Thess. 3:6; 2:17). Since Gallio (Acts 18) is believed to have arrived as proconsul in the early summer of A.D. 51, Paul must have gone there in early 50 and written 1 Thessalonians soon after. Nearly all scholars date the book in the early 50's, and it is probably safe to date the Letter more precisely in A.D. 50 or 51, only twenty years after our Lord's Ascension.

First Thessalonians, written approximately 50AD to the church in Thessalonians, is probably one of the oldest books in the New Testament, possibly the first letter written.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: Paul was an amazing man and apostle of God, but he was not a "one-man show." Whenever he could, Paul worked with a team. Here, Paul mentions the men he worked with:

- Silvanus (also known as Silas) was a long and experienced companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:19-24). When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him (Acts 17:1-9), so the Thessalonians knew Silvanus well.
- Timothy was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia (Acts 16:1-3). He was the son of a Greek father (Acts 16:2), and a Jewish mother named Eunice (2 Timothy 2:5). From his youth, he had been taught in the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of

Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion (1 Thessalonians 3:2).

We need more Teamwork in the ministry, God doesn't want one man shows or Lone Rangers. I love the Army recruiting theme back some 20 years – "An Army of One". That is what the church needs to be if we are to be effective in turning our world "upside down." If you ever feel like you want to do more in this church, then come see me, and we will find you more to do, we will be an Army of One, serving the Great One.

- 2019 – What's Your Warrior
- 2018 – Warriors Wanted
- 2006-2018 – Army Strong
- 2001-2006 – Army of One
- 1980-2001 – Be All You Can Be

Verse 1 - To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ –

Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

Paul was originally brought to this area of Macedonia by a vision given to him from the Lord. Macedonia is the area we call Greece today.

Acts 16:6–10 (NKJV) ⁶ Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

What might the Lord be speaking to you about this year, where might He being showing you where He wants you to go? Mind you, COVID-19 cannot stop a missionary, for a missionary isn't someone who crosses the sea, but someone who sees the cross!

So in Greece they first went to Philippi, and Paul's welcome mat was taken out from under his feet after he called the demons out of the slave girl who was making a fortune for her masters by fortune telling. You remember the story, Paul was beaten severely with rods, thrown in the inner-prison (the worst of the worst places in the prison), yet Paul and Silas had a prayer meeting and a worship session, and the earth quaked, chains fell off and prison doors broke open.... And you know the story, the Philippian jailer came running to Paul, saying what must I do to be saved!

Acts 16:25–30 (NKJV) ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What chains may you feel bound in today, what dark prison cell do you feel imprisoned in? Go to prayer, break forth in praise, and watch your earthquake, as the Lord will show up every time!

So after being pleaded with to leave the city, go west young man as the saying goes, and they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica.

Acts 16:38–39 (NKJV) ³⁸ And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. ³⁹ Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city.

Acts 17:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed.

Acts 17:2–4 (NKJV) ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

But then after three weeks of prosperous ministry, he had to flee from an angry mob. The charge against him was that he turned their world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Acts 17:5–10 (NKJV) ⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷ Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." ⁸ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. ⁹ So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. ¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

He then moved on to Berea - again enjoying several weeks of ministry, but soon was driven out by the same Thessalonians mob after they heard he was there. His next stop was Athens, where he preached a classic sermon but had mixed results. By the time he came to Corinth, he was in weakness, in fear and in much trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3). Paul was a very discouraged missionary!

Acts 17:13–15 (NKJV) ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Acts 18:1 (NKJV) ¹ After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

1 Corinthians 2:3 (NKJV) ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

Well, Jesus said it would be so, and so don't be surprised when you faith, the very core of Christianity comes under attack, and don't be deceived into the America Gospel, of peace and prosperity..... Jesus said it is war, and always will be war. The word there for violent is the same word there in Luke 16, it means to be pressed, to press in.

Matthew 11:12 (NKJV) ¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Luke 16:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.

Christian, its pressing in, the world is pressing in upon the Church and His people. The voice of the Church is getting quieter and quieter, and those who speak it out (such as Paul did), are getting surrounded and drowned out.

Background of City of Thessalonica

Thessalonica , originally called Therma because of all the hot springs in the area. In 315 BC Casander, who was one of the four generals who divided up the empire of Alexander the Great, took Macedonia and made Thessalonica his home base. He renamed the city in memory of his wife, Thessalonike, who was half sister of Alexander. The city is still in existence today, and again, Macedonia is the area we call Greece today.

Thessalonica was the prosperous capital of the province of Macedonia (northern Greece), located on the famous Egnatian Way (the main road from Rome to the East). It was a major commercial center, very prosperous, load with idol worship and very pagan, and it was a seaport slash beach town. We could liken it to Southern California or Ocean City today.

Verse 1 - To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ –

In real estate you know the same location is everything that's what makes the value of the property so great is its location. Well you are currently standing on the most valuable property in the United States of America and in the state of Maryland and in the County of Anne Arundel County because you the church are in God, and God is your location.

Do you see that here in verse 1, the church of the Thessalonians “in” God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh the wonderful location of the church.... In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, they send you peace today! How does that make you feel? I hope it warms your heart, for grace and peace beat for the heart of God, the God of love, grace and peace are the very heartbeat of God.

Grace, the Gospel of grace, without God's grace then there would be nothing more to say.
Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

No grace, then no salvation. Without God's grace then we would not have peace with God, because our sins would not be forgiven and we would still be at war with Him.
(John 1:17 NKJV) For the law was given through Moses, but **grace** and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Grace: You will never have real peace, until you get a handle on grace.

- G - God's
- R - Riches
- A - At
- C - Christ's
- E - Expense

Grace. First mentioned in Genesis 6:8, Noah found grace in God's sight. Noah was spared God's wrath. Grace is last mentioned in the last verse of the Bible. Revelation 22:21, may the grace of God be with you always.....God promises us His Grace will keep us from wrath, and will keep us in His peace always.

Genesis 6:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Revelation 22:21 (NKJV) ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Grace & the Christian

A conversation was overheard on a public bus. A woman was reading a religious book, when the man next to her asked, “What are you reading?” “It’s a book a friend gave me. She said it changed her life.” “What’s it about?” It was obvious she had just started the book. She flipped to the table of contents and read off a few chapter titles, “Discipline, Love, Grace...” The stranger stopped her, and asked, “What’s grace?” The lady replied, “I don’t know. I haven’t got to grace yet.”

And this is the problem with many Christians. They’ve yet to get a grasp on grace! It’s the unmerited favor of God - a love we don’t deserve. Grace is the starting point in our relationship with God. Yet many Christians “haven’t gotten to grace.” You’ll never experience peace until you receive grace. The whole Christian life flows from God’s grace.

Peace: When we understand His Grace is never ending, then we will quit wondering and doubting if He is upset with us. We will always know that He is for us, and then no matter what we have done we will run back into his arms, say we are sorry, and let Him comfort and hold us.

When the trials come, we won't worry what will become of us, we will trust that He is using them in our lives to shape us and mold us into His Image. As we realize we are in His hand, the Peace of God, like a military garrison, keeps our hearts and saves us from all doubt and fear.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Are you anxious, I pray you spend the day meditating on these two words, grace & peace. Meditation is a lost practice and discipline among Christians, and thus much power is lost because a Christian doesn't. It is Biblical, see Psalm 1. We are not talking about eastern mysticism where a person chants and so call "clear their mind", it is simply talking a theme, a promise of God, a word of God, and thinking upon it and letting it come true and come deep into your heart and mind.

***Psalm 1:1–3 (NKJV)**¹ Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

***Philippians 4:8–9 (NKJV)**⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

***Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)**¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

***Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)**¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
Title: The Key to Life: Living it Backwards

1 Thessalonians 1:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

My Word Shall Not Return Void

I have just finished my reading through the Bible (not in a year but 1.5 years as I find that pace more fitting to absorb what I am reading. I can't encourage you enough to get on some type of systematic, consistent, reading plan, because as the Word says in Isaiah 55, My Word shall not return void.

Isaiah 55:6–12 (NKJV) ⁶ Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. ¹² "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

What Will Next 18 Months Look Like

As I finished my 18 months, and set up my next 18 months (I use a digital reading plan which are available all over the world-wide-web), I went to the very end to see when it ends, which is all the way to June 2022, that seems like forever away, but we know time and life flies; I asked myself, where will America be 18 months from now, where will this church be 18 months from now, and then I asked myself where will I be 18 months from now. I truly can't answer for America or CCAAC (even as the pastor), but I know what I wanted for me personally, I want to thrive! I want to live the abundant spiritual life that Jesus said can be mine (John 10:10).

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

The Lord spoke (nothing new, but reaffirmed the old truths):

Ephesians 5:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

I know, regardless of what happens in the world around, if I am connected to Him, like a branch of a vine, I will spiritually thrive, and I will produce much fruit, because my thriving is not based on my works, but simply attached to Him, who will do the work for me and in me. So, I pray the Lord moves on all our hearts today, and we will say Lord, 2021, I want to thrive in You and with You, and I want to reach new spiritual heights in my walk with You this year 2021, speak to my heart today on how to do that.

John 15:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 1:2 NKJV) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

Verse 2 – We give thanks to God always for you all – oh the power of thanksgiving for people in our lives. Thanksgiving will counter-act the human nature of the heart of man, which is to critique, and examine and think upon all their faults. But when we give thanks for that brother, that sister, that one whom He gave His life for, we start to see them the way God sees them..... treasured! And when you give thanks for them, and see the treasure they are, when you do see their faults (as yes many faults are glaring for all to see), you will find yourself moved with compassion over them, and rather than “talk about them”, you will “talk of them” to the Lord as you intercede for them. I challenge you, I encourage you, to give thanks to the Lord for the person you were talking about (all their faults), and see what the Lord does in your heart, to which I guarantee you He will change your heart for them.

Verse 2 - making mention of you in our prayers - Paul was a man of prayer, as we read over and over. The power of his ministry was fueled by prayer. The fact that he uses plural form of “our prayers” tells us that Paul, Silas, and Timothy would pray corporately together for this church; oh the power of corporate prayers. Let me say it ever so clearly, as many are quick to quote that we are not to forsake the assembly together (Hebrews 10:24-25), and they apply that to the Sunday meeting. The modern church has made Sunday Service into a day and time above all other days and times, and I believe actually defies the scripture of (Hebrews 10:24-25), as the time of corporate prayer doesn't rate or rank with the Sunday Service, to which I say, what a huge miss of power just waiting to be unleashed!

Matthew 18:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Acts 1:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

I believe the power of prayer was greatly at work as Paul, Silas, and Timothy prayer for this young church in Thessalonica.

Only There 3 Week

Paul was there for only three weeks and a church was started, elders were appointed, and it is only a few months later he is writing to see how they were doing.

Acts 17:2–4 (NKJV) ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This

Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

People today try to disqualify people from ministry because they are only saved a few years, yet hear these leaders were only saved 3 weeks and are leading the ministry. People can be effective in ministry immediately if their heart is right and dedicated to the Lord. Yes we are not to lay hands on quickly but I believe everybody can start in some form of ministry immediately after they give their life to the Lord. You can serve in the soup kitchen, visit a shut-in, or serve in your community. There is a time to sit and be taught the Word, before you go off and teach it, but you can start evangelizing immediately. Even if you don't know any Scripture, you can just tell people your testimony, once I was lost and now I see.

- *I remember the story of a woman in California, she only knew one Scripture, John 3:16, and she would go to the same spot every day and share that Scripture with passer-byers. One guy said so what, what else do you know, she said that is all I know, he told her she was a fool. This went on every day for a week, then the man came by the next day and said I considered what you said and I too have given my life to the Lord.*

This church only had three weeks with Paul, and a church was born. This church was making a huge impact on the region around them as we will read in a few verses. Young people, new believers, don't let anyone tell you that the Lord can't use you because you are too young or too young in the Lord. Remember this church in Thessalonians.

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The Model Church

Thessalonica was a model church. They brought Paul great joy... In contrast there were churches that troubled him...

- The Corinthians were “Christians Gone Bad.” They were immoral and divisive ...
- The Galatians were “My Dear Fools.” They were prone to legalism...
- The Colossians were gullible to false doctrine - like a big-mouth bass they bit the lies hook, line, and sinker...
- But the Thessalonians were a joy...

No doubt he was greatly concerned about the churches he had just founded - how were they doing? While at Corinth, Silas and Timothy came to him from Thessalonica with great news: the church there was going strong, and Paul got so excited that he dashed off this letter to the Thessalonians, probably his first letter to any church. He wrote it just a few months after he had first established the church in Thessalonica. After writing and sending this letter, Paul enjoyed a sustained and fruitful ministry in Corinth - and eventually returned to the Thessalonians.

Paul writes to them to encourage them, to commend them for their faith, to continue in their labor of love, and to remain hopeful of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

The Outline of the Book

Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

So you note takers, jot these three simple points down, and you will have the general outline of this book, and be able to recall the theme and purpose of this wonderful epistle every time it comes across your studies in the future:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian.
(1 Thessalonians 1:7 NKJV) so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

So we have the outline of the epistle, and the three marks of a mature church and believer (just as we saw these three in Colossians 1:4-5)

- *your work of faith,*
- *labor of love,*
- *patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*

Colossians 1:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

1.) Verse 3 - Work of Faith

What shall we do, that we might work the works of God they asked Him that day. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They were looking for a list, but Jesus said it isn't a list, but one thing - believe on Him. It is not all your works, your energy, your good intentions, but that the work on the cross is enough to see you into heaven.

John 6:28–29 (NKJV) ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

It is said so beautiful in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 9:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

Receive this simple truth, share this simple truth. That is salvation also, not your works but His:

Titus 3:4–7 (NKJV) ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

2.) Verse 3 - Labor of Love,

Once you see number one (work of faith – simply believing), love will naturally flow from your heart. Once you see that it is not your works, but His work, then you can rest and just enjoy serving the King for the pure joy of it.

- *In the late 1940's Life magazine went to Boy's Town and saw an orphan child 11 years old carrying a bigger boy, 13 years old who was crippled, the reporter said that is quite a burden you are carrying there, and we all know the reply - he ain't heavy, he's my brother.*

True ministry is that this isn't heavy, it is a labor of love. We see that we have been brought into the kingdom, God's forever family, it is not obligation, work or burden, but one of love.

I love ministry because I get to, not have to. I am so thankful that I get to play in the big game and not have to watch it from the stands.

3.) Verse 3 - Patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

Patently hoping for what? For the return of the Lord. Not I hope that it will happen, but I know it is going to happen. This is a young church, less than a year in existence and Paul is teaching them about the rapture and Second Coming. Churches today never touch on this subject because they say it is too hard to understand, Paul is teaching it to baby Christians, therefore we know it is for all to understand.

Here folks is the secret of life:

Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven.

- We know the big picture - Christ Wins.
- We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign.
- We study Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that.

We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out.

Jesus showed us this the night before His crucifixion. The very night before he was to go to the brutal Roman cross, what do we find Him doing, John 13.

John 13:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

He washed feet, lovingly. Jesus wasn't freaking out about tomorrow's trial, he loved in the shadow of the trial before Him. Jesus knew that after the trial and tragedy that He was heaven bound, and many would be too because of His sacrifice.

Friends, consider this, he even washed Judas' feet.

People will betray you, defame your name, attack your character, and/or sell you out.

But Jesus knew from whence He came, and where He was going. It is only when you know where you came from and where you are going can you live in peace.

John 13:3 (NKJV) ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,

Who has hurt you?

- Was it someone you loved and they traded you for another, maybe something as little as 30 pieces of silver.
- Was it someone you shared deep truths about yourself with, but in the end rejected your truths.
- Was it someone you spent night and day with for years, maybe even three, but they left you to go hang with another crowd, whose main topic was slamming you and plotting to hurt you.
- Was it someone so close to you they were family, that you broke bread together, counted as a brother, sister, mother or father, someone so close you would share a kiss with, but in the end they kiss your cheek as they press the knife in your back.

If you hurt, then your hurt is real, and just saying get over it is not going to heal you. What will heal you? Your labor of love for them. That you loved them to the end as Jesus said;

John 13:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had world, He loved them to the end. come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the

Jesus demonstrates to us that whatever evil is poured out on us we respond back in love, serving them in love. If we work backwards from heaven, we look at the person who hurt us, and if they have not committed their life to Christ, then the perspective of them not being in heaven, but doomed to eternity in hell, will break our heart, and when we look at them we will grieve for their soul. We see they are putty in the hands of the evil on.

Luke 23:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Well, what if they are Christians and hurt me. Then back to the introduction of grace and peace. We have to shower them with grace, before we will have peace with them. Let your labor of love be a demonstration of your grace. We will study more on this in chapter four.

To what length do we allow ourselves to be open to a person who is a user and abuser of people is an often asked question of me, and it is a great question that needs to be answered. The answer is..... we allow ourselves to be open to them all the way up to the point of the "will of God the Father" and what He is calling us to do. See Jesus did not allow Judas, or the pressuring of the unrepentant sinners and religious leaders, keep Him from obeying God the Father fully and completing. Their sin, did not cause Jesus to sin. Their weakness, did not make Jesus weak. Their wrong way direction, did not cause Jesus to go the wrong way. Jesus said follow me, and went in the direction God the Father called Him to go.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NKJV) ⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We are Just Passing Through

So in closing beloved, heaven is near. This is the message of the Bible, we are heading out of here, we are just passing through, a short stay-over, the pain is but for a moment, trials or persecution, remember.....heaven is near.

John 14:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

The three marks of a mature church and believer: Faith, love, hope. The three must go together. Your faith will never be solid without the understanding of the hope of His return, and with this hope of His return we will be energized for a labor of love to those around us.

James 2:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

But just the same, works without hope is powerless.

So we are off to a wonderful start of a wonderful book of the Bible, the heart of God.... I look forward to the studied in the weeks to come. Let's pray.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1:4-5

Title: The Power of the Gospel (part 1)

1 Thessalonians 1:4–10 (NKJV) ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. ⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have

that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We covered 1:1-3, lets read them for remembrance.

(1 Thessalonians 1:1 NKJV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 1:2 NKJV) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Now for our study today, 1:4-10:

(1 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

This word here election means chosen. God chose you because He wanted you. God wants you. I surely do not want to dismiss the theological depths of the meaning of the word election, but it can take on such a cold meaning in a sense. I did not elect Renee to be my wife I saw her and my heart was moved and I chose her above all others and there was none like her in all the world to me. That's how the Lord looks at you I didn't elect you out of all the candidates I chose you because you moved my heart and my heart's big enough to choose multitudes get love each uniquely and individually. God loves you.

We are chosen before the foundation of the universe,

Ephesians 1:4-6 (NKJV) ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

.....yet we still have to respond. The Bible speaks much of God's election and is equally clear concerning man's responsibility to make his calling an election sure by faith and faithfulness. Being that I live in this time domain, I preach in this time domain..... unless you do something about your sin, you will perish in your sin and be separated from God for eternity in hell.

2 Peter 1:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

John 6:37 (NKJV) ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Luke 9:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

God's sovereignty and man's free-will..... what depths to try to completely understand. JB Phillips said, if God was small enough for me to understand everything about Him, then He wouldn't be big enough for me to worship.

Theologians have argued for centuries over this doctrine, but let it be seen, Election is an eternal word, written outside of our time domain, by an eternal all-knowing God (omniscient). I like what an old pastor/teacher (Henry Ironside) said:

H.A Ironside gave the illustration of the sinner coming to the gates of Heaven and above the gate it reads "Whosoever will, let him come" (Rev. 22:17). As he accepts this gracious invitation and goes through the gates into Heaven, he sees written on the other side - "Chosen...in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

The Gospel is a love offer, from God Himself, will you marry me?

Revelation 19:7–9 (NKJV) ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

It's been said that Election is a family secret, and truly when you get it... You get. When you see the depth of His love, the beauty and sweetness of His heart, that He chose you and realize you take His breath away (wow), you will say wow I've been chosen/elected, before the foundation of the world, how couldn't I respond to His love and marriage offer and say.... I do!

Beloved, you will know if you are elected or not by your response to the gospel, and the confirmation will come by a changed life, because when you give your life to God, your life will change. You will find the sinful things you use to love to do, you forsake. There have been situations where I have walked away and said to myself, I've got to be saved, there is no other reason I am walking away from this. We are not talking sinless perfection, but we are talking a changed life that leaves the old life behind and walks in the ways of the Lord.

1 John 2:3–4 (NKJV) ³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Paul is using this epistle to tell us what a model church is, and what a mature Christian is and does, the epistle is the characteristics of a believer – Faith, love and hope.

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

(1 Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV) For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

As we studied in Colossians, man's gospel, man's so-called good news, comes in word only, it has no power behind it. The gospel of Jesus Christ comes in word and power, the power to change lives.

Paul said:

(Romans 1:16 NKJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

This message is powerful. This Bible is powerful because it is the very breath of God. A seminary student asked Charles Spurgeon how to defend the Scriptures against unbelievers, skeptics, and cynics. The 300-pound preacher laughed aloud and said, "How do you defend the Scriptures? Son, that's like asking how to defend a lion. Just let it out of the cage. It will defend itself.

What is the gospel? I will put it into 5 P's

1. Personal – God loves you and has a plan for your life

(Jeremiah 29:11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

2. Problem – But there is a problem, and that is that your sin separates you from Him.

(Isaiah 59:1-2) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

3. Penalty – You have offended the Holy God, broken His commandments, therefore you cannot come into His presence or fellowship with Him.

(Romans 6:23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. Provision – But God doesn't want to leave us separated from Him. God devised a plan that would allow Him to be merciful to us, while at the same time judging sin. Jesus Christ took our place, took our punishment.

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

5 Profession – Our response, we make a profession of Faith.

(Romans 10:9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

- 1. Recognize** – Recognize we have offended the Holy God, and Jesus is the only way.
- 2. Repent** – Be willing to Turn from our sin, and follow the Lord and all His ways
- 3. Receive** – Ask Jesus to come into your life and be your Lord and Savior.

Now that is the gospel, and it comes to people in power as people see their need for a Savior, as people see the joy of forgiveness. Forgiveness means New Life, a New Beginning, forgiveness means Hope.....all of these are power.

- I can give you a drug that will wear off,
- I can give you a truckload of money, but it will eventually run out,
- but if I can give someone the gospel, and the Holy Spirit confirms it in peoples heart, lives are changed, and eternity in heaven is secured, now that is power.

We are called to be witnesses. A witness is one who goes into the courtroom and simply shares what he or she has seen. The Lord did not call us to be an attorney, arguing the case, or a judge, handing down a verdict. The Lord simply called you to be a witness - to tell people what He has done for you personally. If you are anything more than a witness you will diminish the power of the gospel.

If you want to move in the spirit, see the spirit move, - then start witnessing. The Lord says you will receive power to witness for me. Signs and wonders follow witnessing. The steam generated from the fore of the locomotive is to power the locomotive down the track, not toot the horn. Beware of people seeking the emotionalism of the Holy Spirit, for that is not why God gave it to us, not for self-excitement, but for others. We will develop this more in future studies.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Mark 16:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Communion:

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

The ever most wonderful passage of Isaiah 40, mounting up on wings of eagles and being strengthened. What I love about that verse is everything, but I love and want to point out to you today that word “wait”, and it means (to bind together).

Isaiah 40:28–31 (NKJV) ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

I am reminded of Genesis 13, right after he separated from Lot and God promised him the land, and promised to make his descendants as many as the dust of the earth. But there is something that you see in Abraham, as he did not see this earth as his home, as he continually looked for the city that was not of this earth but eternal and made by God; but Abram’s life here on earth can be summed up to this, he pitched tents and built altars. Tents (not making this earth his all and all), and building altars (to worship the Lord). In Genesis 13 he pitched his tent and built his altar in Mamre there in Hebron. Mamre means (strength, fatness, abundance), and Hebron means (communion, oneness, fellowship) and so today I find that in communion. In communion I/we as we remember His love offer, celebrate our election/being chosen, we find strength/abundance in the sweet fellowship with Him in His love.

