

# I Thessalonians 3:1-4:12 – 19 November 2023

## “M.E.G.A. Ministers”

### Introduction

- \*Paul had but 3 weeks to 3 months at Thessalonica
  - \*Amazing what God can do in a short period of time!
  - \*In Chap 1: Paul commended them for their immediate, expressions of faith, love & hope in their new life
  - \*In Chap 2: Paul more focused on the sincerity of our interactions in serving the world the Gospel
  - \*Before Paul gets to his main point in Chap 4:13, he final has a word w/ them regarding the depth of their Christian life and service
  - \*Read Matt 20:25-26 – Word translated *great* is the Gk word *mega* & it's used 195 times
  - \*I believe the Lord wants us to be M.E.G.A Ministers
- Today, let's look at 3 degrees of Christian ministry or service – so we can become M.E.G.A. Ministers**

# 1<sup>st</sup> degree is to be established, unmovable in the faith (Chap 3:1-8)

Read Vs 1-3

1. Paul was hindered in returning to Thessalonica so he did next best thing in sending Tim & Silas
2. He sent them to establish & comfort them
  - a. *Establish* as in ‘hardening or strengthening’
  - b. *Comfort* is ‘to call near’
  - c. This is designed to rid them of any doubts
  - d. Reminds us of Aaron & Hur in Exo 17:12
3. The establishing & comforting was so they would endure the afflictions man laid on them
  - a. Paul spent chapters 1-2 speaking of their hope in waiting for Jesus and the resurrection
  - b. W/ hope as background, we endure afflictions
4. To endure troubles to get to the goal, we have to weigh the value of the things involved
  - a. Read II Tim 3:12 – Won’t see that one cross-stitched on a pillow
  - b. If the value of Christ is greater than the value of a trouble-free life, then we’ll endure

- i. Justin Martyr said, ‘the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church’ – it’s worth it!

## Read Vs 4

1. There’re 2 things we should expect to come along & try tearing us away from believing in Jesus
  - a. Pleasures AND tribulations (Matt 13)
  - b. Read Act 20:29-30 wolves AND perverse things
  - c. Read I Pet 4:12-13 – Trials work a great reward

## Read Vs 5

1. Temptation comes in many forms
  - a. To do evil w/ pleasures & depart the Lord
  - b. To not endure affliction & depart the Lord
2. Paul is concerned they’ll not endure affliction

## Read Vs 6-8

1. Paul sent Tim to comfort them & in return they ended up comforting Paul by their endurance
2. It’s like Paul could breathe again hearing that they’re being solidified in the Lord

3. There are 5 times “stand fast” used in the NT
  - a. Stand fast in the faith – I Cor 16:13
  - b. Stand fast in liberty – Gal 5:1
  - c. Stand fast in one spirit – Phil 1:27
  - d. Stand fast in the Lord – Phil 4:1 & I Thes 3:8
  - e. Stand fast in traditions of the Word – II Thes 2:15

## **2<sup>nd</sup> degree is to be growing toward completion (Chap 3:9-13)**

Read Vs 9-10

1. New Christians should take no offence in Paul wanting to complete what’s lacking in them
  - a. The more I grow in the Lord the more I accept that there’s a lot I don’t know
  - b. Mature Christians should take no offence in someone wanting to complete what’s lacking in them
2. “To perfect”: To completely mend or finish fixing, doesn’t mean ‘bringing to perfection w/o sin’
  - a. As in Mat 4:21 to mend nets back to fixed

3. Not a call to sinless perfection but to be all that we, individually, are called & equipped to be
  - a. He gave 1, 5 or 10 talents, use what's given
  - b. He gives some a small net and to some a big net, use whatever we're given
  - c. Read I Pet 5:10: He uses pain to complete us

Read Vs 11-13

1. May God guide you w/ how to increase in love until your faultless & stand before God's throne
  - a. Like Zac & Liz were blameless (Luk 1:6)
  - b. Read Jude 24 – We use this life to grow in imitating our Jesus
2. “With all His saints” – At His coming the Church is coming w/ Him meaning, they're already w/ Him
  - a. Also Read Jud 14
  - b. Saints aren't certain people & not angels, but all Christians are saints – every usage is human servants

## **3<sup>rd</sup> degree is to be abounding in a good lifestyle (Chap 4:1-12)**

Read Vs 1-2

1. *Abound* is ‘to have enough and to spare’
  - a. That’s evangelism – My daily life is satisfying and I want you to have some
  - b. If on trial for being Christian, is there enough evidence to convict you?
2. The call is to make our daily experience one that would please God
  - a. When we lay down at night, can we say, ‘God it was my joy to please you today’

Read Vs 3-4

1. *Paul begins discussion of abounding in a good lifestyle by having control over our own bodies*
  - a. Our bodies are made in God’s image & if you’re a Christian you’re Temple of Holy Spirit
  - b. There’re specific actions that are godly
  - c. Any sex beyond marriage isn’t God’s will

2. God wants us to know & has made a way for us to know His will (Read Rom 12:1-2)

### Read Vs 5

1. Sexual conduct of Christians is different than that of the world. Are you ready to be different?
2. We live w/ control over our impulses

### Read Vs 6

1. When lusting after one that's not your spouse, we're lusting after one that belongs to another
  - a. That's stealing what's not yours; covetousness

### Read Vs 7-8

1. This isn't man's plan; this is God's plan for sex
  - a. That means it can only be good!
2. We need to put all that we are on the altar, so He can alter all that we are
3. It says in vs 8 that He's given us His Holy Spirit to accomplish this within us
  - a. Our abounding comes from the Holy Spirit

## Read Vs 9-10

1. *They had the primary characteristics of a Christian, and that is love for other believers*
  - a. ‘If you love Me you’ll keep My commandments’
  - b. Read John 13:35 - “By this shall all know..”
2. How’s your love for the church? Over time is it growing or waning? Let it increase more & more

## Read Vs 11-12

1. *‘Study to be quiet’ is to work at living a peaceable life not stirring up needless contention*
  - a. Read II Thes 3:11-12
  - b. Some work really hard at being lazy & that just stirs up more contention & work for others
2. What’s it take to become a busybody & gossip?
  - a. Not having your own honest goals & pursuits
  - b. Paul told the Corinthians to “let all things be done decently & in order” (I Cor 14:40)
  - c. Some of the 1<sup>st</sup> sins are those of idleness & not what we know is good and right



## Conclusion

So the Lord wants us to be great servants, MEGA ministers! How are you doing?

1. **Are you established in the faith, unmovable?**
  - a. Song: On Christ the solid rock I stand...
  - b. Take time for your own personal study of God's Word and grow deep
2. **Are you growing toward completion?**
  - a. Song: Complete in Thee, no work of mine...
  - b. We all have things to confess to one another that need to improve
3. **Are you abounding in a good lifestyle?**
  - a. God will lead us into purity, love & peace
  - b. If you're experiencing the Holy Spirit then you have enough...and to spare

***“Whoever will be great (mega) among you, let him be your minister” --Matt 20:26***