Hebrews 11:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Genesis 13:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

Lets take communion, and be bound together with the Lord, and enjoy the abundance, fatness, and strength that comes with the sweetness of fellowshiping and communing with Him.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1:6-10

Title: The Power of the Gospel (part 2)

1 Thessalonians 1:4–10 (NKJV) ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. ⁵ For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have

that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 1:6 NKJV) And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

Followers of (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) and the Lord, is referring to that when they heard what Paul had to say about the power of the Gospel, it was confirmed by the Holy Spirit that it was real, and it was powerful, so powerful that it could change a person (such as Paul) from a widow maker, orphan maker, into a completely new person, as Paul was.

A changed life is a hard truth to dismiss. I remember when I got saved, many friends saying they missed the "old Ray".

Ephesians 4:17–24 (NKJV) ¹⁷ This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

But make no mistake, and I think we often can, there is an affliction that comes with receiving the Gospel, hearing people say "I miss the old Ray", aka – Ray has lost his mind, has become a "holy Joe", a Bible Thumper, a holier than thou! Well you are not alone, and think it not strange these fiery trials, and why so important to come and be among the brethren, so you can strengthen one another, and look out among the people and go, ok "Im not the only crazy one" haha.

1 Peter 4:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

Also, this sounds like a contradiction, much affliction, with joy. In ministry you get beat up, rejected, have days when you just want to quit, but you push on through those hard times, and

then you see the joy of lives being changed, marriages being healed, people living and excited about the Lord, then you say ahh it's all worth it.

(1 Thessalonians 1:7 NKJV) so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 1:8 NKJV) For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

V.8 - Sounded forth, means trumpeted. The whole region had heard about the radical faith of this little church in Thessalonica.

Paul only taught them for three weeks, and yet in that little time they grew so strong that the whole region heard of what was going on.

[Acts 17:2 \(NKJV\)](#) ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, [and for three Sabbaths](#) reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

V.7 - This word "examples", is the Greek word "tupos" which meant to leave a mark by being struck. It was the word used to make coins. The metal had the everlasting impression of the image that was left on it. This little church that was only a few months old was changing the whole area around them.

A church/believer with faith, love and hope will be a trumpet to the whole area they live in, and leave a lasting mark.

[\(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV\)](#) *remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

V.8 - so that we do not need to say anything – The Amish have a saying, preach Christ, and if all else fails, use words!

(1 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV) For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

(1 Thessalonians 1:10 NKJV) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Verses 9-10 are the three things the world was speaking about them, and we will see that these three are again faith, love, and hope.

- They turned from Idols – Faith is to turn from what one see, to believing in what you can't see.
- They served the Living God – service is the labor of love
- They wait for His Son from heaven – waiting is the patience of hope.

how you turned to God from idols

They turned from idols, history tells us they had 100's of idols where they lived, and they turned from them.

Now don't be confused when the Scriptures speak of idols, and some dumb people bowing down to a piece of wood, a rock, or the sun, moon, or stars. All the idols had a "philosophy, a belief system" behind them. Some idols they worshipped brought favor upon the agricultural crops, others prosperity, other sexual pleasures. Today idols come in the form of Playboy – objects of desire, not human beings, Educational Degrees, or work place rankings – see how intelligent I am, Material things – look at me as I drive by you, substances (alcohol, drugs, pills) – they provide me escape, pleasure, numbness.

[Exodus 20:2–6 \(NKJV\)](#) ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow

down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

In the end, all idolatry is truly covetousness, which simple is wanting more, not content/satisfied with what God has provided, or offers a person. Simply..... Jesus is not enough.

Exodus 20:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

to serve the living and true God

They turned from their idols to serve the living and true God. Living and true, Jesus isn't just some story we read about, He is Alive. Buddha is dead, Krishna is dead, Mohammed is dead; there is only one true God – Jesus Christ, for to be the true God, you have to be the living God. A dead god produces dead works, a living God produces works that are alive.

and to wait for His Son from heaven

Every chapter in Thessalonians ends with the coming of the Lord. This book is about the coming of the Lord, Him meeting us in the air, before He sends forth His wrath on a Christ rejecting world. Before His wrath comes down, we must come up.

Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

This is the key of the book, and the key of life, to work backwards from heaven and the imminent return of Jesus. Church History is horrible. Dark Ages and Crusader period, horrible. But, the model church lived in the expectancy of Christ imminent return and that heaven is near. The horrible periods of church history were because they didn't believe in the immediate return of Jesus or that heaven was near.

Today, marriages, relationships, personal lives are suffering the same because people don't believe heaven is near, they grow weary of doing good, laboring in love, serving the true and living God. Heaven is near, and let heaven put life in perspective.

Matthew 24:45–51 (NKJV) ⁴⁵ "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

V.10 - and to wait

They wait, waiting is not to be passive. The Greek word here was used for a mother waiting for her child to be born. Like today, a mother while with child is getting the room painted, diapers stocked, baby bottles and blankets in house. She has an active waiting, preparing for the coming baby.

As we wait, let us wait actively, growing in our faith, and laboring in love for each other and the world around us. Let's work backwards from heaven.

even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

There is a wrath to come, we have escaped it through the finished work of Jesus the Christ upon the cross; but there are those around us, who will face the wrath to come, if they do not receive Jesus the Christ as their Lord and Savior. They will perish forever, to hell. Do you care about that?

Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The Coming Darkness

I want to share a story about hunting. I know hunting's not everybody's thing, I understand that. I grew up Western Pennsylvania, that's what we kind of did and is just what we were bred into, if

you would. One of the things I say, I only hunt what I'm going to eat or give away for others to eat and there's a very specific purpose of the hunt, but I only shoot what I'm going to eat.

There's an agonizing part of hunting that sometimes you do shoot, you do hit, but you don't get to eat because you can't find your game. A weeks ago, I was hunting and you get a legal 30 minutes after sunset. I was 20 minutes into it. So it was getting dark and I got my shot. It was a good shot (I was bow hunting), I know it. And I watched the deer run and where it entered back into the thicket of the woods.

It had been raining. The darkness was falling. The deer went into the woods and that's definitely one of the hardest places to be tracking deer. But, of course, the rain was washing everything away. And what I say about that is, I knew where the deer went in. I started searching for my deer at the appropriate time. Couldn't find a trail. Couldn't pick up where it went. And I searched for two hours because I wanted to harvest that deer. It's an agonizing thing and many hunters will tell you how agonizing it is to take your shot and not harvest and it's not so much about just that you didn't get to put the meat in the freezer, but it's as much by you took a life and you didn't profit anything. It's agonizing.

What I want to tell you is nothing's lost on the Lord. And as I searched and as I searched like I said for two hours in the dark with flashlight, search grid, in the woods, in the rain, I searched and I searched and in the end, I never did find the animal and the next day didn't produce anything for me.

But as I searched and I searched, it's agonizing. I felt the Lord speak to me. This is what I say, nothing's ever wasted on the Lord, but the Lord says, to me as I searched and I searched, He said, "Ray, this is how I search for the lost. I search and I search for them." I know this is a word that the Lord gave me, and I give to you....."there's a coming darkness that comes upon the land, and once total darkness comes, that which is lost can never be found and the beast of the night will devour it.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

I'd want to just leave that with you. A thought as agonizing of a loved one as darkness falls. And once darkness comes, that which is lost will never be found. It is an eternal decision. Their decision stands for time. I just want to encourage us as a church. I want to encourage us that darkness will fall, whether it's age, accident or circumstances. I believe we are in the last hour. And as I study these things, and as I teach and prepare these things, I know soon and very soon, we're going to see the King. But of course, that which is lost, will never be found. And I just pray that God stirs us up. We see the signs, now let's let it affect our prayers

Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful." That's a good word. But the laborers are few. Pray that the Lord of harvest would send laborers into the field. He's telling us the harvest is plentiful. It's not all doom or gloom, but He also says "Pray that the Lord of harvest would send laborers into the field." And what you read in the next chapter is Jesus sending his disciples into the harvest yard. I believe we pray, we become the very answer to that passage and God raises us up, sends us into the harvest field. And that's what I want these things to move and do in our heart.

Matthew 9:35-38 (NKJV) ³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Conclusion

I would to God that we see it, believe it, live like it.... Our redemption draws near, and the day is far spent! Lord please put a burden on our hearts to live like we can see you before the day is over. Lord give us burdens for the lost, who are perishing, and when the final darkness falls, will be lost forever. Lord let this word today, the power of the Gospel that changes lives from old to

new, and that we would have a burden for the lost, go the distance to pray for them personally and corporately, and the boldness that if all else fails, we will use words.

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Chapter Two

Passage: 2:1-12

Title: Why do I do What I do; How do I do What I do?

1 Thessalonians 2:1–12 (NKJV) ¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. ³ For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. ⁴ But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline

Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Verse 1 is the introduction to our passage today titled, "Why Do We Do What We Do?", *(1 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV)* For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

V.1 Vain – Vain means without purpose, profit, or fruit. Paul is saying we came, and we came with purpose, and it was profitable and fruitful.

This verse sets up the start of our whole teaching...."Why Do We Do What We Do?". Paul came to these people in Thessalonica, with a purpose. I think, I know, it is so easy for us to do without even thinking about it. Paul came.... With purpose, to preach the Gospel, to see lives changed! But this also applies to everything else in our lives, every relationship, every action, every ministry.... When we do it with purpose, it will not return void, it will not be in vain, it will come with power and be profitable and fruitful.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.

V.1 Vain – Vain means without purpose, profit, or fruit. Paul is saying we came, and we came with purpose, and it was profitable and fruitful.

Again, this verse sets up the start of our whole teaching...."Why Do We Do What We Do?". Paul came to these people in Thessalonica, with a purpose. I think, I know, it is so easy for us to do without even thinking about it. Paul came.... With purpose, to preach the Gospel, to see lives

changed! But this also applies to everything else in our lives, every relationship, every action, every ministry.... When we do it with purpose, it will not return void, it will not be in vain, it will come with power and be profitable and fruitful.

(1 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

Paul was run out of town in Philippi after he had been beaten and wrongly imprisoned (Acts 16). He comes to Thessalonica, starts preaching again, and comes under attack. His charge, verse 6 of Acts 17 – what he preached turned the world upside down, the result, he was run out of town again.

(Acts 17:1 NKJV) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.....

(Acts 17:6 NKJV) But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

Paul preached the Gospel with purpose, and because of that it had power, and because he preached with purpose he was able to withstand much conflict and not quit. Here we see the continual application of when we do what we do with purpose, there is a power that can't be defeated, even when much conflict comes (and you can expect that in every area of your life if you are a believer.

How often we preach the Gospel out of an obligation, and there is surely merit to that as we are called to do the work of an evangelist. But how everything will change when we allow our hearts to be moved to preach with a purpose, that the Gospel will change that person's life. Then there comes a power with the purpose, as we feel the power that our words can change that person's life. When we share the Word of God with the person who is afflicted, or addicted, who is low, depressed, confused, or conflicted.... that the words that we speak, the actions that we do, can change a person's life.

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV) ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Do you believe the power of the Gospel? Do you believe it has the power to change a life? Do you believe it has the power to deliver someone from worthless idols, to deliver them from the wrath to come, to give them a purpose in life? For when you do, you will find power in the Gospel you preach!

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Romans 1:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

(1 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

(1 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

Paul was "entrusted" with the Gospel! Let that sink in, the preaching and sharing of the Gospel is something God "entrusts" to us. If I was to allow you to take my son with you in your car to go to lunch today, I am entrusting him, my very heartbeat, to you. I entrust him to you, because I trust you will handle him and protect him perfectly.

Paul was run out of town in Philippi after he had been beaten and wrongly imprisoned (Acts 16). He comes to Thessalonica, starts preaching again, and comes under attack. His charge, verse 6

of Acts 17 – what he preached turned the world upside down, the result, he was run out of town again.

(Acts 17:1 NKJV) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.....

(Acts 17:6 NKJV) But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

Paul called it what it was, sin. He called them to repentance. He called them from their idols and personal sins. The resultant, he was hated and persecuted by many.

There are people who are living contrary to God's word. We have compassion for them, but then.....they come against us, at that moment, our ministry to them is decided, how will we treat them, how will we respond to them. People living in their sin, will often be the person that rises up against us, maybe even attacking us. We present the word, and they call us judgmental, and then start to judge us, pointing out all of our failures or failings. It is funny, they say we are being judgmental, but truly isn't that what they are doing to us. They judge us saying we are Bible thumpers, they bring up all of our faults, they put us into a group and categorize us.

But hear O'Christian the lesson and application for us, Paul never changed his message, he never tuned it in to make it pleasing to all.

We have to call it for what it is, sin is sin, if we water it down, we do them the greatest misjustice. Proclaim the full gospel, do not be afraid of man's reactions or upsetting them, or being disliked. When you live life backwards, from heaven – OR NO HEAVEN – the fear of them going to hell will supersede the fear of them being upset with you.

The young Jeremiah was called to preach:

Jeremiah 1:1–10 (NKJV) ¹ The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, ² to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³ It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. ⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." ⁶ Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." ⁷ But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

Later God warns him, to proclaim the whole message. He said Jeremiah if you pull punches, fail to share the whole story, are ashamed of the gospel, the Lord said Jeremiah I will not be with you

(Jeremiah 1:16 NRSV) And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

(Jeremiah 1:17 NRSV) But you, gird up your loins; stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do not break down before them, or I will break you before them.

If you fail to proclaim the whole gospel, you will become ashamed, and they will find fault in your message, for the gospel is a unit. The gospel only works when it is presented in its fullness. Leave a piece out and it doesn't make sense. Now I'm not talking when you are wetting their whistle, giving them snippets of His love and wonderfulness. I'm talking when you get to that moment when they say what is this all about, what do you mean to be saved, that I need to be saved.

Leave holes and people will pick it apart. Example, the theory of evolution: there are so many holes and open loops in it, any student can blow it apart and leave them looking foolish (however the open loop works for them, so you can't nail them down on a specific point, and they can continue to revise it.).

The gospel is made to be presented in its entirety, leaves holes and people will pick it apart. Present it in its fullness and there are no loops, only those who refuse to repent and believe. It's the 5ps and nothing less Tell people Jesus died for you, they whats that mean? If you first didn't tell them there was a problem, and that was that they offended the Holy God, they don't see a need for a savior. Don't tell them about the penalty, then they see no need to escape it. Just presenting God as a nice guy, and someone you can count on, without telling them He is also a God of judgment, leaves Christianity as the crutch they accuse us need. Yes it is a crutch, but first it is a lifeboat, the crutch is the added benefit that comes in the deal.

Bottom line, trying to make the gospel acceptable to them will leave holes and leave us embarrassed.

The gospel isn't to make God acceptable to man, but man acceptable to the Holy God.

(1 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV) For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness; God is witness.

(1 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV) Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Paul saying, we weren't trying to gain anything from you, we came in honesty and sincerity. We could have but didn't. Paul came to them, for them. God called him to them. Paul wasn't looking to build the Greater Paul Evangelical Organization, he wasn't seeking or coveting, he was just doing what God called him to do.

The simple definition of covetousness is to "desire something that is not from the Lord." How do I know when I am coveting? It doesn't line up with God's Word, and/or I won't pray about, and/or I don't have peace about it.

Be careful about getting yourself into something you weren't called for, but you coveted. Beware or you will be like King Jehoshaphat that we read of in 2 Chronicles 17-20

Jehoshaphat was a great king, but made a terrible mistake, his coveting made him do foolish things he wasn't called to do. King Ahab the wicked king of Israel was having trouble with the Syrians, so he called king Jehoshaphat the king of Judah and said lets join forces and fight the Syrians, Jehoshaphat says ok, lets do it. Bad move king, here's his story:

Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah, the scripture say that the Lord was with him. Jehoshaphat we read planted churches and sent out missionaries:

2 Chronicles 17:1-9 (NKJV) ¹ Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. ² And he placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken. ³ Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, ⁴ but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. ⁵ Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. ⁶ And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. ⁷ Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hai, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. ⁸ And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. ⁹ So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.

Jehoshaphat was a spiritual leader. I suggest to you, that Jehoshaphat wasn't called to be a warrior, rather he coveted to be in the battle so he could say I am a battle proven king.

Up to this point he had never gone to battle:

2 Chronicles 17:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. ¹¹ Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats.

Jehoshaphat had all these mighty men of war around him (1.16 million-man army), but no battles because everyone was afraid, not of him, but the Lord. Maybe he watched too many war movies or too much news footage of how a mighty army rolls over its adversaries. I believe he desired to be a war hero, but that wasn't what God called him to be, for God clearly called him to be a spiritual leader, and God would cast fear into his enemies that they would not war against him.

2 Chronicles 17:12–19 (NKJV) ¹² So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. ¹³ He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, were in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ These are their numbers, according to their fathers' houses. Of Judah, the captains of thousands: Adnah the captain, and with him three hundred thousand mighty men of valor; ¹⁵ and next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and eighty thousand; ¹⁶ and next to him was Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the LORD, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. ¹⁷ Of Benjamin: Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with him two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield; ¹⁸ and next to him was Jehozabad, and with him one hundred and eighty thousand prepared for war. ¹⁹ These served the king, besides those the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

Here is a common mistake covetousness will do to you, to make unions with the ungodly. The Lord never called Jehoshaphat to be in union, communion, or fellowship with Ahab. His first mistake was aligning himself with a king who did not follow the ways of the Lord. So his covetousness makes him do something foolish, he makes an alliance with the world, and he goes and follows after something that the Lord didn't call him to:

2 Chronicles 18:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab. ² After some years he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth Gilead. ³ So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?" And he answered him, "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war."

He doesn't seek the Lord on his own, he asks the wicked to go seek the Lord. The world covets, it will always be easy to have them confirm and lead you into your covetousness. Covetousness will draw you away from seeking the Lord. Why didn't he inquire of the Lord himself, or call on the priests he had established?

2 Chronicles 18:4–28 (NKJV) ⁴ Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today." ⁵ Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand." ⁶ But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" ⁷ So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah the son of Imla." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" ⁸ Then the king of Israel called one of his officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!" ⁹ The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in their robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. ¹⁰ Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed." ¹¹ And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the king's hand." ¹² Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." ¹³ And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak." ¹⁴ Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!" ¹⁵ So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" ¹⁶ Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" ¹⁷ And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" ¹⁸ Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. ¹⁹ And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. ²⁰ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' ²¹ So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him and also prevail; go out and do so.' ²² Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you." ²³ Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?" ²⁴ And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!" ²⁵ Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; ²⁶ and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace."'" ²⁷ But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!" ²⁸ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead.

The war was between Ahab's Israel versus the Syrian forces. Now they go to battle and King Ahab says you wear your gear (your robe and crown), but I'll go in disguise. Coveting will blind

you.....in Jehoshaphat's case, stupid. Hey Beav I'm gona go in disguise, Gee Wally, ok that sounds like a great plan.

(2 Chronicles 18:29 NKJV) And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

Now Jehoshaphat has what he coveted, a sword in his hand, riding high on his horse (cause everyone else would be on foot). Warriors are passing by all look at the king as they pass, he nods at them as his mind is entertained with what the history books will write about him, and the girls will be in awe when he comes home to a fanfare parade.

Now the Syrian commander gave the order, don't fight the other men, just go for the king, topple the head of the regime, and the rest of the regime will quit. Gulf War 2 battle strategy isn't new, its thousands of years old. I imagine Jehoshaphat was looking pretty good, feeling pretty powerful, with everyone saying howdy king, until the battle started, and then everyone was flailing arrows at him, at that point he must have been saying wait a minute, I'm not the king of Israel, Ahab is the guy you want. His covetous dream didn't include this reality, arrows by the thousands all for him.....reality never lives up to the dream and he cries get me out of here Lord.

2 Chronicles 18:30-34 (NKJV) ³⁰ Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who were with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." ³¹ So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. ³² For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. ³³ Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." ³⁴ The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

The Lord spares Jehoshaphat, and then rebukes him.

2 Chronicles 19:1-11 (NKJV) ¹ Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. ² And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you. ³ Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God." ⁴ So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes." ⁸ Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem. ⁹ And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: ¹⁰ Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. ¹¹ And take notice: Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites will be officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

And here is my point that Jehoshaphat wasn't called be a warrior, because the next battle comes, Jehoshaphat is terrified, he remembers the last battle, and knows that is not where he wants to be, so what does he do? He Seeks the Lord, he proclaims a fast throughout the whole kingdom.

2 Chronicles 20:1-5 (NKJV) ¹ It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. ² Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). ³ And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. ⁵ Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

Now he is not coveting something He wasn't called to, instead he calls on the power of the Lord:

2 Chronicles 20:6-12 (NKJV) ⁶ and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? ⁷ Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? ⁸ And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ⁹ 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' ¹⁰ And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—¹¹ here they are, rewarding us by coming to

throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

And here we clearly see what Josaphat was called to be, to lead his nation to stand before the Lord. Stick with what lines up with the Word, and what works in your life.

2 Chronicles 20:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. ¹⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

The resultant, God’s power in their lives, and an enemy that would be defeated:

2 Chronicles 20:15–21 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.” ¹⁸ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. ¹⁹ Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high. ²⁰ So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” ²¹ And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever.”

They didn’t even have to battle, the Lord battled for them

2 Chronicles 20:22–24 (NKJV) ²² Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. ²³ For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. ²⁴ So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

When you are doing what God called you to do, things just work, they flow, and we get to take the spoils:

(2 Chronicles 20:25 NKJV) When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much.

It leaves you singing for joy, doing what the Lord has established you to do, and to be. If you are in a place you have coveted and strive to be in, things won’t flow, things won’t work, you will constantly be struggling to stay where you are at, and there will be no joy, no song in your heart:

2 Chronicles 20:26–28 (NKJV) ²⁶ And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD.

Finally, Jehoshaphat is back where he started from in the beginning, people feared the Lord, and left them alone:

2 Chronicles 20:29–37 (NKJV) ²⁹ And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. ³¹ So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ³² And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. ³³ Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers. ³⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel. ³⁵ After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. ³⁶ And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. ³⁷ But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works.” Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

We have to come to the place, of “why do I do the thing I am doing”. It has to be a solid place, immovable. We have to know why we’re doing what we’re doing because if we do anything in the fear of men then everything, we do will be based on what this man think not God and if we do

anything for the applause of man and we surely will not here the applause of God saying well done good and faithful servant. If we do anything in our lives that is anything less than in according with the Word of God and the Will of God, And here's one of the greatest keys to all of it at some point whether it's a relationship or ministry whatever it may be someone will question your motives (in a critical way – whether openly or talking behind your back) of why you do what you do just like they are doing here with Paul and you have to know that you're doing what you're doing because you know it's God's word and it's God's will for your life. It is not because of the pressure of man, nor the praise of man, not my coveting, nor my refusal to do what God has called me to do, but God's Word and God's Will. When you reach that.... You will be bold, you will be empowered, and you will be able to endure. Just look at Paul.

(1 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

(1 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJV) So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

(1 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV) For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

Paul ministered full-time, and worked full-time. No one can deny the heart of a volunteer. The worker is worthy of his wages the Lord says, yet Paul often worked so not to financially burden the church, or to make it clear that what he was doing was surely not a job:

1 Timothy 5:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

1 Corinthians 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

Acts 18:2–3 (NKJV) ² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 20:33–34 (NKJV) ³³ I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

(1 Thessalonians 2:10 NKJV) You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

(1 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV) as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

(1 Thessalonians 2:12 NKJV) that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Now when we know why we are doing what we are doing, then we will rightly "do" it as unto the Lord, we will have the heart of God, and again, then everything changes!

Notice, here is family

Three things he remembers of them:

1. v.7 - Like a mother up all night
2. v.9 - We were working brothers, so we can be relatable to you
3. v.11 - We were a challenging father, sometimes we have to be tough and exhort.

v.7 - Like a mother – sometimes up all night

(1 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

The word nurse here means "a nursing mother," like a mother hen. This is Paul's expression to them, I've been a nursing mother, a mother bird to you. Oh the gentleness of Paul. He was a tender as a mother to them.

Jesus said, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). Jesus identifies Himself in many ways in Scripture. He calls Himself the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. He protects His sheep, and someday He is going to gather them all into a fold where they will be safe with Him. Then He also uses this idea of the mother hen with her little chicks.

Matthew 23:37 (NKJV) ³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

I read a story about a farmer who had a fire and lost all his livestock. In the morning he was walking the burnt area and came across his hen. He said he kicked the hen with his foot, and out came from underneath her outstretched wings, all her little chicks. How many times the Lord Jesus says to us, "Just come in under My wings."

Paul was that kind of minister. He loved the Thessalonians with a mother's love. They were dear to him. There are still ministers like that today. Maybe they aren't all great expositors, but they believe the Word of God and preach it. Such godly and experienced pastors are able to counsel people who are in need of help. You don't need to be afraid to sit down and open your heart to such a man and let him help you

v.9 - We were working brothers - so we can be relatable to you

(1 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV) For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

I remember growing up, me and my brother, we shared everything. We shared a room, clothes, bikes, sports equipment, everything. We would fight and compete to the point we were warring. But now if someone else came against my brother, or me, look out for the lion was unleashed – no one touches my brother. Brothers/sisters have a bond, united by the same blood, they can relate to each other. Paul came and worked side by side with the people of this church. He was relatable to them. There are some things my mother just doesn't understand, nor my father, but immediately my brother does. Paul lived among the people, he hung out with them. There is special place for that in our Christian relationships today.

I am reminded of the story that is told by pastor Don McClure the when growing up he and two of his other brothers or coming home from school one day and his one brother got any fight with another boy and as he was fighting that boy the father was just happening to come home from work and he drove by very slowly as he watched fight transpiring and the boys knew that when they got home their father was not going to be pleased because he was a very godly man. And so when they walked into the house the father was in his chair reading his newspaper and the boys tried to slip by but the father said sons come in here and he lowered his newspaper looking over it he said to the three boys if I ever see this again there will surely be trouble in this home. So they were waiting for the brother who was fighting to receive the full wrath but the father went on to say if I ever see one of you in a fight in any of you standing by and watching the fight rather than joining the fight there will surely be trouble in this home you will never leave one of your brothers to fight alone.

Beloved, we must never leave and let one of our brothers left to fight alone, we must join into the fight next to them.

v.11 - We were a challenging father - sometimes we have to be tough and exhort.

(1 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV) as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

Paul charged them. This has a note of severity in it – it involves discipline.

It is tough to be the tough guy. I would love to just be the brother to my son, just hanging out, at times we do, but first and foremost God has called me to be a father, therefore I have to correct and speak the hard truth – why, for the next verse, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

We need to be all of these to each other. Sometimes just comforting as a mother, other times just being there as a brother, and other times being stern and direct as a father.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Title: There's Something About You – and it is a Good Thing

1 Thessalonians 2:13–20 (NKJV) ¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶ forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Our Passage Today / Context

The context of our study today is chapter 1 through 2:1-12, as we studied last week that Paul said our coming to you (church of Thessalonica) was not in vain (emptiness), but fruitfulness and greatly profitable. Paul said we simply preached the gospel (in it's entirety), not trying to make God acceptable to man, but man acceptable to God, for man's sin separates him from the HOLY God. And they gladly received it and their lives were changed, they turned from idols, their lives were changed, so much so that all the surrounding regions was talking about their conversion and faith.

1 Thessalonians 1:6–2:12 (NKJV) ⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. ¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. ³ For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. ⁴ But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

There's Something About You

In our verses today Paul isn't so much teaching, but encouraging them, telling them what is so special about them. I want you to notice the personal pronoun "you" as we read our passage today, ten times in 6 verses the word "you" is used, and throw in a couple "your" for good measure. Paul is talking about what made them, what makes them so special. Again this church, these believers, are a model church and believer, that world sees (all of Macedonia), but..... even if the world doesn't see, God does, and he has his servant Paul remind them of what makes them so special, of what God sees in them and is proud of and moves His heart. Ten times in six verses, "you"; the title of today's study is: There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing.

1 Thessalonians 2:13–20 (NKJV) ¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when **you** received the word of God which **you** heard from us, **you** welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in **you** who believe. ¹⁴ For **you**, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For **you** also suffered the same things from **your** own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶ forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Therefore we

wanted to come to **you**—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For **you** are our glory and joy.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Outline (1 Thessalonians 2:13-20)

There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:

- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Received, You Welcomed– the Word of God (2:13)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - The Word of God Works in You – Effectively (2:13)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Imitated, You Suffered – Just Like the Early Church Did (2:14-18)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Are the Glory of the Church and God – the Crown of Rejoicing (2:19-20)

There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:

- You Received, You Welcomed– the Word of God (2:13)

(1 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV) For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when **you** received the word of God which **you** heard from us, **you** welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in **you** who believe.

Paul continues to give thanks for the way the Thessalonians received the word and continued in it. They did not receive the word as from men, but from God Himself.

They receive the word and they welcomed the word.

1. Received - means to accept - paralambano, par-al-am-ban'-o
2. Welcomed - to embrace whole heartedly - dechomai, dekh'-om-ahee.

They received the word of God, and I think of Matthew 13 the parable of the sower and the seed, and the seed (the word of God) fell on good ground and it produced much fruit, and that is what happens in every person's life where the word is received and falls on good ground..... just as it is said here, it works effectively in the believer's life (those who receive it). They did not receive the word as from men, but from God Himself.

Matthew 13:23 (NKJV) ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

And they “welcomed it” we read, they embraced it wholeheartedly. They did not receive the word as from men, but from God Himself. John chapter 1, the word was God Himself, they were fellowshiping with God Himself, it was Revelation 3:20 a personal intimacy, a dining together, a communion and oneness together.

John 1:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Revelation 3:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

How could Paul visit a city for a mere three weeks, hold a few Bible Studies, then get run out of town on a rail, yet still leave behind a growing, vibrant church? There's one explanation. As Paul put it, "The word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe." God's Word works! The Bible believed changes lives.

Acts 17:2 (NKJV) ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

The word of God is God's tool which He uses to build his church, it is His best weapon for winning victories that glorifies His name.

Jeremiah 23:28–29 (NKJV) ²⁸ "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD. ²⁹ "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

Hebrews 4:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

What is it you are trying to build today in your life, what is it that is coming against you today? May we receive the Word, and Welcome the Word and let it do what it is designed to do.

We must affirm with Martin Luther that the preaching of the Word is the first essential mark of the church. Luther believed so strongly in the centrality of preaching that he stated, "Now, wherever you hear or see this Word preached, believed, professed, and lived, do not doubt that the true ecclesia sancta catholica [Christian, holy people] must be there.... And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian, holy people must exist there, for God's Word cannot be without God's people and, conversely, God's people cannot be without God's Word."

Mohler, R. A. J. (2008). The Primacy of Preaching. In D. Kistler (Ed.), Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching (p. 1). Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing.

Oh the power and riches of His word. Every time we come here and open up His word we believe it is God Himself speaking to us, and we approach it like Moses then on the backside of the desert, that we are standing on holy ground. God says to Moses take off your sandals, and I believe He says that because He doesn't want anything coming before us and Him and the Word He is going to speak. We believe we are standing on holy ground, and thus why we go to such great lengths to a distraction free environment, where we guard the ground (where the word of God is going forth) as holy ground. Moses, take off your sandals, let there be nothing between us, turn off your cell-phone, leave your children in the children's church, don't be chatting to your neighbor, draw near Moses I have something holy (uncommon) to say to you, to tell you.

Exodus 3:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:

- The Word of God Works in You – Effectively (2:13)

(1 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV) which also effectively works in you who believe.

Effectively works – (Greek – energeo), our word "energy". The Word works, it has built in power with it. It's power does the work in our lives..... effectively. You have the word of God doing mighty work in you.

I love the spiritual picture that's given in Matthew chapter 14 when Jesus feeds the multitude with five loaves and two fish. The bread is a picture of the word of God the spiritual Manna from heaven and it says that he blessed it, then he broke it, and then it multiplied. There is an easy outline to how to have a great Bible study. Take the word of God before you, look to the Father to bless the word you are going to study, then break it down (word-by-word, piece-by-piece, bite-by-bite), and watch God multiply it in your life, feed you a spiritual banquet.

Matthew 14:17–21 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ He said, "Bring them here to Me." ¹⁹ Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He **blessed** and **broke** and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. ²⁰ So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. ²¹ Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

But I want to zero in right now on "broke it". Oh what happens when His word breaks us, and we are broken. I am reminded of the woman in Bethany just days before the crucifixion. She had heard the words of Jesus and it broke it, and now wants to come and pour out a sacrifice of praise unto Him.

John 12:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

This touching story of how Yeshua (Jesus) was anointed before His crucifixion carries a beautiful illustration that has ministered to me time and again. I have wondered why the alabaster box needed to be broken when Mary could have simply opened it and poured out the nard; (extremely expensive and precious perfume which might have been Mary's dowry). One commentator said that she refused to use that box for any other purpose after anointing Him. That would make sense if it was Mary's dowry because it would be an expression of a bridal vow to Yeshua and no one else. But whatever the motive in her heart, Mary's example speaks powerfully of the total devotion and commitment her soul had for Yeshua, her will to give the best of everything she had; and it speaks of brokenness followed by anointing and its beautiful fragrance. So I believe this act is an illustration meant to encourage every devoted soul whose offering of herself brings circumstances which "break" her. The fragrance of perfume following the breaking "fills the room".

Broken people "smell" different. Their humility and love are an ambiance that is unmistakable. Being broken before the Lord affects everyone around...as the Apostle Paul said, "... we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;" [2 Corinthians 2:15]. And Paul was a broken man.

2 Corinthians 2:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

We should never be ashamed to be broken, even if we are criticized by those around us, as Mary was. The Lord's commendation of her has traveled around the world for 2,000 years and inspired millions of believers in circumstances that break them. God will not deny a broken heart and a contrite spirit. When we offer ourselves and our most precious things, whether they be material, personal, dreams, longings, loved ones, or our very destinies, on the altar of sacrifice, it is then that God's anointing will be greatest upon us. It will pour out of us like the ointment from that broken alabaster box -- and His pleasure in us will "fill the room".

Beloved, know that when you offer your best to the Lord your hard beautiful stone box will be broken, and after that, the fragrance of your life will be beautiful wherever you go.

Like the church in Thessalonica, like you, the Word works, it has built in power with it. It's power does the work in our lives..... effectively. You have the word of God doing mighty work in you.

There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:

- You Imitated, You Suffered – Just Like the Early Church Did (2:14-18)

(1 Thessalonians 2:14 NKJV) For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

(1 Thessalonians 2:15 NKJV) who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,

(1 Thessalonians 2:16 NKJV) forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

The Thessalonians had been persecuted for about a year now. The Christians in Jerusalem and Judea had been persecuted for 20 years. This church is in good company, there was just something about them, just as there is something special about you, as the world presses in on your faith, criticizes it, attacks it, wrongly accuse your motives, you are in good company.

Acts 8:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Acts 11:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

Whenever you think you've got it tough, remember there's someone somewhere who's worse off. Years ago, I heard about a young man named Kyle Maynard. He played 11-year-old football for Collins Hill. Kyle was a defensive nose-guard, but what made his participation so unique is that Kyle has no arms or legs. He would crawl across the field on his nubs. I remember reading a quote from one of his teammates,

"Everyone has reasons to quit that aren't as good as his reasons to quit. And he doesn't quit."

When you think you've got it rough - your family rejects you, or your co-workers ridicule you, or a boss rides you - think of the believers in the world today who are behind bars and being tortured for their faith.

For their (these religious persecutors) actions and persecution, there is a wrath to come. God is ever so patient, but there is a wrath to come, and may we pray for them that they will escape the wrath to come through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ who takes away the sin of the world, for all who will believe.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(1 Thessalonians 2:17 NKJV) 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.

(1 Thessalonians 2:18 NKJV) Therefore we wanted to come to you; even I, Paul, time and again; but Satan hindered us.

Couldn't wait to see you so we could fellowship, but Satan hindered us. We have a very real adversary that can hinder us from reaching others, he can make us ill, our kids ill, or have the best TV shows on the same night as bible study. Don't underestimate his ability to hinder us.

In a million ways, our enemy can engineer little distractions to keep us from visiting a friend, or bowing to pray, or getting our family to church! What we're tempted to chalk up to coincidence can be an attack.

Ephesians 6, we are in a spiritual warfare Christian, don't faint nor grow weary in the battle, there is a real enemy hindering our lives and work, and the battle must be fought in prayer.

Ephesians 6:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Luke 18:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

Remember the story of Daniel, he had to wait on his prayer answer.

Daniel 10:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

Paul will see shortly, pray without ceasing. That is the shortest verse in the Bible. Some say now "Jesus wept", but in my observation, in the original language, Jesus wept is actually three Greek words, and pray without ceasing is two Greek words. My point, God is making the point, short and sweet and clear..... Church PRAY!

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ pray without ceasing,

What would have happened had Peter stayed watchful in prayer in the garden that night? Would it have changed the cross, no! the cross is why He came. What would it have changed, why did Jesus speak so directly of charging them for not praying if was not going to change the outcome of the cross? I suggest to you what would have changed that night, and it would have been Peter. Prayer would have prepared Peter for what was ahead of him that night, and so too will it prepare you for what is ahead of you this day, the next day, and the likes. I believe missing from the scriptures had Peter remained watchful in prayer for that hour would have been the account the chopping off of Malchus' ear, because Peter would have been in control of his flesh because he would have been Intune and in alignment with Jesus and His mission, the cross. I think missing would have been the fireside, "I do not know the man", not because Peter would have said "I'm with Him", but probably because Peter would not have been at the courtyard of the High Priest, but because he was back at the garden of Gethsemane praying, like Jesus would go when He needed to talk to the Father.

Matthew 26:40–41 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Prayer prepares us for what is before us.

I speculate of course, but I wonder how much different the Bible account would have been that night had they "watched for that hour", and I wonder that same for myself, and how many days may have been different had I prayed. So, tomorrow may we remember, prayer prepares us for what is before us.

[There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:](#)

- You Are the Glory of the Church and God – the Crown of Rejoicing (2:19-20)

(1 Thessalonians 2:19 NKJV) 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?

(1 Thessalonians 2:20 NKJV) For **you** are our glory and joy.

There are 5 crowns spoken of in the bible:

- Incorruption –
- **(1 Corinthians 9:25 NKJV)** And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an **imperishable crown**.

- Rejoicing –
- **(1 Thessalonians 2:19 NKJV)** 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?

- Righteousness –

- *(2 Timothy 4:8 NKJV) Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
- Life –
- *(James 1:12 NKJV) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*
- *Revelation 2:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*
- Glory –
- *1 Peter 5:1–4 (NKJV)¹ The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

Amazing our Lord took a “crown of thorns” so we may the imperishable crown, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory! What type of God is He, that would take a crown of thorns, to give us crowns!

John 19:1–3 (NKJV)¹ So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.² And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.³ Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.

I live my life, looking forward to that day, to cast my crowns (along with the 24 elders) at His feet and simply praise Him and say You are worthy to receive all glory and honor

Revelation 4:9–11 (NKJV)⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus

Jesus considered the cross worth it for the joy of us with Him, forever.

(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The greatest joy in the world is seeing others come to Christ because of our witness, To watch people mature and break free from bondage and go forth in their walk.

Hey take your lumps and bruises, it will be worth it... Paul did for the church in Thessalonica, and then the church of Thessalonica did for the world around them.

at His coming?

Paul wrote this believing the Lord was coming soon, read his letters years later, and He believed it just the same.

I had only been saved for 10 years but have been listening to Pastor Chuck for 25 years; what do I mean by that is I got saved in the 90's but was listen to Chuck tapes recorded in 70s. One thing that stands out to me is how I listen to his tapes from 1977, and sure in his voice was the soon return of Jesus, you can sense the excitement in his soul. I met him, and talked with him, listen to him teach, and he was even more excited about the soon return of Jesus Christ then, then 25 years prior. He lived a life that truly believed Christ was coming back, and it came out in everything he said and did.... He never grew weary waiting, but more and more sure, and more and more excited.

Christ is coming back church, for His church, and we are His glory, and thus let us rejoice!

Again, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Outline (1 Thessalonians 2:13-20)

There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:

- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Received, You Welcomed – the Word of God (2:13)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - The Word of God Works in You – Effectively (2:13)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Imitated, You Suffered – Just Like the Early Church Did (2:18-16)
- There is Something about You – and it is a Good Thing:
 - You Are the Glory of the Church and God – the Crown of Rejoicing (2:19-20)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)

- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Chapter Three

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8

Title: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

1 Thessalonians 3:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ² and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, ³ that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴ For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵ 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. ⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you—⁷ therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline

Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Communion

I would like to start our service off with the taking of communion, as we do this in remembrance of what the Lord did for us. He said for as often as we do this, we proclaim he is coming back too! He came once take our sin away, and next time He comes, He is coming to take us away! And I say come quickly Lord Jesus. I love how "The Book" ends, Jesus saying surely I am coming quickly.... And the people answer and say.....come Lord Jesus! But I can relate to those saints in Revelation 6 who say "How long O Lord!

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Revelation 22:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Revelation 6:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Do you remember the story of Joseph in Egypt, and he made them promise that when the day came to leave Egypt they were to take his "old dead bones" with them. So someone had to go bust into the tomb to get his bones, then there they are carrying away all their possessions and then a handful of them have to carry his bones too (probably on some type of gurney/stretcher to hold the coffin he was in) on their shoulders. It would be something very reverent for sure, as these were the bones of Joseph himself. Sometimes you wonder if Joseph was just being emotional when he gave the charge to bring his bones when they left. And.... Consider this, that for forty years of wilderness wandering, forty years before they will enter the Promised Land, they are carrying his "old dead bones" with them. We read in Joshua chapter 24 the bones of Joseph finally being buried in the Promised Land. I ponder if he put a burden upon already a great burden. But I don't think so, as you hold this bread and cup in your hand, for like this bread and cup in your hand, every time they would see Joseph's body (lifted up on those shoulders) they would remember the promises of God are true, and will never fail, and they would be set free from Egypt, and they would enter the Promised Land, and the bones of Joseph were the reminder it was so and would be so. And as we take this cup, and look at Him (Jesus) who was lifted up upon the cross, this bread and cup is our reminder that we have been delivered from Egypt, and we are going to the Promised Land of our inheritance..... heaven! It is sure and true.

Exodus 13:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

Joshua 24:32 (NKJV) ³² The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Genesis 50:24–26 (NKJV) ²⁴ And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." ²⁶ So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

It is all because of Jesus we celebrate today, and it is all because of the cross and His finished work, that we can rest.... It is done!

John 19:29–30 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

And a word to whomever this applies to today, and that is you are bitter, you have been bitter at someone, some event, maybe God Himself and you wonder how you can ever be set free from it, and life be sweet again. When Israel had just started their journey from the Red Sea, they were three days without water, and they came to a spring in an area called Marah, but they could not drink of the waters because they were bitter. To which the people complained, so Moses cried out to the Lord what shall I do, and the Lord showed him a tree and said cast it into the water, and immediately the water became sweet. I pray today you see the tree, the cross, and know God desires to put that pain and bitterness behind, the pain of Egypt and all that happened to you there, and come and see how the cross and the sweetness of it. As we take the bread and cup, we remember all that it promises, and all that it does.

Exodus 15:22–25 (NKJV) ²² So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³ Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" ²⁵ So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them,

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 3:1 NKJV) Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,

Paul is in Athens. Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to Berea after being driven out of Thessalonica. They taught the Word to the Bereans, who were good students. But the same people who drove Paul out of Thessalonica followed him to Berea, forcing them to leave for Athens.

Acts 17:10–15 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

We ended chapter two with Paul saying I wanted to come to you but Satan has hindered me. Paul says we couldn't stand it anymore, we have to know how are you doing, therefore even though I can't come I'm sending Timothy, I just have to know how you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 2:17–20 (NKJV) ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

Paul said we can no longer endure it, we had to find out how you were doing. He repeats this statement again in verse 5.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (NKJV) ⁵ 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.

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Were Willing To be Left Alone (3:1)
- We Sent Our Hearts to You (3:2)
- We Wanted to Establish You and Encourage You (3:2)
- We Wanted You to Know Afflictions Should be Expected (3:3-4)
- We Worried the Devil Deceived You (3:5-6)
- We Are One Link Away From Each Other (7-8)

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Were Willing To be Left Alone (3:1)

(1 Thessalonians 3:1 NKJV) Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,

Paul is willing to be left alone in Athens, in verse 2 he is sending Timothy. Paul is willing to be left alone, for the sake of the church in Thessalonica. He was hindered by Satan from coming to see them and be with them. He repeats his longing to see them and be with them again in verse 5. You can just hear it in his voice (lifting off these pages) of how longingly he wanted to be with them.

He had only spent 3 Sabbaths with them, yet his heart is knit to them. Paul had a special relationship with this church, but so too every church and Christian he encountered (Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, etc). I pondered this, and I said what a shepherd's heart. Then I remembered back to the Ukraine in 1995, I was in Bible College at that time. I met a pastor way out in the middle of nowhere in Ukraine as they asked me if I would go visit him as he hadn't had American fellowship for a few years at that point. I took a train ride probably about 500 miles to get to him. We immediately connected, and our hearts were knit together. And I still to this day have the piece of paper he wrote me, which he said remember Ray a shepherd's heart cannot be taught, it given by God, you have it, ask God to show you.

I believe that applies to each and every one of us here today, I believe that for those who care, God gives this type of heart to, like Paul's, and we don't have to be anything in and of ourselves, but simply ask the Lord to show us what He has put in our hearts. O Lord we want to love and care for people like we see here in Paul's heart. People are eternal, everything else around us is stuff that burns. Lord, help us to love people like this, to which He will say.... Ok, you are asking for my heart, for love of people is my will, I will give you this heart.

Do you remember when Jesus in Matthew 17 was coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, which totally blew the minds of the disciples. They asked Jesus, why do the scribes say Elijah has to come first before all things are restored, as they are putting two and two together and saying the RESTORER is here, we just saw it with our own eyes, but we haven't seen Elijah so something seems to be out of order. But Jesus says Elijah did come, and they rejected him, and it says the disciples understood that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist (that had been killed only a few months back). Here is the significance, the same Spirit that was upon Elijah, was upon John, was upon Paul, and is upon you.

Matthew 17:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. ¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:13–17 (NKJV) ¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Acts 1:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Oh the power and freedom of simply receiving rather than the maker! What do I mean by that? Remember Exodus 16, wilderness wandering of Israel, thirsting, but now hungering; and God provided them manna from heaven (to feed an estimated 2.5 million people). But the power and the freedom for Moses, he did not have to be the baker, the bread maker, just the receiver, the giver of what God provided. For us, the same holds true, looking unto the Lord and saying Lord I want this heart, give it to me, put it in me, show it to me, and we are relieved of having to be someone great (oh if I was only a Paul, an Elijah, a John the Baptist then I could love like this). Instead of us being the giver, the maker, we simply become the receiver, and then we give what has been given unto us, just like Moses did, Paul, Elijah, and John. That greatest is within each and every one of us – as we simply ask, and it will be given unto us.

Exodus 16:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. ⁵ And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

Matthew 7:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Lots of gatherings, and I have been to a few of them over my life, where people “tarry” for the Holy Spirit to give “power” to do great things for the Lord (and I think that is great), but what if right now we all, go beyond Bible study, and say Lord I want to love people, like Paul did. Paul, who could no longer endure them just being some distant relationship, but so close they made his heart move just wanting to see them living and walking in the things of the Lord; right now, we say Lord the same spirit that was upon Elijah, John, and Paul is upon me. Yes power to do great things is great.... But the greatest is love, Lord I want to love people like this.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV) ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

James 1 says if we lack wisdom, ask God and He will it liberally. A synonym for that word wisdom there in James means, “knowledge and holy love of the will of God”. Oh God, please give us the heart like Paul, who had your heart, a shepherd’s heart, that cant be taught, it is given from above. Give us the love of people, and then we will have true power

James 1:5 (NKJV) ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

5428 φρόνησις [phronesis /fron-ay-sis/] n f. From 5426; TDNT 9:220; TDNTA 1277; GK 5860; Two occurrences; AV translates as “wisdom” once, and “prudence” once. 1 understanding. 2 *knowledge and holy love of the will of God*. Additional Information: For synonyms see entries 1108, gnosis; 4678, sophia; and 4907, sunesis. See entry 5826 for comparison of synonyms.

Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Sent Our Hearts to You (3:2)

(1 Thessalonians 3:2 NKJV) and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

Also, notice too, Paul was willing to forego Timothy's friendship for a time, so he could go to Thessalonica. And there's a lesson here for us... Paul would spend forever with Timothy, he wasn't so selfish that he couldn't let go of a friend to help the Thessalonians. We too, should resist the urge to huddle up, only with folks we like. Let's keep reaching out to new believers

Paul send his heart to these people by sending Timothy who has a heart just like Paul for these people.

Here we have a description of Timothy: A Brother, A Minister of God, A Fellow Laborer:

A Brother:

We studied what it was to be a brother last study. A brother can relate like no one can.

A Minister of God:

The word minister, diakonos, dee-ak'-on-os; (to run on errands); an attendant, i.e. (gen.) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); a teacher and pastor (a deacon or deaconess):--deacon, minister, servant.

The word minister means servant. Our culture has it all wrong, people like to be called Reverend, which means to be respected, but minister means servant. Now we don't call waiters Reverend, we don't call Flight Attendants Reverend do we. Unfortunately, the world, and much of the church, has lost the true meaning of what a minister truly is, he/she is a servant. Ministers are not meant to be served, but to serve others. We are all ministers, for we are all to be servants of others.

First use of this word in the Bible:

(Matthew 20:25 KJV) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

(Matthew 20:26 KJV) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

(Matthew 20:27 KJV) And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

(Matthew 20:28 KJV) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

This is a mistake by people who want to be used by the Lord for they can fall into the trap of taking advantage of the Title and position – and be served rather than serving; they lose relatability to the people they are to be serving. Timothy was a brother, he related to the people.

I remember the first funeral I did. I called to talk to the funeral home, and they asked me what is my official name so they can put it on the "officiating record". I said Ray Bollas, they said is that Father Ray, I said no, they said is it Reverend Ray, I said no, they said, is it the most Most Reverend Ray Bollas. Obviously they were looking for a Title. I said well if you want to be real formal, you can call me Raymond.....of course he replies, Reverend Raymond. But minister

A Fellow Laborer:

Literally means to be a Team Player. You will never be a team player if you are not first a brother, and servant. These are three essential qualities to have if you want to be use by the Lord in your home, workplace or at your school. As we studied in our first study, Paul was no lone ranger, nor should we be. There has to be a linkage between the body. I might also add, if God has a future ministry for you, be faithful to the one He has you in now. If you know God is moving you out of one ministry and into another, be faithful to the one you are in, be a team player until your season is over

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Wanted to Establish You and Encourage You (3:2)

(1 Thessalonians 3:2 NKJV) and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

Paul and company wanted to establish and encourage these believers concerning their faith.

- Establish – to make firm, unmovable
- Encourage – to cheer them on, to coach them (teach and instruct), for that is what a team player does, he is looking for the good of the whole team, and each individual on the team.

Here is a sure prayer answer, ask God who can I reach out to, to establish and encourage today, and you can be sure that God will answer that prayer. Your first prayer may need to be..... Lord make me a “team player”.

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Wanted You to Know Afflictions Should be Expected (3:3-4)

(1 Thessalonians 3:3 NKJV) that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

(1 Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV) For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

Paul says don't be bummed nor surprised when you hear we have afflictions and problems. Paul is going to dispel the ole “of course you're happy, why shouldn't you be happy, you got it all.” Then they go on with the; you got that job, that mate, those looks, that.....

Nobody is gona charge Paul with those things, he knows hard times, he can relate to those who are joyous, and those who are suffering,

yourselves know that we are appointed to this

Appointed, it was scheduled in Paul's Day Planner that he would suffer much tribulation.

Imagine Paul's Day Planner read daily:

1. Prayer (5am)
2. Preach (10am)
3. Persecution (12pm)

Paul left Thessalonica because he himself was the flashpoint, and his departure might cool tempers - but it didn't extinguish the opposition. He knew persecution would continue to be directed toward the believers... so too I should add, we are living in the so-called “cancel-culture” and anything you say that goes contrary to mainstream media and politics, gets cancelled; I just want to say, don't think they will be content with just silencing the “big ones”, for after they finish with them, they will move on to the next, and the next, and the next, and at some point, like this little church in Thessalonica, you!

The Lord told Paul from the beginning that he would suffer many things for the Lord:

Acts 9:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”

The Sun Rises in the East (from the “Insanity of God”)

A great book to read, a great docudrama to watch is “The Insanity of God” – which is about modern stories of persecuted churches and brothers and sisters around the world.

One morning Viktor arranged for me to meet with a group of his friends—several Russian pastors, some evangelists and church planters, and some elders—a cross section of his church. I listened in wonder as these believers almost casually recounted being sent to prison for “five years,” “three years,” or “seven years” and being “beaten,” “forced to sleep naked in a cold, damp cell” or “having nothing but moldy bread and boiled cabbage to eat for months.” These same men shared joyful memories of “the time when my wife and son visited me in prison,” “when I was placed in a cell with another believer who could encourage me as I encouraged him,” and “how the church cared for the needs of my family while I was in prison.”

When we stopped to eat lunch, I gently scolded the group, saying: “Your stories are amazing. Why haven’t they been written down? Your stories sound like Bible stories come to life! I can’t believe that you haven’t collected them in a book, or recorded them in some video form. Other followers of Jesus around the world could hear your stories and be encouraged by what God is doing here among those who are persecuted.”

They seemed confused by what I was saying. Clearly, we were not understanding each other. Then one of older pastors stood and motioned for me to follow him. He led me over to a large window in the front room of the home. As we stood together in front of the window, the old gentleman speaking passable, but heavily accented, English said to me: “I understand that you have some sons, Nik. Is that true?”

I told him that it was true. He nodded and then asked me, “Tell me, Nik. How many times have you awakened your sons before dawn and brought them to a window like this one, one that faces east, and said to them, ‘Boys, watch carefully. This morning you’re going to see the sun coming up in the east! It’s going to happen in just a few more minutes. Get ready now, boys.’ How many times have you done that with your sons?”

“Well,” I chuckled, “I’ve never done that. If I ever did that, my boys would think I was crazy. The sun always comes up in the east. It happens every morning!”

The old man nodded and smiled. I didn’t understand his point.

I didn’t understand his point, that is, until he continued: “Nik, that’s why we haven’t made books and movies out of these stories that you have been hearing. For us, persecution is like the sun coming up in the east. It happens all the time. It’s the way things are. There is nothing unusual or unexpected about it. Persecution for our faith has always been—and probably always will be—a normal part of life.”

Pray for Them

I think one of the quickest pathways to a hard heart, critical heart, selfish heart, is to forget the persecuted church, and persecuted brothers and sisters

We are told in Hebrews 13:3, we are to remember our brothers in chains. I pray today, the Lord gives us a heart for the persecuted church and brethren around the world. We will need God to give us that shepherd heart we asked for earlier, knowing that it can’t be taught, it can only be given.

Hebrews 13:3 (NKJV) ³ Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

But how do I pray for them you may ask and there’s so many to pray for, to which I would say just pick one and pray for them and let God take it from there. Just pick one day a week and make that a part of your prayer time and let God take it from there. But as we’ve been studying when you can no longer endure it is because God has change your heart for them and therefore you have the heart of God.

[Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!](#)

- [We Worried the Devil Deceived You \(3:5-6\)](#)

(1 Thessalonians 3:5 NKJV) 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.

(1 Thessalonians 3:6 NKJV) But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you;

Paul knew his enemies in Thessalonica had lied about him, and tried to discredit him. He was glad the believers had not been swayed. What a relief to hear of their continued faith in Christ, and their love for him.

Paul loved them as a nursing mother, a brother, and a father – yet how many times people came behind Paul and challenged his character, attacked his motives, and destroyed the people Paul was pouring into. How heartbreaking that must have continually been for Paul. If you have ever been there, you know it. The only way to continue on, not quit, is to stay in that heart of God, by having the shepherd's heart that is given, not taught. Anything less, and we will be critical, resentful, and of no use to the Lord in ministry. Because the greatest of these is love!

1 Thessalonians 2:4–12 (NKJV) ⁴ But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Are One Link Away From Each Other (7-8)

(1 Thessalonians 3:7 NKJV) therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.

(1 Thessalonians 3:8 NKJV) For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

I had to find out, did the tempter take you down, did he get to you. Ahh what comfort it was when the report came back that they were doing well.

A struggle me and Renee have is we are always saying, I wonder how so and so is doing, I wonder how such and such went. Lets call (but there is never enough time), or we can't wait until Thursdays Bible Study to catch up. I can relate to how Paul is feeling here. He had to hear how they were doing. If you ever get busy or drift away and we don't see you for a while, and you receive a call from me or Renee, its not that we are sin-sniffing, but to make sure that the tempter didn't get you.

Your strength strengthened us. It is one big chain link. A link can't move without effecting the rest of the chain. A weak link or broken link, will effect the whole chain. We are not island as we started with, or lone rangers. Also, you can't drop out of this thing called Christianity and think it will only effect you, and not others. It is amazing when someone falls how many people it effects, it is quite wonderful in a sense that when one person grieves or suffers personally how many people grieve with them for their sake.

Outline: Therefore, When We Could No Longer Endure It!

- We Were Willing To be Left Alone (3:1)
- We Sent Our Hearts to You (3:2)
- We Wanted to Establish You and Encourage You (3:2)
- We Wanted You to Know Afflictions Should be Expected (3:3-4)
- We Worried the Devil Deceived You (3:5-6)
- We Are One Link Away From Each Other (7-8)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Chapter 4

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 3:9 – 4:12

Title: The Will of God for Your Life

1 Thessalonians 3:9–13 (NKJV) ⁹ For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? ¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–12 (NKJV) ¹ 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; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ 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. ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. ⁹ 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; ¹⁰ 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; ¹¹ 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, ¹² that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline

Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) *remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Passage Context / Title

Paul's heart just pours forth for these people. In light that Jesus is coming back soon, he will pray fervently for them that they be found blameless in holiness at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Title: The Will of God for Your Life. Paul is pouring his heart out for them that they be found blameless when He comes. Oh my heart today is that you will be set apart and be blameless.

1 Thessalonians 3:1 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,

1 Thessalonians 3:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 3:9 NKJV) For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,

As he thinks of them, he burst forth in prayer and thanksgiving for them

Paul is saying nothing satisfies him more than to know they are doing well.

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

Paul always did well because he was others centered. It wasn't how am I doing, is everything all right for me, he didn't sing the me song. Do you want to make yourself miserable, I mean truly deep down depressed and miserable? Then think about yourself. If that doesn't depress you, nothing will.

Paul says there in verse 8, when you live, we live, Paul lived for others.

1 Thessalonians 3:8 (NKJV) ⁸ *For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.*

(1 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV) night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

(1 Thessalonians 3:11 NKJV) Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

Paul only knew them for three weeks, yet he had this depth of love for them, why? Because here in verse ten, he prayed for them night and day.

See prayer will cause you to action, you can't sit idly by, you have to do something. Verse 5, Paul says, *For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith.* When you pray for that loved one's salvation you will be lead to share with them, or pray for that missionary you will be lead to go join them for a week or two, or send finances to help them. Prayer will lead you to action.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (NKJV) ⁵ *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.*

(1 Thessalonians 3:12 NKJV) And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

If I am not others centered, it is because I am not praying for others. Prayer unites and knits our hearts together.

Paul wants them to increase and grow in their walk with the Lord. Paul all along has been saying it is great where you have come are and have come from, but what he is also saying is, don't get comfortable. I am so proud of you, you have been a beacon to the whole region, you are known for you faith, labor of love, and hope of His return, but don't get comfortable and start to slow down – God wants to increase you.

(Jeremiah 48:11 NKJV) "Moab has been at ease from his youth; He has settled on his dregs, And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, Nor has he gone into captivity. Therefore his taste remained in him, And his scent has not changed.

(Jeremiah 48:12 NKJV) "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I shall send him wine-workers Who will tip him over And empty his vessels And break the bottles.

The Lord was speaking to a group that was getting real comfortable, settling into their ease, and God says I'm going to pour them from vessel to vessel. Pouring from vessel to vessel was how they made wine in that day. They would stomp the grapes, then pour the juice into a vessel and let it sit and settle. As the impurities would settle into the bottom, the wine maker would pour the wine into another vessel leaving the impurities behind. If he left it too long with the impurities it would take on the flavor of the dregs – which isn't good. They would do this over and over, until the wine was pure, and sparkling.

Imagine the wine saying I was just getting comfortable, and you stirred me up, agitated me. It doesn't know that the end result is wine that is pure. How often everything is the way I like it, then the boss says your fired, the coach says you're benched, the boyfriend says bye-bye. As uncomfortable as these things are, sometimes He allows them in our lives to move us out of our comfort zones, so that we may increase and abound.

Trials don't make or break you, but reveal what is already inside you. My mind can deceive my self, I can think all is well until I get moved out of my comfort zone, moved into a trial. The trial and the way I deal with it will show me, wow I've really grown; or I say my, I thought I was past that thing, over that thing, stronger than that.

Moving me out of my comfort zone may reveal to me how greatly my prayer life has dropped off, or how inconsistent my church going has been, or how "seven days without reading the Bible has made one weak." A dark bottle has to be turned upside down to see what is in it. A bump in the road spills coffee on my lap, the bump just showed what was in the cup, it didn't create what was in the cup, rather the bump revealed it. Trials bring out bitterness, anger, and depression – ohh you don't know what that person did to me. Fact, those things were already in me, the trial or person just gave the opportunity to see what was really in my heart. You will be a wise woman or man when you realize your reaction isn't the result of what they did, but what was in you.

We say use me Lord, make me more like you. He says ok, but for that to happen, at times I have to upset you, move you from your comfort zone, so I can make you a purer wine, I can only do that by pouring you from vessel to vessel, lest you take on the flavor of the dregs. You parents, don't you be afraid of upsetting your children, moving them out of their comfort zone, lest they take on the flavor of the dregs.

God says I want you to abound in love, increase in the spirit, so I can pour you out on this world.

(1 Thessalonians 3:13 NKJV) so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

(1 Thessalonians 4:1 NKJV) 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;

(1 Thessalonians 4:2 NKJV) for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

God says I want you to abound in love, increase in the spirit, so I can pour you out on this world.

And, that when Jesus comes back, He will find you blameless in holiness. A Bride adorned in white prepared for her groom.

Isaiah 43:1 (NKJV) ¹ But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

Story of Dmitri of Russia

A great book to read, a great docudrama to watch is "The Insanity of God" – which is about modern stories of persecuted churches and brothers and sisters around the world.

One story was about a man named Dmitri. Dmitri was a Russian pastor leading a house church. As townspeople heard of the powerful manifestations of God taking place among the worshipers, more and more crowded into Dimitri's home to hear about Jesus. One night, more than 150 people gathered.

The authorities couldn't let this continue, so they sent Dmitri a thousand kilometers away from his family and locked him in prison. He was the only believer among 1,500 hardened criminals. His captors tortured him to force him to renounce his faith, but Dmitri held firm. For 17 YEARS!

Nik Ripken's book, The Insanity of God, A True Story of Faith Resurrected, describes what happened next.

“For seventeen years in prison, every morning at daybreak, Dmitri would stand at attention by his bed. As was his custom, he would face the east, raise his arms in praise to God, and then he would sing a HeartSong™ to Jesus.”

The other prisoners would laugh, curse, and jeer. “They’d bang metal cups against the iron bars in angry protest. They threw food and sometimes human waste to try to shut him up and extinguish the only true light shining in that dark place every morning at dawn” (p. 156).

One day, Dmitri found a full sheet of paper and a pencil in the prison yard. “I rushed back to my jail cell, and I wrote every Scripture reference, every Bible verse, every story, and every song I could recall.” He posted it on a damp pipe in his cell as an offering to the Lord. His jailor saw it, beat and punished him, and threatened him with execution.

As jailors dragged him from his cell and down the corridor, “the strangest thing happened. Before they reached the door leading to the courtyard—before stepping out into the place of execution—fifteen hundred hardened criminals stood at attention by their beds. They faced the east and they began to sing . . . the HeartSong™ that they had heard Dmitri sing to Jesus every morning for all those years.”

Shocked, his jailors released their hold and backed away from him.

“Who are you?” one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- “I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!” The guards returned him to his cell and shortly afterward, he was released and returned to his family.

Paul will give us six “you” statements in these twelve verses (4:1-12). These “you” statements Paul calls the “will of God.” Six things God wants you to do so that you are set apart for Him and His use. Six things we as believers need to be doing here and now, daily, our labor of love.

The Will of God for your life:

1. that you should abstain from sexual immorality (4:3)
2. that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor (4:4-5)
3. that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter (4:6-8)
4. to love one another (4:9-10)
5. that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands (4:11)
6. that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing (4:12)

The Will of God for your life:

1 - that you should abstain from sexual immorality (4:3):

(1 Thessalonians 4:3 NKJV) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

Your attention please. Who is Paul talking to? The model church, yet he has to refocus them and direct their attention to the specific point that they are not to be sexually intimate with anyone but their spouses. Why does Paul have to refocus them, because they lived Thessalonica which was a place of major idol worship. Study history and you will see that practically all worship included sexual practices. Thessalonica history tells us had 100’s of idols and temples. Sex was everywhere. You could buy on the corner, you sell it at the temple. Paul is warning the people of the church in Thessalonica that just because you see it all around you, just because it is so easy to get, don’t be lured into it for this is not the will of God for your life.

Why does God call fornication sin, when it is so enjoyable? Because God wants to protect and provide for you. Protect you from what? AIDS, herpes, unwanted pregnancy. I know, you heard all those, and besides you use protection. But there is more to it than your body that God wants to protect you from, He wants to protect your soul:

(Proverbs 6:32 NKJV) Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.

1 Corinthians 6:16–20 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For *“the two,”* He says, *“shall become one flesh.”* ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.* ¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?* ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The issue is not only AIDS, VD, or pregnancy, it is that you are losing a piece of your soul. The world says it is two bodies, God says it is two souls. Every time you enter into that union with another person out side of the bounds of marriage, you are giving a piece of yourself away, a piece of your very soul. Enough times, and you become a shell of a person, never being able to truly give and receive love.....just an empty shell.

Consider this article in the USA Today:

Study links depression, suicide rates to teen sex - By Karen S. Peterson, USA TODAY – 04June2003

A controversial new study links teen sexual intercourse with depression and suicide attempts.

The findings are particularly true for young girls, says the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank that sponsored the research. About 25% of sexually active girls say they are depressed all, most, or a lot of the time; 8% of girls who are not sexually active feel the same. The study comes in the midst of a flurry of new reports on the sexual activity of teenagers. Such research is fodder for the growing debate on sex education in schools. The Bush administration backs abstinence programs.

The Heritage study taps the government-funded National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health. The Heritage researchers selected federal data on 2,800 students ages 14-17. The youngsters rated their own "general state of continuing unhappiness" and were not diagnosed as clinically depressed. The Heritage researchers do not find a causal link between "unhappy kids" and sexual activity, says Robert Rector, a senior researcher with Heritage. "This is really impossible to prove." But he says that study findings send a clear message about unhappy teens that differs from one portrayed in the popular culture, that "all forms of non-marital sexual activity are wonderful and glorious, particularly the younger (teen) the better," he says.

The Heritage study finds:

- About 14% of girls who have had intercourse have attempted suicide ; 5% of sexually inactive girls have.
- About 6% of sexually active boys have tried suicide; less than 1% of sexually inactive boys have.

Tamara Kreinin of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) says "we need to take depression among the young very seriously." But it is a "disservice" to blame sexual activity and ignore "divorce, domestic violence, sexual abuse, substance abuse, lack of parental and community support and questions about sexual orientation," she says. SIECUS supports school programs with information on birth control and abstinence.

But what does God want to provide for you? Love without shame or pain. When you wait and get marriage, and you and your spouse come together, it is a union of two souls becoming one, so much so that they become a part of one another.

Have you failed in that area (again I remind you Paul is talking to the model church here), then repent today, and ask the Lord to make you new. And know this, God forgives you; like the "team player" as we discussed last study, get up and get back into the game for the Lord, there is still a whole lifetime season before you to do well.

(Romans 5:8 KJV) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It Takes Power to Overcome Power

As we have been studying through the Book of Matthew, we saw the passage where Jesus speaks of the power of the Spirit overcoming the power of the "strongman" (which for our application can be the Devil, the world, or our flesh). As we studied, we applied the principal, it

takes power to overcome power, and the same power that rose Jesus from the grave, is not just available to us, but lives in us, and we have the power to overcome all things and anything! For it takes power to overcome power, and thus don't try to overcome this in your power, but call upon His power.

Matthew 12:28-29 (NKJV) ²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Ephesians 1:18-23 (NKJV) ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Faith Means to Place Dependence Upon

I think too often we overcomplicate what faith means. Faith simply means, to put dependence upon. I can have faith in myself and put all dependence upon myself. Or place my faith elsewhere (other people, things, etc). Of course, the place to depend is on Christ. For salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10), I placed my dependence upon Christ to pay my penalty, as I saw and knew I couldn't. Well to overcome the Devil, the world, and my flesh I need to do the same and place my faith (dependence) on Him to do it, as I see and know I can't, at least not for long. It takes power to overcome power, and His power is the greatest power to overcome. Why do we Christians live so much in half-power? We believe, have faith, put full dependence upon Him for salvation..... but then leave the other half of His power on the shelf, as we try to do, we try to overcome, we do things in our power, when all the power is right there, if by faith (dependence) say, Lord I can't but You can, I put my dependence on You to overcome. Asking, by faith, is saying I depend on You to do this (Matthew 7:7)

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Matthew 7:7-11 (NKJV) ⁷ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Who Are You!

"Who are you?" one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- "I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!"

The Will of God for your life:

2 - that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor (4:4-5):

(1 Thessalonians 4:4 NKJV) that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

(1 Thessalonians 4:5 NKJV) not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

The simple definition of vessel – to contain and carry contents. What contents do we carry in these earthen vessels?

(1 Corinthians 3:16 NKJV) Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

(1 Corinthians 3:17 NKJV) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Now we have seen this word sanctification twice, what does it mean. Simply sanctification means to be “set apart”, for the Christian, it means to be set apart to God.

There is sanctification the “Position”, and that is when we receive Jesus and we are set apart for Him, and He is in us and we are in Him, done deal no reversing that. Believer hear this, you will never be more holy than you are once you believe; the good works and obedience will not make you any better before God – for you are in Christ, and when the Father looks at you, all He sees is Jesus – perfection.

Now secondly, there is sanctification the “Process”. And that is the Holy Spirit in you, conforming you more and more into the image of Jesus Christ, for the everyday walk and use of God. The Holy Spirit in you is the only means by which you can live for God.

Why the two, for God lives outside our time domain, so He sees the completed, sanctification the Position. But as we live in inside this time domain, we live sanctification the – Process.

God says a vessel of honor, He is saying this child is mine, this child belongs to me, I have set this child aside for holy purposes, and I will see these purposes come to pass.

The question here is, what are you filling your vessel with daily? The Lord wants our vessels to be in sanctification and honor, filled with things that are pleasing to the Lord.

Now I could take a cup and fill it with coffee, soda, water, tuna, etc. But I need to wash it out before I fill it with the next thing or else it will take on the flavor of what was left in it. If I am not taking in the things of God, everything else I bring into my body will take on the flavor of whatever junk I left in it. That fresh water will take on the taste of the tuna unless I first clean the cup/vessel out. Paul is calling this model church to keep the vessel clean, and not just in terms of sexual immorality.

Might I add, if you put nothing into this cup, but just leave it sit out, that is what we call an antique. A cup is to be filled up and poured out. Filled up with Gods love, and poured out unto the world. That is why God sets us apart, so we may pour His love out on those around us. If it were not so, He would take us to heaven the moment we receive Him as Lord and Savior – Sanctification the Position. On the Mount of transfiguration, Jesus was shown in His perfection, he had lived a perfect life and could have entered into heaven, but instead He stayed for the appointed time to be poured out unto the world, a vessel of honor.

Who Are You!

“Who are you?” one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- “I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!”

The Will of God for your life:

3 - that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter (4:6-8):

(1 Thessalonians 4:6 NKJV) 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.

(1 Thessalonians 4:7 NKJV) For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

(1 Thessalonians 4:8 NKJV) Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Defrauding his brother in this matter, what matter does he mean?, verse 6 is still talking about sexual matters. Defraud means to rip-off. Beloved, if you are involved in sexual immorality, you

are defrauding your brother, you are ripping them off. You are robbing them of their future relationship, even if that future is with you, because once it is destroyed, it is gone.

How?

- 1.) Brother and sister, you have sex outside of marriage, you are causing another to sin before God.

You don't make love but lust, the world doesn't get it, to them it is all about bodily expression, but it is souls coming together, two people becoming one. When it is done outside of marriage, it is a defrauding, a ruining, you are ripping them off.

God isn't messing around in this matter, and I recommend we all memorize this verse, Hollywood may sell it all as no harm, no foul, nobody is getting hurt, but look what the Lord says to those who do:

(1 Thessalonians 4:6 NKJV) 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.

(1 Thessalonians 4:7 NKJV) For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

(1 Thessalonians 4:8 NKJV) Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

- 2.) Another way you defraud, rip someone off in terms of sexual matters: Here is something you may never have considered.

If you buy that magazine, go to that movie, that promotes immorality, you are defrauding your brother or sister, you are supporting them and others to go deeper and deeper into this deception. When you invest your money, it says this is what the world wants, lets give them more. You may say well it doesn't affect me,,,,,,,,,,,,,and we will argue that later, but consider this, how many young guys and girls get sucked into this deception and become a slave to trying to look and live like what they see on TV, the movies, or the Vogue magazine.

Also, If a brother or sister dresses provocatively for the reason of attention, and you compliment them, you are encouraging them to go deeper into this deception.

- 3.) Thirdly, you will rip-off, and defraud more than just the other person. So even if your partner is willing, know that it will go deeper than just the two of you.

2 Samuel chapters 15-17 is the story of when King David's own son, Absalom, stole the Kingdom from him. Absalom planned it so perfectly, he ended up sending David on the run. Ultimately God would protect David and He would return to his throne, but first he had to go through a lot of pain.

(2 Samuel 15:13 KJV) And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

(2 Samuel 15:14 KJV) And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

The interesting verse in this whole story is about Ahithophel, David's counselor for some twenty years. He sided with Absalom, and gave counsel on how to defeat and overthrow David. Imagine the insight he would have on how David thinks and reacts after 20 years of giving him counsel.

(2 Samuel 15:12 KJV) And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

But why did Ahithophel rebel against David, take Absaloms side. David must have asked, why turn against me. What have I done to you that you would turn against me after 20 years? We went to war together, fought in the trenches together, I confided in you, we faced evil people trying to steal this kingdom together, why turn against me?

Follow the genealogy and you will see why:

(2 Samuel 11:3 KJV) And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

(2 Samuel 23:34 KJV) Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather.

Decades earlier David killed Uriah and cover his sin with Bathsheba. Ahithophel was David's counselor at the time. So for years he watched David cover his sin, get away with it, Ahithophel felt defiled, defrauded, ripped off by David for defiling his granddaughter. So he struck when opportunity came. If Absalom had followed Ahithophel advice, David most likely would have been overthrown.

You defraud a brother or sister, and the day will come when your sin will find you out. It is not God getting you, for He already forgive, but you sin never forgives you or forgets you, it will find you, it will seek you, and it will try to do you in.

(Galatians 6:7 KJV) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

(Galatians 6:8 KJV) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

(Galatians 6:9 KJV) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

(Galatians 6:10 KJV) As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Its 20 years after David's sin and he is still paying for it. 20 years from now you may be paying for it with AIDS, or having to tell your true love, I have something you need to know before we get too serious, I have

But as I said defrauding isn't just about you and your partner, it is about others – aka Ahithophel. So we also see that defrauding isn't just about sex, it is also about anger, bitterness, hate, and spitefully treating someone.

Ahithophel felt so defrauded by David he wanted to kill him:

(2 Samuel 17:1 KJV) Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

(2 Samuel 17:2 KJV) And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:

When you defraud someone, the Lord will not be with you, but against you. Ahithophel told Absalom how to overthrow David, but when Absalom rejected him, he went and hung himself.

(2 Samuel 17:23 KJV) And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

But, a word of warning and caution to you who have been defrauded by a brother or sister, you who are on the opposite end, the receiving end, you may say ahh I have a right to be upset and bitter. But remember Ahithophel swinging from the rope; we can create a greater sin that what that person did to us, that of bitterness. Your bitterness will lead to more causalities, more than you were hurt,Let it Go.

Who Are You!

"Who are you?" one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- "I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!"

The Will of God for your life: 4 - to love one another (4:9-10):

(1 Thessalonians 4:9 NKJV) 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;

(1 Thessalonians 4:10 NKJV) 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;

Paul told them you are doing great, but don't stop there, increase and abound. Do these things God has commanded in these past verses and you will increase and abound in love.

Who Are You!

"Who are you?" one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- "I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!"

The Will of God for your life:

5 - that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands (4:11):

(1 Thessalonians 4:11 NKJV) 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,

Aspire to be quiet. Don't be a busybody, talking about everybody else. Recognize this, people talk about others so as to elevate themselves. If you are doing this, then ask yourself what am I not facing up to in my own life.

A tell-tale sign you are being a busybody, you are getting into other people's business; you talk about them, you talk about how they are messing –up, but you do nothing about it. You don't intercede for them in prayer, you don't call to encourage them, invite them to lunch, etc, you just talk about them.

How do you quit being a busybody, by getting your hands busy, get into something other than just sitting around.

Who Are You!

"Who are you?" one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- "I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!"

The Will of God for your life:

6 - that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing (4:12):

(1 Thessalonians 4:12 NKJV) that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

Walk properly, both with your brothers, and the world. Inside the church, and outside the church. Paul told us in verse one to "walk to please the Lord" and here in verse twelve, to walk properly towards those who are outside. How? By literally everything we just covered in our study today, to not defraud them, to love them, to serve them, to be the witness of Christ before them.

Walking properly is not for extra-credit, it is the minimum requirement

(Luke 17:7 NKJV) "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?"

(Luke 17:8 NKJV) "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"

(Luke 17:9 NKJV) "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

(Luke 17:10 NKJV) "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

Gang, before we can fly, we have to walk first.

Paul the exhorting father.....

Who Are You!

“Who are you?” one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- “I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!”

The Will of God for your life:

1. that you should abstain from sexual immorality (4:3)
2. that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor (4:4-5)
3. that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter (4:6-8)
4. to love one another (4:9-10)
5. that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands (4:11)
6. that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing (4:12)

Who Are You!

“Who are you?” one demanded. Dimitri straightened his back and stood as tall and as proud as he could.

- “I am a son of the Living God, and Jesus is His name!”

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Title: Why Is There a Rapture?

Today's Passage

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (NKJV) ¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are 3 things that God says He does not want us to be ignorant (unaware) of:

1. His working with the Nation of Israel - (Romans 11)
2. Spiritual Gifts - (1 Corinthians 12)
3. His Second Coming (which means Last Days, for that is when He comes, in the Last Days of earth) - (1 Thessalonians 4)

Romans 11:25–26 (NKJV) ²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (NKJV) ¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We see much ignorance (being unaware of) today regarding these three things, but Paul is saying don't be ignorant. This church was less than a year old, all new believers, yet Paul is

teaching them about the Rapture. Today we begin the next section of this model church, and mature believer, and it is their hope.... And the hope is the soon return of Christ for His Church.

In Proverbs 25 we are told it is the glory of kings to search out a matter, and I pray we will be great students of the Bible. I pray we will be great Bereans and search out the Scriptures, and I pray the Word of God finds good soil today, and as we take this word into our hearts, and the Spirit waters it, and the "Son" puts light upon it, it will do what the word is designed to do, bring much fruit, as we take God at His Word that it will not return void.

Proverbs 25:2 (NKJV)² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

Acts 17:11 (NKJV)¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Matthew 13:23 (NKJV)²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Isaiah 55:10–11 (NKJV)¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

Fallen Asleep

This word "fallen asleep" is the first phrase that causes many to get confused, and have a hard time understanding this passage on the rapture, so let's clarify this first. Because if you just read it by itself, it leads us to think that these are dead Christians who are in the grave somewhere and that God resurrects them from the dead first, and then call us who are alive right now up into heaven. That is not so. Before we read this, let me just tell you that all believers in Christ who have died up to this very moment of this Bible Study, are in heaven right now. They are not rising from the dead in verse 16, they are standing to their feet to go with Christ and receive us. We know this is so because we read these verse in the knowledge of the resurrection, which a key to understanding the whole rapture.

(2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV) We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Fallen asleep: This word is used in the Bible, both Old and New Testament, about believers that have died. This is not a reference to "soul sleep" or purgatory.

(Acts 7:60 NKJV) Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

John 11:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

(Acts 13:36 KJV) For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

(1 Kings 2:10 KJV) So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

This Church Worried About Those Died Before the Rapture – So Much Believed See It

Here in this study, Paul is writing them because he has told them about the "rapture", but they were worried about their loved ones who had died recently, that since they had died, they would miss the rapture. Paul is going to comfort those that have lost loved ones and wondered if they will see them again by teaching them more doctrine about the rapture. Although they were a little confused about the rapture, their worry showed how much they believed the rapture was near, and how focused they were of it in their daily life. They truly are a model church, a model believer, for their faith, labor of love, and hope of Jesus return.

Gang, Jesus is coming back, some 300 times in the New Testament we are told Jesus is coming back.

I am thoroughly convinced from watching people and studying the Word that the people who are truly content

- are those who constantly realize that this world is not where it's at. On the other hand, those who try to find happiness here are perpetually frustrated.
- The possessions they purchase are never quite what they were supposed to be.
- The relationships they form are never as satisfying as they thought they would be.
- The dreams they pursue are never as fulfilling as they hoped they would be.
- Nothing is ever quite right until we realize, 'Hey, it's not here!'

I believe this is why the Lord constantly tells us in the Word to set our hearts on things *above*. People are bogged down, with stomachs churning, brows furrowing, and hearts breaking because they are taking life on earth far too seriously. When a person finally understands heaven is where it's at, he is free to enjoy life.

- It doesn't matter where he lives, what he does vocationally, what kind of car he drives, bike he rides, or skates he gets around on.
- All of that is irrelevant because he sees the finish line — he realizes that heaven is near.

(1 Thessalonians 4:14 NKJV) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Again, don't be tripped up by the word sleep here, the main point here is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the power of the gospel. Buddha died, Mohammed died, Krishna died, Joseph Smith died, they all died but none ever rose again. Jesus Christ suffered, died, was buried, but rose again on the third day.....and therein lies the power of the gospel. Anyone could have been willing to take your place on the cross, take your punishment for sin, but only the Lamb of God had the power to Raise from the dead. The resurrection is proof that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice, substitution, for your sin. When you share the gospel friends, don't leave the resurrection out, for it is the power of the gospel.

Christ's resurrection is the demonstration that you and I will rise again, that death has no power over us. As Christ rose again, so too will we. The resurrection is our hope, without it we have no hope like the people Paul mentions at the end of verse 13.

1 Corinthians 15:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

If you can believe in the resurrection, then you can believe in the Rapture.

(1 Thessalonians 4:15 NKJV) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

(1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Here, Paul speaks of an event yet future. We call it the rapture. The Lord will descend from heaven. And Paul gives us the play-by-play of how it'll happen...

- First, He'll let out a holler... Let's Roll (Ray's guess)
- Then an archangel will pipe in. Maybe he hollers too.
- Next you'll hear a trumpet blast.

So, with all that said, then what does it mean that **the dead in Christ will rise first**? The word rise in the Greek simply means to "stand up." Jesus is saying to the saints in heaven, "It is time, everybody up, let's go get our loved ones. Those in heaven miss you as much as you miss them, they can't wait to hold you again, to look in your eyes again.

Correlating Rapture Passage:

1 Corinthians 15:50–58 (NKJV) ⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

In First Corinthians 15:52 means, a twinkling of an eye, could literally mean "an atomic moment", i.e., a moment of time so small it cannot be subdivided further. Think of the Atom Bomb going off, that is what the Rapture will look like – "literally! How exciting, and today would be an awesome day for such a nuclear exchange (if you will). Come Lord Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 4:17 NKJV) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Meet in the clouds.....It will be like a mushroom cloud of the atomic explosion!

Here is the high-level overview of history (from a biblical standpoint) of mankind and God's working with mankind. Each of these points a semester at Bible College ☺

- Creation (Adam – means man)
- 4,000 years a man's sin (breaking God's Law) – was cover through animal sacrifice
- Christ and the Cross (the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world).
- 2,000 years (till time now) - man's sin cover through Jesus Christ sacrificial death on cross – The period of Grace through Faith (not man's works by Christ's on the cross)
- Then in a twinkling of an eye – the Rapture (God's takes His Church/Bride home to heaven) for what is known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- At same time here on earth, what is known as the 7-year Tribulation Period (as the world will suffer wars, famines, pestilence, economic collapse, like nothing ever seen before).
- Then, what is known as the Second Coming of Christ as He will return to earth with His saints
- To... set up what is known as the Millennial (1,000 year) Reign of Christ here on earth.

- Then at the end of that the final judgement of God upon Satan, and man (The Great White Throne Judgment).
- Then, what is known as the New Heaven and New Earth.

Often I've been asked, more in a challenging sense I know, what translation of the Bible should we read? And many people are coming with a challenge because they believe that there are certain translations that are errant and uninspired to which I'm not going to argue that point. But they'll say it should be Old King James only or New King James only. They'll say NIV only, whatever it may be. And they'll say, "What do you say?" And I most always answer with the same. Whichever version you'll find yourself reading is surely the best version to start with and the Lord will speak to you and guide you along the way. I myself started with King James 1611, read three chapters, put the Bible down, this is 30 years ago, and said, "No wonder nobody reads this thing. Who can understand it?" Especially in this old language with thee and thou and here a stay and here a say and the likes of those words, that you spend more time trying to figure out what in the world does this mean using the 1611 language.

But the Lord still kept tugging on my heart. I went back to the bookstore, got the New Revised Standard Version after I laid 11 Bibles down side by side, read all the back covers that showed the style of the writing of the book inside. And I find NRSV was the easiest for me to read to which I went home and read the whole Bible in about 30 days, gave my life to the Lord. After I read the whole Old Testament chapter by chapter, verse by verse, saw that my sin separated me from a Holy God. Came into the New Testament, saw that Christ died for me to take away my sin and gave my life to the Lord. Sometime thereafter, I switched into the new King James and have been reading that ever since. And again, my point, the best version is the version that you'll read.

But to answer the question when people say, "That's nice but really are you not promoting errancy because not all of those books translate as great as old King James?" To which again, not my point to get into defend and decide the greatest translation but surely King James is a tremendous translation. But to my answer, to be very direct I say to people, "The greatest translation then if you're not going to look at the English translation, is then the original language which is Hebrew in the Old Testament with a little Aramaic in a few chapters, and then pure Greek, koinonia Greek at that in the New Testament." To which I say, "If you want to truly argue the point to its fullest degree, it's the original language of Hebrew and Greek." To which most people if they're honest will say, "I don't know Hebrew and Greek. That's why I have to read English translation."

I say that to build in that one of the challenges that we come across in a passage such as this is that many will say, there is no word rapture in the Bible. Therefore the whole doctrine and theology of it is errant. To which I will say, "I agree. There is no word rapture in the Bible." But let me make a point. There's no word Trinity in the Bible either but the doctrine and the theology of it is clearly taught. God in three persons, the blessed Trinity. There's another word that wasn't known among man back in Genesis though the word we see is in the Bible and it was the word rain. I will cause it to rain on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. When Noah would preach that judgment to come, the flood that would be brought on by rain, the judgment of God against a God-rejecting society, no one had ever seen rain up to that point.

The scripture was clear that the way the earth was irrigated was that there was a mist that came up from the earth, hence why the garden was such a garden. And if you want to go another layer, the earth sat in a perfect zero-degree axis and it was surrounded by a water canopy and hence what you had was a perfect greenhouse environment. The whole earth was a garden, truly. It was when the flood happened that the earth would be knocked out of its perfect zero-degree axis and put on the 23.5-degree tilt that we know which causes the seasons that we know, spring, summer, winter and fall. And it says that the water canopy collapsed and therefore you no longer had this perfect greenhouse environment.

The point being made is no one ever heard of rain. And in 2 Peter 3:3 it says they would mock Noah as he preached the judgment to come. And the apostle speaks to us today. The people today will mock when the last days are spoken of. Even so, even Christians will mock. Not just unbelievers who hence we see the building of what we taught in our prophecy update the great deception as the church will be deceived by the wisdom of the world and mock the word of God and the prophecies of God. So the rain was never seen as a word and it was never known, yet the prophecy of it still came to pass as the flood covered the earth as it rained for 40 days and 40 nights just as God said that it would be.

2 Peter 3:1–9 (NKJV) ¹ Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

And so true and so too, though the word rapture is not in the Bible, the doctrine of it, is the word used here in our text today in the Greek, the original language. Again, back to the original, is the Greek word [harpazio] and it means to seize and violently take away by force. Liken that to I'm walking and I come to the crosswalk of a busy intersection and my child steps off to cross before the light turns green to walk. I will grab my child as comfortable as it may be from the back, the collar if need be, and harpazio my son back from the danger of the oncoming traffic onto the safety of the sidewalk next to me.

It will be violent. It will be extreme. He may even say, "Why did you do that?" But when he sees the cars coming at breakneck speed and realizing that he would have been crushed and killed, the attitude will change about why I did what I did. Though it may have then seemed sudden and uncomfortable at the moment, it turned out to be loving and gracious and kind in the end.

Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth Wuest, says the Greek term "harpazo" has five different meanings... It can mean, "to catch away speedily," or "seize by force," or "claim for one's own self," or "move to a new place," and "to rescue from danger" - and with the rapture of the Church all five meanings definitely apply.

In around the 4th century, when the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, this word in the translation we have before us "taken away", the word in the Greek is harpazio. The word in the Latin was translated into [rapturous] to which we would translate the word into English today, rapture. So the word's there clearly as we just looked through and seen maybe not in the English but surely in the original language which is always the language that we go to for all matters of doctrine and theology.

So another word as we're talking about words, the word sin. You sinned. The word is from old English and it was used in the term and context and realm of archery. When you aim for the bullseye and you do not hit the bullseye, when you miss the mark, it was said you sinned, meaning, you miss the bullseye. You missed the mark. As I take up archery enjoying the great outdoors, I always felt somewhat that shooting for me was somewhat natural and intuitive and it is in some way. But when I picked up the bow just recently, I was amazed at how far off I was. As I take a bow, put my arrow in my bow, point it at that bullseye, how far I would miss, how far I would sin and miss the mark.

Well, I had to start analyzing everything about archery to determine why am I sinning and missing the mark? And here's the thing. You're trying to take this little piece of wood about a quarter of an inch thick, less than three feet long, three little feathers on the back of it, and you're trying to launch it 20, 30, 40 yards into a target. It's a little more challenging when you consider it in that

way. But here's what I found. When it comes down to archery, it all came down to what's called the anchor points. And the anchor points are placing of your feet, that they're solid and stable, anchored to hold your body. Then you have your arm straightened, pointing towards the target, anchored towards it. You draw your string and then you anchor your hand to your face so that you have this really like perfect anchor that nothing's moving. And then all that you have to do is release the string and let the arrow fly.

And there's one other little thing about it and it's called index. An arrow has usually three feathers, two of the same color, one odd color and that odd color is to index where you place it inside your bow because you have to make sure that when you release the bow those feathers don't touch your bow frame in any way or it will throw off your shot. So simply two things that change everything about hitting the mark and it is to anchor and to index. And if you don't anchor right and if you don't index right, your shot will be off. And what's my illustration that I'm drawing here? When we do come to sin, missing the mark and we don't anchor what that truly means if we don't anchor.

If you look at the life of Jesus, it summarizes those 33 short years in three very specific events. He came, he died, he left. Three questions for us.

1. Why did he come,
2. why did he die
3. and why did he leave?

We need to understand this if we're going to understand anything more about this topic of the rapture and why the rapture.

Jesus God came. He was birthed. He lived 33 spotless sinless years. Jesus God died. Why? For sin. Not his sin because he never missed the mark. Whose sin then? Our sin because we missed the mark. The mark is perfection. **The word is holiness.** God is perfect and holy and no sinful imperfect man can come into his presence because therefore he would no longer be perfect because we bring our imperfection into his presence. Twenty-four-seven around the throne the four living creatures say, holy, holy, holy.... That is the words of heaven, for God is holy!
Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Therefore, Jesus died as he traded places to take our sin to make us perfect. And he took our sin to the grave, buried it there, left the imperfection there, rose again on the third day, proving that the substitutionary trade was accepted by God the Father and proving that he has the power to take away the sin of the world and the power to overcome sin in the world. He came, he died. That's why he came. That's why he died.

So the key word for our understanding.....holiness

When you see the holiness of God, that He cannot look upon sin, but was willing to become sin so we might by made holy, then now we can truly see the depth of His love for us.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And why did he leave? To go prepare a place for us. He said, "For where I am there you'll be" and it's there that he will receive us and bring us home forever.

John 14:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

He goes to prepare the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Revelation 19:7-10 (NKJV) ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper

of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

We can come in because we have been robed appropriately.... In holiness, by the finished works of Christ. Verse 11 in the parable of the wedding guest, the man was thrown out of the wedding feast because he was not dressed appropriately, he was not robed in righteousness (right before God – which is holiness).

Matthew 22:1–14 (NKJV) ¹ And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³ and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. ⁴ Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. ⁷ But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests. ¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Isaiah 61:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

2 Corinthians 5:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.* ²¹ *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

But here is the main point of “Why is There A Rapture”, because sin must be judged, because God is Holy! And why are we at a 7-year Marriage Supper of the Lamb? Because at the same 7-year period, here on earth, is the 7-year Tribulation Period, and what is going during that time is told to us in Revelation 6, it is the wrath of the Lamb on a Christ rejecting world. We, the Church, is not there, because (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11) are not appointed to wrath, because the wrath due us was poured out upon the cross upon Jesus.

Revelation 6:12–17 (NKJV) ¹² *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

1 Thessalonians 5:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

But The Holy God, we come to a point, that He will judge a Christ rejecting world....because His Holiness demands it! But.... Not before He takes His Bride to Himself in heaven where He has gone to prepare a place for us.

(1 Thessalonians 4:18 NKJV) Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth Wuest, says the Greek term “harpazo” has five different meanings... It can mean, “to catch away speedily,” or “seize by force,” or “claim for one’s own self,” or “move to a new place,” and “to rescue from danger” - and with the rapture of the Church all five meanings definitely apply.

And here’s the most thrilling promise of all, “And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” We’ll be with Jesus!

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Isn't this the fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams - to finally be with Jesus and never leave His side. Paul adds, "Therefore comfort one another with these words." Here's the encouragement we need. Let's always remind each other, the Lord is coming back. Hang in, hold on, hunker down - the cavalry's coming - it'll all be good when we're with Jesus!

Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 4:13 – 5:28

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV) ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Paul comforts this church with these words, Jesus is Coming Back for His Bride; and so too do I comfort you with the same words.....

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Title: When is the Rapture?

Communion

I would like to start our service and study today with the Lord's Supper, as He said to do this in remembrance of Him. As I was reading Leviticus it continually said for all the sacrifices there at the Tabernacle and then to the temple that the blood of the sacrifice was to be poured out at the base of the altar which doesn't sound like much until you consider the thousands of sacrifices day in day out it was estimated at Passover there were 250,000 lambs sacrificed. I have been up on the temple Mount twice now and I have looked at it from across the Kidron Valley many times and what I can describe to you is the temple Mount is about 2000 feet above sea level and it's probably at least 1000 feet above the bottom of the Kidron Valley. And what I can also describe to you is the area of Jerusalem there is very very hard ground and of course at some point the temple head stone pavers that everything sat upon and walked upon. And now I want you to consider and picture the thousands of gallons of blood no doubt several 100 per day and no doubt several 1000 per feast and where would the blood flow is my question to which we know the answer is it would flow downhill. Whether it was made by man or made by nature a trench would be made and the blood would flow down that trench from the temple down into the Kidron Valley and just keep flowing as long as the volume existed. In Israel where the Kidron Valley is, they also call it the Valley o Jehoshaphat, which means "God will Judge". It is also referred to (at times of Jesus and today) as Valley of Hinnom, which means the Valley of Slaughter. And at time of Jesus it was called Gehenna, which was the word used for hell. Gehenna was a garbage dump where they would throw out the trash from over the wall of the city, they would burn the trash thus it was always burning and smoking, and it was a place that they would pipe the raw sewage from the city too. It was an awful place, and again it was where trenches of blood would flow through daily! My point? There was always a flow of blood, a visible flow of blood coming from the Temple, that all would continually see and be reminded of what was said in Leviticus 17 (as made clear in Hebrews 9), that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. And before we take communion, I want to remind you of the night on which He was betrayed (not just Judas but by us and our sin), Jesus would cross over the Brook Kidron on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane there on the Mount of Olives, and as He crossed the Brook, there before Him would be the flow of blood, and He knowing that in 12 hours His blood would be joining it. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Lets take the cup, as He said to do this in remembrance of Him.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Leviticus 1:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. ⁵ He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Leviticus 4:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Leviticus 4:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar.

Leviticus 4:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar.

Hebrews 9:16–22 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. ¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according

to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."²¹ Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.²² And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

Joel 3:2 (NKJV)² I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

Jeremiah 19:6 (NKJV)⁶ therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

Luke 12:4-5 (NKJV)⁴ "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

John 18:1-2 (NKJV)¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.² And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Today's Passage

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (NKJV)¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV) But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

There are 3 things that God says He does not want us to be ignorant (unaware) of:

1. His working with the Nation of Israel - (Romans 11)
2. Spiritual Gifts - (1 Corinthians 12)
3. His Second Coming (which means Last Days, for that is when He comes, in the Last Days of earth) - (1 Thessalonians 4)

Romans 11:25-26 (NKJV)²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV)¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV)¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We see much ignorance (being unaware of) today regarding these three things, but Paul is saying don't be ignorant. This church was less than a year old, all new believers, yet Paul is teaching them about the Rapture. Today we begin the next section of this model church, and mature believer, and it is their hope.... And the hope is the soon return of Christ for His Church.

In Proverbs 25 we are told it is the glory of kings to search out a matter, and I pray we will be great students of the Bible. I pray we will be great Bereans and search out the Scriptures, and I pray the Word of God finds good soil today, and as we take this word into our hearts, and the Spirit waters it, and the “Son” puts light upon it, it will do what the word is designed to do, bring much fruit, as we take God at His Word that it will not return void.

Proverbs 25:2 (NKJV)² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

Acts 17:11 (NKJV)¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Matthew 13:23 (NKJV)²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

Isaiah 55:10–11 (NKJV)¹⁰ “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Don't let the chapter break trip you up, chapter 5 is still in the context of the Rapture.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1 NKJV) But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

Apparently, the Thessalonians were well-informed as to the indicators of the Lord's return. Recall in Matthew 24:36 Jesus said, “Of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” No one knows the day or hour of His return, but we can know “the times and seasons.”

Matthew 24:36 (NKJV)³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Interestingly, every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV)² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV)¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV)¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has given us signs or indicators to let us know when we're getting close to the return of Jesus to the Earth. He doesn't want us caught off-guard. And one of the signs of the end times is given to us in verse 2...

(1 Thessalonians 5:2 NKJV) For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

First, let's define a term, "the day of the Lord." Currently, we live in the day of man. Mankind is having his say and getting his way. But the day is coming when God will shut him up. God will intervene in human affairs. He'll have His say and get His way! The Day of the Lord begins will the full-scale, global evacuation of Christians known as the rapture.

Then God punishes the rebel planet once and for all!

Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 14:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Regarding the Devil and this time of Mankind. The Devil is the prince of this world, and he has been judged by God, but yet to be sentenced, to which that day will come in its fullness at the end of the Millennial Kingdom

John 16:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The day may be unknowable, but the season is, we see the signs around us.

Are we in the Last Days?

Some would depart from the faith and go into devil worship-1 Tim 4:1.

People would mock about the last days and not believe-2 Pe 3:3; Jude 18.

People would become lovers of themselves-2 Tim 3:1,2.

People would be disobeying their parents-2 Tim 3:1,2.

People would be grateful for nothing-2 Tim 3:1,2.

Homosexuality would increase-Lk 17:28,30; ref Gen 19:5; Ro 1:24,26,27.

People would be without self-control in sex-2 Tim 3:1,2,6; Rev 9:21, Lk 17:28,30; Jude 7.

People would love pleasures more than God- 2 Tim 3:1,2,4.

False Teachers/Religions will be many – Matt 24:5

Wars – Matt 24:6 – not a single day of peace on earth since before WW1

Rumors of War – Matt 24:6 – Cold War most expensive war ever fought, and not one bullet fired

Famines – Matt 24:7 – countries like Africa can't feed their people

Pestilence – Matt 24:7 - Aids, SARS, COVID

Earthquakes – Matt 24:7 – Life Magazine says in last 15yrs 500, 000 people died in earthquakes.

Knowledge will Increase – Daniel 12:4 – look at the Technology world around us.

The greatest sign, the nation Israel.

The rapture will end the church period, this period of grace, and then God will start dealing with Israel and their salvation.

(Romans 11:25 NKJV) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

(Romans 11:26 NKJV) And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

(Romans 11:27 NKJV) For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

May 14th, 1948 Israel was rebirthed. For 2000 years they lived without a homeland, yet kept their nationality, and today we see them in the news every day. Israel is the prophetic clock, Jesus said be ready, you have seen all the signs.

(Matthew 24:32 KJV) Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

(Matthew 24:33 KJV) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

(Matthew 24:34 KJV) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

(Matthew 24:35 KJV) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(Matthew 24:36 KJV) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

(Note: some think these verses direct references to the rebirth of Israel because throughout Scripture the "fig tree" is a reference to Israel. Maybe so, but if not, do we really need any more signs than we already have?)

(1 Thessalonians 5:3 NKJV) For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Why should we believe that the rapture is near if its 2000 years later and He still hasn't come?

And here's the clue that starts it all. When you hear, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction." The Day of the Lord is preceded by a false peace, a pseudo Shalom. There's a calm before the storm. We talk about Matthew 24, wars and rumors of wars being signs, but the greatest will be when the whole world thinks they have finally arrived at peace. When the nations believe that danger has past that's when sudden destruction breaks out in earnest.

(1 Thessalonians 5:4 NKJV) But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

(1 Thessalonians 5:5 NKJV) You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

The world will be shocked and rocked by the sudden disappearance of millions of believers. I'm sure it'll cause many folks to remember our warnings. For the world, Jesus is coming as a thief in the night, but believers should be watching... we're on constant stake out - aware of the signs - looking for Jesus!

My job as a shepherd is to make sure you are not surprised, that you are ready! Some pastors and churches wont teach prophecy because it makes people uncomfortable, to which I say that all leads to the great deception in many ways.

2 Peter 3:1–9 (NKJV) ¹ Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Matthew 24:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

(1 Thessalonians 5:6 NKJV) Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

(1 Thessalonians 5:7 NKJV) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

Children of light don't be asleep in the darkness, don't get drowsy, the days are close. Don't get intoxicated with this world, walk wisely, redeem the time.

Parents be sober. Sports and extracurricular activities are great, but do you notice how they always fall on Bible Study night. Don't let those things take you away from the Word and Fellowship. I believe even if your children are not totally getting it, you are still developing a pattern for life, that will pay huge dividends when they are older. Show them now that the Word and Fellowship are the priorities in life, and that nothing supersedes them. Now if the Rapture happens today, a year from now, how important were those things, how important were those things that took you away from growing in the Word, increasing and abounding in love.

Why do I say this, because I've seen kids get wiped out down the road because mom and dad thought that other things were more important than bringing the kids to church. The children watched their parents and learned what was more important and when they grew, soccer and baseball were replaced in their life with college, and then work, and then, and then.....

Verse 8, Paul reinforces this

(1 Thessalonians 5:8 NKJV) But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

A breastplate protected the heart, and a helmet protected the head. God wants to protect our heart and mind, the things that enter our mind, affect our heart. How do we guard our mind and increase our faith?

(Romans 10:17 KJV) *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

God manifests His Word through preaching that is the reason we go to Bible Studies. God will show you things in the Word, that He spoke to His teachers to bring to your ears.

(Titus 1:3 NKJV) *but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;*

6 Reasons Why We Should Study Prophecy

Here are 6 reasons why we study prophecy:

Control - (God is in Control for He Knows the End from the Beginning)

Isaiah 46:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'

Comfort - (We can take Comfort knowing God is in Control, and none of these things Surprise Him)

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Persevere - (We are to continue to Persevere, for He is Worth It)

(Revelation 3:10 NKJV) "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Purity - (Everyone who has this Hope Purifies themselves – to Give Themselves to Him the Spotless Bride)

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV) ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Priority - (Make our Priorities to What Matters Most considering we are going to See the King soon and very soon)

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Preparation - (There is a Lost and Dying World who is not Prepared to Meet Him)

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

**(1 Thessalonians 5:9 NKJV) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
(1 Thessalonians 5:10 NKJV) who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.**

This wrath is meant for those who have rejected the Lord, this is the reason for the Rapture, to take His children out before he pours His wrath out. We experienced God's wrath on the cross, but Jesus took our place, that should have been me on that cross. The wrath I experience today is all from Satan who is the Prince of this world, as we live in a world that says I don't need you God to rule over me, I'm just fine without you. God's wrath will come against them in the seven year tribulation period.

Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

If my house was infected with termites and I had to fumigate, even if my kids were being a bit rebellious or difficult, I would still make sure they were out of the house before the tent went up and the gas pumped it. Therefore if we earthly parents are concerned about our children's safety, how much more is our heavenly Father concerned about the safety of His children.

Before the Iraqi war, America called all their ambassadors out of Iraq.

(2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV) Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Passages like verse 9 convince me that Jesus will return for His Church not after the Great Tribulation, or at its midpoint, but prior to the Lord's coming judgment. "For God did not appoint us to wrath." Paul made a similar statement in Chapter 1:10 where he introduced Jesus as He "who delivers us from the wrath to come."

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Remember, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Sin must be judged: *Hebrews 9:16–22 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. ¹⁸ Therefore not even

the first covenant was dedicated without blood. ¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." ²¹ Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. ²² And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Next week we will look at 10 Reasons that the Rapture happens before the Tribulation Period begins.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11 NKJV) Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

We won't be here for this wrath to come, we will be in heaven with the Lord celebrating at the Marriage supper of the lamb (we will talk about that in 2 Thessalonians), we escape this period.

Comfort each other with these words' brethren. These words are the comfort to every heart problem.

Again folks, the key to life is to live life backwards from heaven, and everything else will fall into perspective.

As Paul wrote the Colossian church,

(Colossians 3:2 NKJV) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

(Colossians 3:3 NKJV) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

(Colossians 3:4 NKJV) When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

The days are going by rapidly, gang. We are going to see Jesus soon, and when we do, we will say, `This is it! This is what we've been craving and longing for all our lives

That is why I believe we can't talk too much about heaven. And that's why Paul says, `That's where your heart should be because when Christ appears, it's going to be glorious. Talking about heaven daily, will make heaven a reality.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Title: 10 Reasons for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church

Today's Passage

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Overview/Recap

Matthew 24 is known as the Olivet Discourse, for it is on the Mount of Olives that Jesus answers the disciple's questions of what will be the signs of the Last Days. In our past study we have discussed the major events of the Last Days (theologically called "eschatology"),

- and we started with the 1st Coming of Jesus Christ (to take away the sin of the world),
- and then we discussed what is called the Tribulation Period (which is 7 years of a horrendous time on earth as described in Revelation 6-18), and it is God's judgment on a Christ rejecting world, as Revelation 6 says it is "the wrath of the Lamb".
- At the end of that 7 year Tribulation period is the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ, where He will put His feet down upon this earth for the first time since His 1st Coming, and He will set up His Kingdom on earth for 1,000 years, which is known as the Millennial Kingdom.
- At the end of the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom God will give a final judgement on the Devil, and Christ rejecting men, and He will dissolve this earth as we know it, and then make what is known as the New Heaven, and the New Earth, and that will be eternity that will have no end.

Matthew 24:3 (NKJV) ³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Acts 1:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

Revelation 20:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Revelation 20:4 (NKJV) ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:11–15 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear

from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

No Word Rapture – Bible / Harpazo – Rapiemur / Twinkling of Eye

Now somewhere in all of this is what is called the rapture. You may say well my Bible concordance doesn't even have the word rapture in it, so yea what are you talking about. We get the word rapture from 1 Thessalonians 4, where the Lord says that we should be caught up together. The word translated "caught up" is a Greek (harpazo) is the word rendered *rapiemur* in the Latin, and is the word from which we get the English word "rapture". The word literally means to violently seize up, snatch up, suddenly catch away, as if a pair of giant hands were to grasp you by the shoulders and snatch you off the earth. This event will occur suddenly, in less than the time it takes to blink an eye; in fact, the Greek word translated "in a moment" in First Corinthians 15:52 means "an atomic moment", i.e., a moment of time so small it cannot be subdivided further. So regardless of what one may call the event - the "rapture", "being caught up", "being snatched away", it is clear that the event will occur.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51–53 (NKJV) ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So we answered what is the rapture, the next logical question would be, when is the rapture?

3 Camps – Pre-Mid-Post / Your View Effect way Live

There are 3 basic camps on when the rapture will happen (really 4 as some Christians don't believe there is a rapture at all)

- Pre-tribulation Rapture which is before the Tribulation starts.
- Mid-Tribulation Rapture which is right at the 3 and ½ year point of the 7-year Tribulation period.
- And then the Post-Tribulation Rapture of the Church which is after the Tribulation is over.

Why get all concerned about this issue?" you might say. My answer is because I believe one's view on Bible prophecy and the timing of the Rapture will affect the way one lives out his/her faith here on earth.

Early Church / 2 Factors On-Fire / Didn't Come Back & Not Sorry

Two factors kept the early church on fire:

1. the empowering of the Holy Spirit
2. and the belief that Jesus would return during their lifetime. "But He didn't come back in their day," you say. And you're right—but do you think those early believers are in heaven now, saying, "We didn't get bogged down in materialism or trivial pursuits. We sought the Lord. We witnessed fervently. We lived for the kingdom. If only we knew He wasn't coming, we could have played more racquetball"? No! They're ecstatic that they chose to do what Jesus says to do in every generation—to watch, to be ready, to live for His coming, and you can be sure they heard those words, well done thy good and faithful servant. Christian, please don't let this just be a Bible Study to you, let this study change your life, let this study put life in the proper perspective.

Your Position - Won't Affect Salvation – But will Affect Way Live

Whether or not you believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture will not affect where you'll ultimately end up. If you're a believer, you'll be in heaven no matter what position you hold. But your viewpoint concerning the Rapture very definitely affects how you live your life this side of eternity.

Daniel reading Prophecy – Lead him to Action / Not Debates – Interesting / But to Respond

We saw Daniel reading the writings of Jeremiah, and he saw that as the Lord had prophesied through Jeremiah, that Jewish captivity in Babylon would only last 70 years, and Daniel saw that the time was near, the 70 years were almost up. We see that the reading of prophecy did not just spark an interest in Daniel, it wasn't something that he had interesting conversation and debates with others over, rather it moved him to action. We can read that he was moved to prayer and fasting. We read of him seeking the Lord's will and direction for his life in light of the meaning of the prophecy revealed to him. That is what prophecy is to do, it is a primary reason God gives it to us. It is not to intrigue us, or to engage us in debates, but to change us, and to seek the Lord as to how do we respond, what are we to do in light of this information, pertaining to these last days:

Daniel 9:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ³ Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Study to Share / Written so we Might be Ready

So we are to study to show ourselves approved, and we must also be able to share this information with others. We must be able to show them in the Scriptures why it is a Pre-tribulation rapture, and why they need to be ready. Remind you, this book of Revelation was written so that we might be ready, and to have others be ready:

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

If Old News – Study to Make it “New News”

If this is study is “old news” to you, then I pray you study with me very hard, take these things into your heart, your soul. Your mind, your strength, and ask the Lord that you may glean these reasons so you can make it “new news” to someone who is unaware of these things of the Last Days, so they can get prepared for the Last Days which we have studied, we are living in, we are the last generation, the return of Christ is near..... if not today, tomorrow, and ask again tomorrow we will say the same thing.

10 Reason Pre-Tribulation Rapture

We will look at 10 Scriptural reasons of why it is a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church:

- 1.) Plainly – Jesus said no man knows the day or hour of the Rapture
- 2.) Periphery – We are to be continually looking for Jesus
- 3.) Purity – Not knowing when the Rapture will occur produces a life of purity.
- 4.) Philadelphia – God promises the Faithful Church they will be kept from Tribulation
- 5.) Pattern – The pattern (outline) of Revelation shows a Pre-tribulation Rapture
- 6.) Peace – The promise of a Pre-tribulation Rapture is to give us Peace in our heart.
- 7.) Purpose – A Pre-tribulation Rapture fits with the Purpose of the Tribulation
- 8.) Penalty – God has not appointed us to Wrath, the Penalty has already been paid.
- 9.) Presented – As Presented in the Scriptures God removes His Righteous.
- 10.) Promised – God has Promised His Bride a Honeymoon.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?

- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

1.) Plainly – Jesus said no man knows the day or hour of the Rapture

Plainly – Words in Red / Imminent – Matt 6:33

Just real plainly, real simply, we start with the Words in Red, Jesus said no one knows the day or hour. Thus it leaves the believer in the place of imminent return, since we don't know, it could be at any moment, maybe this very moment. God planned it that way because the believer that lives with His imminent return in mind, will be a believer that is living Matthew 6:33, seeking first the Kingdom:

Matthew 24:37–44 (NKJV) ³⁷ *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

1 Thessalonians 5:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Pre-Trib allows Unknown Return / Post-Trib would know 3.5 years / Pre-trib Witnesses

Pre-Tribulation Rapture allows for the unknown time of the Lord's return. According to Daniel's prophecy, three and a half biblical years (a Biblical year being three hundred sixty days) from the day Antichrist enters the temple and demands worship midway through the Tribulation, the Lord will return. Consequently, if believers were on earth during the Tribulation, they would be able to predict the exact time of the Second Coming—three and a half biblical years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred sixty days after Antichrist enters the temple. Even the Mid-tribulation people could get real close once they saw the 2 witnesses witnessing in Jerusalem knowing they will witness for 3.5 years. The problem for their view is plainly, 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Matthew 24:42 make it clear that no one knows the hour of His coming.

2.) Periphery – We are to be continually looking for Jesus

Pre-Trib Eyes Focused / Mid-Post looking for Anti-Christ

A Pre-tribulation rapture of the church keeps our eyes (periphery – vision) focused on Jesus Christ, where they should be. If you do not believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture, you cannot look for Jesus Christ because, according to your eschatological viewpoint, Antichrist must appear first. Therefore, you find yourself scanning the news, checking out current events, watching the global scene for Antichrist rather than for Jesus Christ.

Angels to Disciples – Eye on Sky / Not Europe – Temple – 2 Witnesses

The angels told the early disciples keep your eye on the sky, because as He went, so will He come. They didn't say keep an eye on the temple, or Europe, or be looking for 2 witnesses in Jerusalem, but keep looking for Him:

Acts 1:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

Yes we Scan / Excitement – The Tachos / Keep Eyes Looking for Him – Effect our Lives

Yes we scan the newspaper and watch the world events because they give us excitement that Jesus' appearing is soon, and we know it is closer today than yesterday (the tachometer is pegging out, the engine is going to blow). But any other view has us looking for the rebuilding of the temple because the anti-christ is going to go in there and commit the abomination of desolation. We are looking at world leaders and saying who can arise out of Europe and be the anti-christ. All things that can take our eyes off of looking for Jesus Christ, and it will greatly affect the way we live.

3.) Purity – Not knowing when the Rapture will occur produces a life of purity.

Purifying Effect / 1 John 3 / I Want for You

"I want you looking for Jesus every day," John said, "because he who has the hope of the imminent, sudden appearing of Christ and the Rapture of the church purifies himself" (see 1 John 3:3). That is why I believe your view on the Rapture is of utmost importance. Live in constant expectancy of Jesus' return. Gang, be watching and be ready. The realization that Jesus could come at any time produces a great purifying effect in our lives. The apostle John said:

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV) ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Vital Church Teaches This / Sadly Most Don't

It is a tremendous purifying hope that He could come at anytime. It is vital that the church teaches continually on the rapture, sadly most don't.

Find Doing when Lord Returns / Be the Wise Servant - Intelligent

There are many things I don't want the Lord finding me doing when He returns. I want to be busy about the things of the Lord. Jesus calls such a one as a faithful and wise servant, the word for wise is intelligent. Philadelphia is known as the Faithful Church:

Matthew 24:45–47 (NKJV) ⁴⁵ "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Tendencies of Those that Don't

On the opposite side, look at the effect of the servant that says the Lord delays His coming. He began to live a careless life, abusing people, and drawn to drunkardness. Notice the 2 things they are prone to, drinking (carnality), and abusing (brutality):

Matthew 24:48–51 (NKJV) ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Whole Point – Be Ready / Produces Purifying Effect

Jesus whole point of the story (matt 24) is to be ready, to watch. Looking for His soon return, looking and expecting the rapture produces a purifying effect in our lives.

Important have Same Attitude / Gospel – Material – Purity / Lord creates that Belief

How important that we have the same attitude of the Lord's return as did the early church. It gave them urgency in getting the gospel out, it gave them the proper perspective on the material things, and an emphasis on purity. As they believed that Jesus was coming at any moment to wind things up. The Lord created that belief in the early church that His return was soon, and I believe He does it in every generation, but I look at the signs before us today and have to have the expectation that we are the generation that will see His return.

More Look for Jesus / More become Like Jesus

The more you look for Jesus Christ, the more you will become like Him. Only a Pre-tribulation rapture view will have us focused on Jesus Christ:

1 John 3:2-3 (NKJV) ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

(2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

4.) Philadelphia – God promises the Faithful Church they will be kept from Tribulation

God's Promise to Faithful Church

God promises the Faithful church that they will be kept from the hour of trial.

Revelation 3:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

I will Keep You – Because Obedient / Definite Article – Specific Time

Because of their obedience, the faithful church, God said I will keep you from the hour of trial.

This hour in the Greek structure is a definite article, meaning it speaks of a specific time. It speaks of the Tribulation Period (Revelation 6-19), and God says I will keep you from it, you will not go through it.

Keep From / People Martyred Saved after Rapture

Jesus says to believers that He will keep us from the hour of trial, not protect us in it. Keep means to guard from damage. We will read throughout the tribulation period martyrs being slaughtered for their faith, for not bowing their knee to the anti-christ. Those being martyred doesn't sound like they are being kept from danger....., the ones being martyred are the ones who missed the rapture:

Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Revelation 13:7-10 (NKJV) ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 20:4 (NKJV) ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The Very name of Philadelphia / Not my Brother

The very name of Philadelphia is brotherly love, and that name is used for a reason. I and you, would never allow our brother or sister to suffer. If we knew trouble was coming we would go and pull them out before the affliction would come upon them.

Come Quickly / Unannounced

May I also not that Jesus said to the Church of Philadelphia that He comes quickly. The word quickly (tachos in the Greek) means to come suddenly, without warning, surprise, so for us it can happen at any time, so be ready:

(Revelation 3:11 NKJV) "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

5.) Pattern – The pattern (outline) of Revelation shows a Pre-tribulation Rapture

Book of Revelation Outline

- The Things Which You Have Seen - (Chapter 1).
- The Things Which Are - (Chapters 2-3).
- The Things Which Will Take Place After This - (Chapters 4-22).

(Revelation 1:19 NKJV) "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

Pre-trib is Outline / Twisted Pretzel / 5 after 11 if Mid / 5 after 19 Post / Pre it flows

Pre-Tribulation Rapture follows the outline of the Book of Revelation. If you don't embrace a Pre-Tribulation view, your understanding of Revelation becomes as twisted as a pretzel because you've got to put chapters 4 and 5 after chapter 11 (after 2 witnesses killed), if you hold to a Mid-Tribulation stance; after chapter 19 (after the 2nd Coming of Christ) if you take a Post-Tribulation point of view. Only a Pre-Tribulation placement of the Rapture allows for a consistent flow of the Book of Revelation.

Meta Tauta

The Lord gives us another key to unlock this book, it isn't a hard book to understand as many people say or perceive. The Greek word (*meta tauta*) which means "after". So the Lord says after these things, then this begins. In our outline the things which are (the 7 Churches) then after the church period starts the next the Tribulation period. Chapter 2-3 are the Churches, then we begin chapter 4 with (*meta tauta*). I like how verse 1 has a trumpet sounding and a call to come up here,

(Revelation 1:19 NKJV) "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this (meta tauta).

(Revelation 4:1 NKJV) After these things (meta tauta). I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." (meta tauta).

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

No Mention of Church till Chapter

The word "church" is not used again in the book after 3:14. After chapter 4-5 there is no picture of the church until after the Tribulation period is over.

6.) Peace – The promise of a Pre-tribulation Rapture is to give us Peace in our heart.

Comforting One – Escape Agony / Mid or Post no Comfort

The doctrine is to be a comforting one, to bring peace to the heart (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The belief that the Rapture happens after or in the middle of the Tribulation is anything but comforting because it means believers must endure unbelievable agony before they are taken to heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Imagine hell on Earth – Boils – Locust – Famine – Drought – Scorched / Comforting Words?

Imagine if the word said, "you will go through hell on earth, you will have boils on your skin, locust attacking you, famine, drought, the earth will be scorched, earthquakes, and continual persecution from the anti-christ, you will go through extreme agony, now comfort one another with these words. No, no, we will be caught-up, taken out of here, we are heaven bound for a marriage supper with the Lamb, now comfort one another with those words.

7.) Purpose – A Pre-tribulation Rapture fits with the Purpose of the Tribulation

Pre-Trib Fits with Purpose / Wrath – Christ Rejecting / Must Judge – to be Righteous Judge

A Pre-tribulation rapture of the church fits with the purpose of the Tribulation. The Tribulation is God's wrath against a Christ rejecting world. God must judge a rebellious world or else He is not

a righteous judge, he would be more a social worker than a judge. Imagine a judge today who allowed every criminal to go free saying maybe grace will change his heart, and that same person came back into the court time and time again. God's grace has its limit.

Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

3 Specific Purposes – Shake – Wake – Make

As we studied the Tribulation in chapters 6-19, we will see God doing 3 very specific things:

- To Shake-up the Heathen
- To Wake-up a Nation (Israel)
- To Make-up the Kingdom

Shake – Cruising / Keep Preaching

The purpose of the tribulation will be to shake-up the heathen. People are just cruising through life, thinking all is well, life is good, got my 2 cars, house, nice job, because I'm a nice person. They have no idea they are destined to hell because they have not sought a Savior for their sins. Christian keep preaching, keep sharing, keep telling them about the Rapture, because when you are gone, they will remember your words. When they enter into the Tribulation period after missing the Rapture, their life will be shaken, and they will see the need to be rescued. Part of the reason of the Tribulation is to shake-up the heathen:

Revelation 6:12–17 (NKJV) ¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Wake – God not Done with Israel / All Saved – God Protects in Trib – Wounds of Friends

Secondly, part of the reason of the Tribulation is to Wake-up a nation, the children of Israel. God is by no means done with the nation of Israel, and we will read in the coming chapters how all of Israel will be saved (Rom 11:25-27). It will be during the Tribulation period that they will see that they missed their Messiah, and they will come to Him, and He will protect them (Rev 12:6). They will ask Him where did you get those wounds, and He will say in the house of My friends:

Romans 11:25–27 (NKJV) ²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" ²⁷ For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

Revelation 12:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Zechariah 13:6 (NKJV) ⁶ And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

Jacobs Trouble / Deuteronomy – Scattered – Regathered in Last Days / God Not done

Jeremiah 30 says that the children of Israel will go through the Tribulation (known as Jacob's Trouble), but during that time all of Israel will see their Messiah. In Deuteronomy it is prophesied that Israel will be scattered, but then re-gathered, and in the Last Days (latter) they will go through great Tribulation. And so it was in 70AD they were scattered, and 2,000 years later on May 14th 1948 they were gathered, and then into the Tribulation they will go. God is by no means done with the Nation Israel and He will wake them up in the Tribulation Period:

(Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV) Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, **But he shall be saved out of it.**

Deuteronomy 4:27–31 (NKJV) ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart

and with all your soul.³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice³¹ (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

Make-up Kingdom / Sort-Out

Thirdly, the purpose of the Tribulation is to make-up a Kingdom. God through the Tribulation will sort out those who love Him, and those who will not bow a knee, and then establish His Millennial Kingdom, then after that His heavenly Kingdom. Let me just add here, any Christian who says I really don't care about ruling and reigning with Him in the Millennial Kingdom, I just want to make it into heaven, you will care when that day comes, and you'll be sorry that you didn't invest now, for what we do in our lifetime on earth will determine what we do in the Millennial Kingdom:

*Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)*⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Verse 10 – Against Whole World / To Test / Church Already Tested – Found Pure

Verse 10 says it is coming against the whole world, to test them. Its purpose is to test those who dwell on the earth. We test something to see if it is pure, if it has a fault in it. We have already been tested, and found without fault because we are examined through the lens of the Cross of Christ:

*Revelation 3:10-11 (NKJV)*¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

*Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV)*²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

8.) Penalty – God has not appointed us to Wrath, the Penalty has already been paid.

Wrath of Lamb / Church Not Appointed to Wrath / Our Hero took our Wrath

The Tribulation is the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb—and God has not appointed us to wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11). The wrath that should have been hurled at you and poured out on me was absorbed by our Hero, our Lord, our Savior on the Cross of Calvary:

*Revelation 6:15-17 (NKJV)*¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

*1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 (NKJV)*⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Comfort with These Words

Notice again, it says to comfort one another with these words.

9.) Presented – As Presented in the Scriptures God removes His Righteous.

Not Appointed to Wrath / Not Judge Righteous with Wicked / Abe – Lot - Peter

God has not appointed His children to wrath, as He will not punish the just (righteous) with the unjust (unrighteous). We see that pictured very clearly with the story of Lot and the judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham asked the Lord will you judge the righteous with the unrighteous, and God said surely not. So we see God pulling "righteous" Lot out before the destruction came down. In reference to this, Peter writes, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9). The word translated "temptations" is the same word translated "tribulation."

Genesis 18:25–26 (NKJV) ²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

2 Peter 2:4–9 (NKJV) ⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—⁹ then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

Genesis 19:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! ¹³ For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

Pictured in Enoch / Noah type of Israel / Wake-up Nation

The Rapture before the Tribulation is illustrated in Enoch, who was taken to heaven prior to the Flood (Genesis 5:24). "Wrong analogy," some protest. "The correct picture is Noah who went through the tribulation of the Flood." But wait a minute. Noah is not a picture of the church, but of Israel, who will indeed go through the Tribulation—and will at last come to Jesus as a result. Part of the Purpose of the Tribulation is to Wake-up a nation:

(Genesis 5:24 NKJV) And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

(Revelation 7:4 NKJV) And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

(Revelation 12:6 NKJV) Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Daniel 9 / 70 Weeks / 69 to Palm Sunday / Church Period / Final 7

Pre-Tribulation Rapture squares with the prophecy of Daniel. At the end of Daniel 9, Daniel was given the timetable for all of Jewish history in units of heptads, or weeks. It is clear from this all-important passage of Scripture that the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel refer to the time between the commandment to rebuild the temple, given in 445 B.C. by Artaxerxes, and the coming of Messiah, fulfilled perfectly on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. But Daniel was also told, "Seventy weeks are determined upon Israel." To what does the seventieth week of Daniel refer? To the Tribulation. You see, the seventy weeks of Daniel refer to Israel. The church was not present for the first sixty-nine weeks. And the seventieth week doesn't begin until after the church is raptured. In other words, if the church was not present in the first sixty-nine weeks, why would she be present in the last week? She won't. She'll be in heaven:

(Daniel 9:24 NKJV) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Great Confusion / Matt 24 – the Elect

One of the greatest confusion in the Scriptures, where a lot of Mid-tribulation and Post-tribulation theology comes from is the misunderstanding of Matthew 24 in speaking of the Elect going through the Tribulation, and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened:

Matthew 24:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

3 Elects – Christians – Israel – Saints Saved in Tribulation

On the basis of this verse, people say “Aha! Here we see the elect in the Tribulation”—failing to realize that the term “elect” refers to three groups of people: Christians (Colossians 3:12), Israel (Isaiah 45:4), and those who will be saved in the Tribulation (Matthew 24:21, 22).

(Colossians 3:12 NKJV) Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

(Isaiah 45:4 NKJV) For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.

(Matthew 24:22 NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Elect of Matt 24 – Israel / Sabbath Day / Christians not under Sabbath

To which of the elect does Jesus refer in Matthew 24:21? I believe the answer lies in the verse preceding it...But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day (Matthew 24:20). Even to this day, transportation in Israel is shut down on the Sabbath. Since the Sabbath means nothing to Gentile nations, the application to Israel is clear. As we have seen, Israel (the Elect) will go through the Tribulation, but God will take them away to safety (pray that journey isn't on the Sabbath). For today, for the believer, we are no longer under the Sabbath law:

Matthew 24:20–22 (NKJV) ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Colossians 2:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶ So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Pray Accounted Worthy / Our Worthy is Jesus on Cross / Found Faithful like Philadelphia

Jesus told us to pray that we would be raptured before the Tribulation. In speaking of the Tribulation in His Olivet Discourse, Jesus said, “Watch and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things” (see Luke 21:36). How are we accounted worthy? One way: We are worthy because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross of Calvary. We are found worthy, for we are the Faithful Church of Philadelphia.

Luke 21:31–36 (NKJV) ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. ³⁴ “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

10.) Promised – God has Promised His Bride a Honeymoon.

Fits with Jewish Marriage

Pre-Tribulation Rapture makes sense historically and scripturally. In accordance with Jewish custom, when a man came of age to marry, he would add a room on to his father's house for himself and his bride. When the addition was complete, and when the father gave the go-ahead, a trumpet would sound, and the bridegroom would go to meet his bride. Now the bride would not know the specific day (but the general day) thus she would have her wedding dress ready, and her hair done, and her and her bridesmaids would be waiting for the trumpet to sound and the groom to come get her. When she heard the trumpet sound, then she would run out the door and meet the groom in the street half-way. We see the story illustrated in the Scriptures by the parable of the 10 virgins who were to be ready for the groom to come get them, at whatever time:

Matthew 25:1–10 (NKJV) ¹ “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with

them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'" ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

Following Ceremony / To Fathers House 7days / End - Presented

Following the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom would take his bride to his father's house, where they would be tucked away for seven days in the newly completed "bridal suite." At the end of seven days, the bridegroom would come out with his bride and introduce her to the community.

That's What Happens to Us / Mansions – Presented

That's exactly what's going to happen with us. Jesus, our Bridegroom, is preparing a place for us in heaven, His Father's house (John 14:2). At the appointed time known only by the Father, a trumpet will sound, and Jesus will meet us, His bride, in the air to escort us up to the "Bridal Suite" He has prepared for us. We will remain with Him in heaven for seven years before we are presented to the world, where we will rule and reign with Him.

John 14:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Revelation 19:9–14 (NKJV) ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." ¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Conclusion

Pre-Tribulation – Proper Perspective

A Pre-tribulation understanding of the Rapture will put life in proper perspective, and it will lead us to seek first the Kingdom of God:

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Be Looking / Spirit of Prophecy / Become Like Him

We need to constantly be living looking for His soon return. That is the spirit of prophecy, and the Lord commends His children for their continually looking for His soon return. For as our eyes are looking for Him, we will become what we behold, and we will become like Him.

6 Reasons Why We Should Study Prophecy

Here are 6 reasons why we study prophecy:

Control - (God is in Control for He Knows the End from the Beginning)

Isaiah 46:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

Comfort - (We can take Comfort knowing God is in Control, and none of these things Surprise Him)

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Persevere - (We are to continue to Persevere, for He is Worth It)

(Revelation 3:10 NKJV) "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

Purity - (Everyone who has this Hope Purifies themselves – to Give Themselves to Him the Spotless Bride)

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV) ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Priority - (Make our Priorities to What Matters Most considering we are going to See the King soon and very soon)

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Preparation - (There is a Lost and Dying World who is not Prepared to Meet Him)

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

God Says Come

Today we come and are gifted this Word from God Himself, His very heart opened before us, the calling to come near, be drawn to Him.

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need

End of Study

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

Title: The Travelers

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 (NKJV) ¹² And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. ¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Every chapter in this book talks about the rapture and coming of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 (NKJV) ² We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NKJV) ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recap: Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). He had received a vision to go to Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. They first went to Philippi, then after being driven out of there, they went west about 50 miles to Thessalonica (there in modern day Greece). Paul was only in the city of Thessalonica a short time, just 3 weeks (3 Sabbaths) but in those short three weeks a church was birthed. Paul is now in Corinth, it's only a few months later, less than a year later, and he writes to them to encourage and strengthen them.

Paul was very proud of this church, because they were already known through the region for three characteristics, their faith, their love, and their hope. The Study of this book, is the study of the model church, and the mature Christian. Verse 3 of chapter one gives us the Outline Structure of this Epistle:

(1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV) remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

The general outline of this book follows the same:

- The Faith of the Church – Chapters 1-3
- The Love of the Church – Chapter 4
- The Hope of the Church – Chapter 5

Jesus Christ is coming back for His church folks, all the prophetic signs say, soon and very soon we are going to see the King.... Our redemption draws near. So again, Here folks is the secret of life..... Live life backwards, when you realize you will spend forever in heaven, and you have that in your mind and in your heart, then you work back from that point and life makes tremendous sense. Tragedy, difficulties, why is this happening, it all makes sense when we work backwards from heaven. We know the big picture - Christ Wins. We know this is preparing us to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial reign. We studied Revelation we know the craziness the world will go through for that seven-year period, and we know that it things will continue to get worse leading up to that. We can relax when everyone is bummed and depressed because we know the big picture. We have perspective in the face of tragedy and trials, while the world may be freaking out. And, knowing that we will see Him soon, we will live with purpose, purity, and peace.

Luke 21:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Passage Context / Title: The Travelers

Before we get into 1 Thessalonians, lets take a quick look a 1 Peter 2:11

1 Peter 2:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Gang we are travelers (that is the title of our study today, "The Travelers"), we are sojourners, pilgrims here on this earth.

Sojourners/strangers - paroikos, par'-oy-kos; having a home near, i.e. (as noun) a by-dweller (alien resident)--foreigner, sojourn, stranger.

We are just passing through, our next destination (our destiny) is heaven, either through age, accident, circumstances, or the rapture, but we are heaven bound as we have been talking through this whole epistle of Thessalonians.

Until we see Jesus face to face, arms embraced, we are not home. Our citizenship is in heaven, up there, not down here. Set your eyes on the things above, look to your heavenly home. God through the apostle Paul in this study, is going to tell us how we ought to be traveling while we are here on this earth. He is going to break these remaining verses-out into how we are to travel on this earth, through this life, just as if we were traveling to Florida for vacation or business.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Outline:

When we travel we deal with those working in the travel industry, we deal other people who are traveling, and we face the unexpected and the expected; today these verses cover those same areas. A series of short concise exhortations, New Testament Proverbs, some 11 just in these few verses:

1. The Workers Serving the Travelers (5:12-13)
2. The Other Travelers (5:14-15)
3. Things Out of Our Control While Traveling (5:16-18)
4. Things in Our Control While Traveling (5:19-22):

1. The Workers Serving the Travelers (5:12-13):

As I travel on this earth, through this life, as I am heading towards heaven, God wants me to recognize the Workers He puts in our travel to get us to our final destination:

There are certain people in my travels, that if they were not there I may never reach my final destination, or without them it may take me days, weeks, or even months longer to get where I was planning on going. I need the pilot to fly the plane, I need the reservations to book my flight, I need the security folks to see to it that my flight is safe. All these people help me to get where I'm going. They are doing a job that provides for me, even if they don't provide the perfect service. There are times when I praise them for their service, others when I am not pleased with them.

God does the same for us in our spiritual travel here on earth, as we travel through to heaven, and God wants us to recognize the Workers that He puts in your life to help you reach your final destination.

God gives us workers to help perfect us as we are told in Ephesians 4:

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NKJV) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Paul says to recognize and esteem their work in your life

(1 Thessalonians 5:12 NKJV) And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, (1 Thessalonians 5:13 NKJV) and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

Respect the Laborer

Respect, esteem the work they do. These people, in love, are in a spiritual war with the devil who wants to stop the travels, many times doing the stuff nobody really wants to deal with, stuff we hope others deal with it, as it's not a comfortable place to correct or admonish someone, but those that do, they do it for the others well-being. Sometimes you just have to step back and ask yourself, does anyone else care for me like this person does.

We are to esteem the workers of God, but at the same time I warn you not to let lose your ear for hearing from God Himself, or that their ears takes the place of your petitions before God.

Sometimes it is easier to go to them, than it is to go to the Lord.

(Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV) 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

One of the signs of the last days will be a great deception within the church, and there will be many who fall away. In a day of rock-star pastors there is a danger that some pastors get more attention than Jesus does. Years ago there was a great violinist, he played for the thousands and they all loved his playing. Then along came the Stradivarius, people would praise this wonderful top of the line violin, to the point that people started to come just to hear the Stradivarius. The Master Violinist was getting somewhat offended at this. It reached a point that upon completion of a set people would stand and applaud, clapping and cheering out his name, and mixed in they would also cheer and applaud and yell Stradivarius, Stradivarius. One concert he came and

played a set that brought tears to the people's eyes, upon completion they again yelled his name and Stradivarius, he then took the violin off his shoulder, smashed it off the ground into little pieces, and the crowd was in shock. He then walked over, opened his other violin case, pulled out another violin, and said, this is the Stradivarius, the violin I just played I bought for twenty dollars.

We are to esteem the workers of God, but at the same time I warn you not to let lose your ear for hearing from God Himself, or that their ears takes the place of your petitions to God. Also, when the Lord uses you as a worker for Him, be careful not to forget that you are just an instrument God uses to make beautiful music.

Now the church, especially the American church, greatly confuses the role and responsibility of the pastor. In Ephesians God clearly details what the pastor's role is, and it is important to see that "pastor and teacher" are combined together. The pastor is to be a teacher. Notice that it reads, some apostles, some prophets, some evangelist, but it does not say some pastors, some teachers, but it says some pastors and teachers "combined". And the roles of those listed as gifts to the church, are to (v12) equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body. So the pastor/teacher is to equip (furnish) the church body, and the body does the "work of the ministry". Much of the way people view the pastor and leaders of the church is that they are to do the work of the ministry, they do all the hospital visits, in home visits, evangelism, church maintenance and the likes; but on the contrary, the Word says the pastors teach and equip, so the church goes does the work. Now I surely don't believe the pastor is to be exempt from doing those things because they are the things Christians are to do, but the breakdown comes when the church misses that those things are every ones calling, not just the pastors calling.

Ephesians 4:7-16 (NKJV) ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

If the pastor has to do all the visitations, all the church maintenance, all the meal deliveries, and the likes, the obvious question is when would he have time to give himself to the word and prayer as called to do (Acts 6:4, Ephesians 4)? If he fails on giving a spirit-filled, God-inspired teaching, then how can the saints be equipped for the work of the ministry.

Acts 6:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

2. The Other Travelers (5:14-15):

As I travel on this earth, through this life, as I am heading towards heaven, God wants me to recognize the Others who are traveling also:

Millions of people travel in and out of BWI every year, about 2+ million per month, around 27 million per year, and about 75,000 per day . Tens of thousands everyday, all have one thing in common, they want to get from point A to point B, safely.

Traveling wears on you, it is exhausting both physically and mentally, and both of which effect a person emotionally/mentally. Strangers traveling among you can add to this stress. People cutting in front of you in line, their body hanging over into your seat, their feet in your space, then

they crawl over you to get to the bathroom every 15 minutes. As bad as they can be, often it is your very traveling companions that push you to the last nerve. The reason is because all day you are crammed in small quarters, rushing or waiting, hey traveling can really wear you out, and then we react, in the wrong way. Hey, we are on our way on vacation, a mission trip, or for my job that pays the mortgage, what are we getting upset with them.

The same is true for our spiritual travel here on earth, as we travel through to heaven, and God wants you to recognize the other people that are traveling with you, and how much better the travels would be if we all considered the other person.

(1 Thessalonians 5:14 NKJV) Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

1 Peter 2:11, we are Pilgrims here on this earth.

(1 Peter 2:11 NKJV) Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, (1 Peter 2:12 NKJV) having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Pilgrims - parepidemos, par-ep-id'-ay-mos; an alien alongside, i.e. a resident foreigner:--pilgrim, stranger.

Pilgrims founded this country; they were ones who were on a sacred quest. The great myth is that they came to America for religious freedom, but the fact is they already had it in Holland. The pilgrims came to this country to lead others to Christ, to prepare the way for others to follow.

Good Works Unto Other Travelers

We are to help others in their travels, we are to have good works we were told in 1 Peter 2:11

Good Works - kalos, kal-os'; of uncert. affin.; prop. beautiful, but chiefly (fig.) good (lit. or mor.), i.e. valuable or virtuous.

Pilgrims remember, not everyone is going to the same final destination.

I love BWI because I know it so well. I love it when I am walking through the terminal and I can just see that look of bewilderment on someone's face. I love it because I know I know I have the answers for them. I can direct them to their appropriate gate, I can tell them where the Starbucks is, I can direct them to where to pickup their luggage, get a rental car, to meet their loved ones, or how to get out on the Maryland roads and continue their travel.

Here is good works.....God wants us warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. Please note, as defined by definition of good works, what we do and how we do it comforting or correcting, must be valuable (brings out value), and virtuous (with pure heart and motives). Some people because of the wrong heart (aka – critical) their way of comforting or correcting actually has people feeling like they are being devalued, rather valued treasures of God.

Again, here is good works.....There are many believers who are struggling in their walk, in their life, and the Lord wants us to help them along.

(1 Thessalonians 5:15 NKJV) See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

Do Not Render Evil for Evil

Forget paybacks, forget getting even, let God handle them. Listen God can defend you much better than you will ever do. Once you start defending your character, you will spend a lifetime doing it. Either you can defend your rights or let God do it.

We are told as we travel, regarding other travelers, we are to always "pursue what is good". One of the most violent crimes committed in the church today is "Character Assignment". When a person assigns another person's character to you, the next time you see them, they become to you that which they said they were. Their character will always be tainted for you will always be wondering or looking to see if what they said about them is true. It may very well be true, but you would never have noticed it had they not pointed it out to you.

Maybe you have rendered evil for evil, have hurt someone, maybe hurt someone who did no wrong to you, well there is still time to make it right. Alfred Bernhard Nobel invented Dynamite. He amassed fortunes through the sale of dynamite. Dynamite was used in many wars as one of the main weapons, and as a result many people died.

Mr. Noble's brother died some years after his invention of dynamite, and mistakenly the newspaper confused the death of his brother with his own death and printed the following obituary: "Mr. Nobel died, he invented a weapon of mass destruction called dynamite, and made millions of dollars as a result of that." Mr. Nobel was horrified when he read his own epitaph.

He soon concentrated his millions of dollars to bring about peace. Today he is known for reward of human ingenuity for peaceful purposes. When he died, he left \$9 million to establish a series of prizes in his name...today we know these prizes as The Nobel Peace Prize.

He had the opportunity to change his epitaph. So do we! Maybe you have blown some people up, there still time to make peace.

3. Things Out of Our Control While Traveling (5:16-18)

As I travel on this earth, through this life, as I am heading towards heaven, God wants me to recognize that not everything is in my Control:

Lost luggage, flight delays, stormy weather, equipment failures, so many things to go wrong in my travels, all of which make my plans fall apart, causing me to have to readjust my travel plans, in order that I make my final destination.

The same is true for our spiritual travel here on earth, as we travel through to heaven, and God wants you to recognize that the Unexpected and Uncontrollable will arise in our travels that we will have to face. Although they may disrupt our travel plans, we are not to let them keep us from our final destination, nor take our eyes off the final destination.

Loved one lost, lives trials, spiritual attacks, and health problems, what are we to do when they arise in our travels here on earth, on the way to heaven? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,
(1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV) pray without ceasing,
(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It doesn't say give thanks FOR everything give thanks, but IN everything. We don't give thanks for the loses, but in the loses we can give thanks because we know that God is still in control and He will still do great things through the loss.

Rejoice always,

(1 Thessalonians 5:16 NKJV) Rejoice always,

Know this Christian, God is always for you, no matter how bleak the situation is, even if it is your fault, He is still for you and desiring to make all things work together for good in your life.

(Romans 8:28 NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

God is on the throne, when I remember that, then everything comes into perspective, and I can fix my eyes on Him, not my circumstances.

We don't always know the rest of the story, we think the circumstances we are in are the end of all, nothing good will come out of it, but we don't see how God may be putting you in a place or position for something better to come along.

A long time ago, a lawyer had successfully handled a difficult law case for a wealthy friend. Following the happy outcome of the case, the friend and client called on the lawyer, expressed his appreciation of his work and handed him a handsome Moroccan leather wallet. The lawyer looked at the wallet in astonishment and handed it back with a sharp reminder that a wallet could not possibly compensate him for his services. "My fee for that work," acidly snapped the attorney, "is five hundred dollars." The client opened the wallet, removed a one-thousand dollar bill, replaced it with five one-hundred dollar bills and handed it back to the lawyer with a smile.

Pray without ceasing.

(1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV) pray without ceasing,

Traveling with God

I find that I seem to pray more on travel day than most other days. I need things to go in order if I am to make my final destination.

I have learned to pray without ceasing; people ask me questions that I need to seek the Lord for wisdom to respond, to pray the Lord to help me at work, on my drive. The door is always open, it isn't just our morning devotion. Start with your morning devotion, start your day off with an attitude of prayer, and then let it carry you through the day. Start the day with prayer and then never cease talking to the Lord throughout the day.

Give Thanks

(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Here we go again, what is the will of the God. Right here, giving thanks always.

It's the trials that make me look forward to heaven and the Rapture, I can thank God through the trials because I know that soon and very soon, I'm going to see the King.

4. Things In Our Control While Traveling (5:19-22):

As I travel on this earth, through this life, as I am heading towards heaven, God wants me to recognize that there are things that are in my Control.

When I travel I check out the financial aspect, the departure and arrival times, the transfers, the layovers, the food, I check into all these things and determine do they fit and line-up with my travel plans, will they get me to final destination safe and sound.

The same is true for our spiritual travel here on earth, as we travel through to heaven, and God wants you to recognize that there are things in my very control, things the Lord wants me to control and apply to my travels.

In these verses we are told to test, hold, abstain, plus a few do not, all of which are action verbs.

(1 Thessalonians 5:19 NKJV) Do not quench the Spirit.

(1 Thessalonians 5:20 NKJV) Do not despise prophecies.

(1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV) Test all things; hold fast what is good.

(1 Thessalonians 5:22 NKJV) Abstain from every form of evil.

Do not quench the Spirit

(1 Thessalonians 5:19 NKJV) Do not quench the Spirit.

Notice the Spirit capitalized, because the Spirit is a Person, and the Person of God Himself, the Third Person of the Trinity. So don't quench God and what He is doing we are being told in our lives.

Quench means to extinguish, like putting out a fire. John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize us with fire and the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost tongues of fire (imagery) rested upon all who were baptized in the Spirit – yet today people are afraid, to the point they shutdown and quench the move of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. God said in 1 Corinthians 12 that He doesn't want us to be unaware of, ignorant, of the spiritual gifts.

Matthew 3:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Acts 2:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

Now.....A lot of people use this Scripture to allow all kinds of foolish activities in the church, but we are to quench the flesh, not the Spirit.

I remember being in a church in Louisiana, I worked some guys who when they found out that I was a Christian, they said you have to come check out our church, it is awesome. Now I received it immediately that it must be a good church because of the powerful witness these guys were in the workplace. We worked in a tough-tough environment. Lots of pressure to succeed, we were in jeopardy of having our program shutdown because of being behind schedule and over-cost by a few hundred million dollars. Guys were lying, cheating, and stealing to keep face. Everyday was a barrage of vulgarity to get the workers to perform over and above, but not these guys, they never used vulgarity, they never inflated or deflated their numbers, they always performed in honesty and uprightness, and they were always prim and proper at work. I said their church has to be good, cause these are good men – and they were. So I go to visit, good worship, then the Pastor came out, started to teach, I said good teaching I like him, but then.....

But then after his teaching, it was time to get weird. The Pastor started to get them all riled up emotionally, he started running up and down the stage, yelling and screaming, saying the spirit is going to descend, come Lord Jesus, ohh fall on us Holy Spirit, we need a fresh touch from you, an anointing from you. Then all of a sudden people started to roll around on the floor, somebody started screeching like an eagle, this lady right in front of me started to convulse. Could you picture Jesus doing this, no. the sad part was there was a bunch of youth in front of me, you could tell their parent made them go, and they were bumping each other pointing to people acting all weird, laughing to one another....my heart broke. I said this doesn't line up with Scripture, this isn't the gifts of the Holy Spirit spoken of in 1 Corinthians, the steam from the fire is to move the locomotive, not toot the horn.....this is too weird. I said to myself about my coworkers, you are so prim and proper at work, how can you get so weird here. If you acted like this at work everybody would say you were a nut case.

I didn't want to make a scene and get up and leave and cause attention to fall upon myself, I thought I could ride it out, but they just kept going and going, I said I can't take much more of this, then it came, the Pastor said, there is someone here and you think this is all weird, your unbelief is keeping the Lord from filling this place, your unbelief is keeping the Lord from doing a work here today, YOU ARE QUENCHING THE SPIRIT, you need to leave. I took my que.....

Now from the Scriptures how do we quench the spirit by lack of love. The fruit of the spirit is love, if we don't open ourselves up to love, we quench the spirit. You want to quench the Spirit? Have resentment and discord for the workers God has put in your life, repay evil for evil, don't rejoice but be angry at the world and God, don't give thanks but be bitter, quit praying..and allow Satan to have his ways with your thought life.

Galatians 5:16–26 (NKJV) ¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Do not despise prophecies.

(1 Thessalonians 5:20 NKJV) Do not despise prophecies.

Prophecies – someone forth telling the word of the Lord. Someone telling you or a group of what the Lord wants them to do.

It is easy to despise prophecies because there are so many nuts out there walking around pretending to be so spiritual.

Listen and apply the word of God to it, and go pray about it.

When I was unemployed for 9 months, I had all kinds of people telling me what they thought the Lord wanted me to do, go be a missionary, go help this start his church, etc, etc. All of their words may have lined up with Scripture, but not what God was speaking to my heart about. they all this great plan for me serving the Lord, but I often wished that the Lord would have told them to take me out to dinner, cause I had to go 9 months without eating an Outback steak.

In the next two verses we will be told to Test, Hold, and Abstain.

(1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV) Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Test all things

You don't have to receive all prophecy, first match it against Scripture, prophecy will never be contrary to the Scriptures.

One of the failures the church in Thessalonica made was that they didn't test all things, in Acts we are told this. The resultant was that people came in told them all kinds of wild stuff and they got all confused and troubled over it. We, more so with the whole counsel of God banded together in our hands should never be dinged for not searching the Scriptures.

(Acts 17:11 NKJV) *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

Hold fast what is good.

Don't let the ungodly sway you from what you know is right.

Don't go into business with the ungodly, don't date the ungodly, don't go against what you know the Word is telling you. Hold fast to what is good, no matter how much the world may try to sway you away from it.

Remember King Jehosaphat, he went into business with the ungodly Ahab, what happens the Scriptures tell us, his whole fleet of ships went down:

2 Chronicles 20:35–37 (NKJV) ³⁵ After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. ³⁶ And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. ³⁷ But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied

yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Abstain from every form of evil.

(1 Thessalonians 5:22 NKJV) Abstain from every form of evil.

(1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV) Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Remember we are the Kings kids, we are His Ambassadors, His Pilgrims. We are to abstain from the appearances of evil, therefore we are to carry the appearance of godliness. Anytime God tells us not to do something, then on the flip side there is something He wants us to do. If He wants us to abstain from the appearances of evil, then on the flip-side He wants us to put on the appearance of godliness.

We are a Kingdom kid, my sons have certain behavior expected of him, because he is part of this family, and Our heavenly father expects a certain behavior from us, because we are part of His family.

Don't justify it. If you want to be used by the Lord, you have to be concerned what people think of you. Even if what you are doing is innocent, it can nullify your ministry. What will the neighbor think when they see your boyfriend's car in the driveway at 3am?

I had to quit drinking IBC Root Beer because it looked so much like beer that I quit so not to trip someone else up. Working with Youth, they look up to me, that what I do is acceptable for them, I quit drinking so there could be no doubt.

Conclusion

Folks if you haven't already done so, start packing, for folks we are just passing through, we are just travelers on to our final destination, our destiny, what we were bought for, to be His and be with Him forever. So as we travel may we remember this study:

1. The Workers Serving the Travelers (5:12-13)
2. The Other Travelers (5:14-15)
3. Things Out of Our Control While Traveling (5:16-18)
4. Things in Our Control While Traveling (5:19-22):

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28
Title: Now It Begins (Easter 2021)

The Master's Touch

The Master's Touch

'Twas battered and scarred,
And the auctioneer thought it
hardly worth his while
To waste his time on the old violin,
but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good people", he cried,
"Who starts the bidding for me?"
"One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?"
"Two dollars, who makes it three?"
"Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three,"

But, No,
From the room far back a gray bearded man
Came forward and picked up the bow,
Then wiping the dust from the old violin
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody, pure and sweet
As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said "What now am I bid for this old violin?"
As he held it aloft with its' bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear two?"
"Two thousand, Who makes it three?"
"Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
Going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered,
But some of them cried,
"We just don't understand."
"What changed its' worth?"
Swift came the reply.
"The Touch of the Masters Hand."

"And many a man with life out of tune
All battered and bruised with hardship
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd
Much like that old violin

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
A game and he travels on.
He is going once, he is going twice,
He is going and almost gone.

But the Master comes,
And the foolish crowd never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
By the Touch of the Masters' Hand.

Prayer

Great praise to Him, who has touched us and made us His. I am reminded of the song “Show Me Your Glory”, and that is my prayer for us today this Easter Sunday, that we would meet with Him in a special way, that He would show us His glory and His face:

The Epic Movie (Jesus of Nazareth) – Now it Begins

Movie Jesus of Nazareth

There’s a scene at the end of the epic film series, “Jesus of Nazareth.” The High Priest’s henchman, the man who conspired with Judas to kill Jesus, was breathing easier. Despite the fact Jesus was clearly divine, if He’d been allowed to live, He would’ve upset the status quo. The religious higher-ups agreed He had to be silenced. Powerful people had too much to lose. Yet now, three days later, the same official hears that something is wrong at the tomb. He arrives to inspect with two other priests and a squadron of soldiers. He finds that the Roman guards were supernaturally overcome - the stone was rolled away - the body of Jesus is nowhere to be found.

He walks into the empty tomb – sees the empty grave clothes. He stares off into the distance, and utters, “Now it begins. It all begins.”

And so it has, the power of the resurrection, of the debt has been paid, and we are made new..... by the Master’s touch.

And for 2,000 years man has been doing what Jesus said to do.... Go tell the world Jesus is out of the tomb and on the move.

Matthew 28:5–8 (NKJV) ⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.” ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

Resurrection Means Jesus is on the Move – Can’t Be Nailed Down or Tucked Away

Jesus is on the Move

In his book, “The Jesus I Never Knew,” author Phillip Yancey writes honestly, “In many respects, I would find an un- resurrected Jesus easier to accept. The resurrection makes Him dangerous. It means He must be loose out there somewhere. Like the disciples, I never know where Jesus might turn up, how He might speak to me, what He might ask of me.”

John 20:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

John 20:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

John 20:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

John 21:1 (NKJV) ¹ After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:

1 Corinthians 15:3–8 (NKJV) ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Can't Nail Jesus Down – Not Tuck Him Away

"The resurrection means we can never nail Jesus down, not even if the nails we use are real and the thing we nail Him to is a cross. Nor can He be kept in the tomb for a Risen Savior means a Living Savior, who is one the move in the world we live, on the move in our lives personally, and always on His way to us. Nothing..... can stop Jesus from getting to you, not nails, not a tomb, nothing! Do you need Him today? Say come Lord Jesus come.

Our Passage (1 Thessalonians 5:23-28)

(1 Thessalonians 5:23 NKJV) Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:24 NKJV) He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

The trichotomy of man – body, soul and spirit.

Sanctify meaning:

37 ἁγιάζω, ἁγιασῶζω [hagiazo /hag·ee·ad·zo/] v. From 40; TDNT 1:111; TDNTA 14; GK 39 and 420; 29 occurrences; AV translates as "sanctify" 26 times, "hallow" twice, and "be holy" once. 1 to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow. 2 to separate from profane things and dedicate to God. 2A consecrate things to God. 2B dedicate people to God. 3 to purify. 3A to cleanse externally. 3B to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin. 3C to purify internally by renewing of the soul.

**Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.*

Blameless meaning:

274 ἀμείπτως [amemptos /am·emp·toce/] adv. From 273; GK 290; Two occurrences; AV translates as "unblameably" once, and "blameless" once. 1 blameless, so that there is no cause for censure (censure - censure Ecclesiastical penalty ranging from a reprimand, suspension, and exclusion from the sacrament to interdiction and excommunication and removal from office)

**Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.*

At the coming of our Lord Jesus – Jesus is coming back for us folks as we have been studying for the past 3 months. The Cup in our hands we were told to do as a reminder of what He has done for us in the past (sanctify and cleanse), and what He will do in the future, and that is come get us and present us faultless and blameless.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **till He comes.**

(1 Thessalonians 5:24 NKJV) He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

If you ever doubt His faithfulness, then go back to the cross.

2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV) ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

(1 Thessalonians 5:25 NKJV) Brethren, pray for us.

(1 Thessalonians 5:26 NKJV) Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

(1 Thessalonians 5:27 NKJV) I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

We are still reading it today. And praise God He preserved it for us to read and be fed with.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(1 Thessalonians 5:28 NKJV) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Verse 1 we started with grace and we end here with grace. It's all about grace (God's-Riches-At-Christ's-Expense).

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Your Hand – Communion Elements (Reminder of His Faithfulness)

Elements in Your Hand

The bread and the cup – of promise and power:

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Verse 23 – Something Subtle yet Specific (your spirit)

(1 Thessalonians 5:23 NKJV) Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:24 NKJV) He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

Many call this the trichotomy of man – body (and God breathes life into – Genesis 2:7), soul and spirit. There has been much debate of what the difference between soul and spirit, some say they are one in the same, but all I know is that in our passage today, we have three separate and unique make up of a person.

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

We know in Hebrews 4 that God's Word is able to divide "spirit and soul", and therefore they must be two separate things

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Here is what we know the Lord says, the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20), and that is what happened when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, just as the Lord said, the day you eat of this fruit you shall die.

Ezekiel 18:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Genesis 2:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

There are some scholars who think that man is not born with a spirit, just a body and soul. There are some who say man is born body, soul, and spirit, but when they sin the spirit dies. All too lofty for me, but what I do know clearly is that Jesus said, you must be born again, and He says that because we are dead because of sin.

John 3:3 (NKJV) ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

What does that mean? Even the great teacher of teachers in Israel at the time of Jesus, Nicodemus, asked what that means, but Jesus made it clear, and made it emphatic (meaning it is a must)... To enter heaven a person must be born again:

John 3:4–7 (NKJV) ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

You Must Be Born Again (John 3:3)
The 1st Passover (Exodus 12)

Behold the Lamb of God

When Jesus came on the scene to begin His public ministry, and then the march towards the cross, He came to the Jordan where the forerunner who called to prepare the way (announce His coming) was baptizing and preaching of the King to Come, and when He saw Jesus coming he pointed and said, Behold the Lamb of takes away the sin of the world. Why of all things call Jesus "the Lamb"?

John 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

When the children of Israel were in the bondage of Egypt in slavery (slavery a picture of sin and Egypt a picture of the world), the 10th and final plague was death upon the first born of the house of everyone who did not have the blood of the lamb applied over the door. They were told (Exodus 12) to bring the lamb into the home on the 10th of that day in the month of the Jewish calendar called Nisan. The lamb was to be presented to the home as a reminder (and to become acquainted with personally) that only the lamb's blood over the door could death pass over. According to the historical writings and research, the 10th of Nisan was the very day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was received as the Messiah.

Exodus 12:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

John 12:12-13 (NKJV) ¹² The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

By the way, The 10th of Nisan was an historic day in the history of our faith. Not only was it the day the Passover Lamb was chosen and brought into the houses of the Israelites in Egypt – it was also the very day that the children of Israel, freed from slavery, finally crossed into Jordan entering the "Promised Land" for the first time.

Joshua 4:19-24 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. ²⁰ And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. ²¹ Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' ²² then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; ²³ for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, ²⁴ that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Jesus came to bring us into the Promised Land and freedom, and then, exactly on time again, on the 14th of Nisan, Jesus was sacrificed upon the cross, at twilight, exactly when all the Passover sacrifices were to be slain. The Jewish Passover was always celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, that month is called Nissian which falls in our March/April calendar.

(Exodus 12:6 NKJV) 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

(Leviticus 23:5 NKJV) 'On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover.

Blood Must be Applied

The blood needed to be applied! If the children of Israel had merely believed in the power of the lamb's blood, and the word of Moses, but never applied it to their doorposts, the angel of death would still have killed their firstborn! A passive belief in the blood would not have saved them -- action was required -- the blood needed to be applied to their doorpost. Once the blood was applied, a line was drawn across which the angel of death could not pass!

You Must Be Born Again (John 3:3) Why A Sacrifice Needed?

Why A Sacrifice?

Why must there be a sacrifice? The why is that our sin separates us from the Holy God, who cannot look upon impurity. We needed help to be made clean

Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

John 3:16

Jesus is the cleanser:

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The Gospel

What does it mean to believe? It is more than just a statement of I believe. Let me save you 4 years of seminary and boil it down. Believe means to Recognize, Repent, and Receive.

- Recognize – Recognize you sin offends and separates you from the Holy God.
- Repent – being willing to turn from your sin, and turn to follow God.
- Receive – to humble oneself and say Lord I need a Savior, come into my life and save me; Lord I give you my life.

That is believing unto salvation, that is being born again, that is the new beginning. It is not rehabilitation, but regeneration, a washing away of sin and Jesus coming in and taking up residence within you, the kingdom of God is here. Jesus said you must be born of water and blood (3:5). The blood a picture of the punishment of sin which Jesus took for “whosoever will receive it”, and the water a picture of being totally cleansed, washed anew, and just as when the water breaks in child birthing, when the water breaks upon whoever believes they are birthed into the kingdom of God.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Acts 3:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Romans 10:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

John 3:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

17th Day of Nisan

Jesus rose again on 17th of that month in the Jewish calendar called Nisan, as we know He was crucified on the 14th and spent 3 days in the grave (equaling the 17th). This would be known as the Feast of Firstfruits that Israel was to commemorate. Do so digging through the treasures found in the Scriptures, we see that was the same day the Ark rested, symbolizing in advance that Christ would be our rest, and our escape from judgment of God, our ark of salvation, our new beginning. The 7th month, would become the first month right here after God says this month is

now the first month. The Feast of Firstfruits took place on the first day of the week following Passover and commemorated the fact that, having been released from Egypt, the children of Israel were headed to a Promised Land wherein there would be plentiful harvests in the land which “flowed with milk and honey.” Of what expectation did the Feast of Firstfruits speak? Christ was killed on Passover. On the Feast of Unleavened Bread, His body was put in the tomb. Yet on the very day of the Feast of Firstfruits, He rose from the dead—the Firstfruit of all who would follow Him (1 Corinthians 15:20). The Firstfruit, Jesus Christ, finished the work. And because He rose, we, too, shall rise.

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 (NKJV) ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

Leviticus 23:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.’

Exodus 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

(Genesis 8:4 NKJV) Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

The Blood Must Be Applied

God gives every man their first breath at birth. The picture (if you will) is that God only gives the second breath, the breath of eternal life with Him, to those who believe in Him. Man needs the second breath to enter eternity, hence what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus back in John 3, that you must be born again.

John 3:3 (NKJV) ³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:4–7 (NKJV) ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

Jesus Breathed on Them / Now they are Born-again

It says Jesus breathed on them, after the resurrection on that very same day.... The 17th of Nisan), and don’t be confused, as we see it was before the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). At this point, the disciples are born again. Although they were already following Jesus, they were not yet regenerated because He had not yet died for their sins. But here Jesus breathes on them—reminiscent of Genesis 2:7, when God breathed life into Adam’s nostrils and he became a living soul.

John 20:22 (NKJV) ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

You Must Be Born Again

The Cup of Communion (Reminder of His Faithfulness)

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Resurrection Means Jesus is on the Move – Can't Be Nailed Down or Tucked Away

Matthew 28:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

Christian, Jesus is on the move, and we never know where He may move and work next....why not this Easter say, how here, how about in me Jesus. He will honor that ask I can guarantee it.

Matthew 7:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Now it Begins

As the priest in that movie said and played so well when he entered the empty tomb..... now it begins. And for us who have received Him as Lord and Savior, have experienced the empty tomb, and the resurrected Christ....there is a move of His Spirit in us, and our lives, that cannot be stopped. And remember church, Jesus is coming back for His Bride, for there is a time we know not when, but we know is sure and true and imminent.... Where the Father is going to turn to the Son and say..... go get Your Bride, go get Your Bride, go get Your Bride!

1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. ²⁵ Brethren, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.