

#4 1Thessalonians

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Verse 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.'

When Paul writes of the Gospel he taught, he means that which he, elsewhere, refers to as, 'my Gospel.' Paul is the one through whom God revealed His Gospel of Salvation by Grace which would be in effect during the 2000 years of the existence, on Earth, of the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church. The complete Salvation, which Paul reveals, includes: God's election of every saved person, before the foundation of the World, that Salvation is all God's work, from beginning through its culmination at the Rapture and that we will, then, rule and reign with Jesus Christ, first, on Earth, for the 1000 years of the Millennium, and then forever as He rules and reigns over His newly recreated, vast, Universe.

Paul, so as not to be 'a burden' on any of the churches he planted, not only worked day and night in preaching the gospel but also worked with his hands, making tents, to earn the money necessary to continue on in ministry. Of course, some churches were better off, financially, and were able to help with Paul's support.

'After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 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. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.' Acts 18:1

Verse 10: 'You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;'

Paul was always careful to conduct himself, as he says, devoutly and justly and blamelessly because he understood that whatever we do, or say, it can never be taken back, especially now, in the age of the internet. And to our class, no matter what I'm being accused of, I have also conducted myself devoutly and justly and blamelessly as your teacher, and as your friend, as one who will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to give an account of all I've done: 'My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.' Jms 3:1

Here, Paul is stating what should be the attitude and conduct of every pastor, teacher and elder of the Church.

Verse 11: 'as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children,'

A teacher's, pastor's and elder's responsibility is to exhort and charge as well as comfort those in their flocks. It's a false pastor or teacher who preaches a constant diet of feel good pabulum. The Gospel begins with the understanding of sin, death, separation and hell. If not, then the one listening sees no need for the grace, love and forgiveness of God. If those listening are always comfortable, something is very wrong with the teaching. What is the first thing we see in God's Revelation of Himself in the Bible? We see Man's disobedience, sin, rebellion and turning away from God. Then, only after, do we hear the wonderful promise of the Savior to come. Then, in the New Testament, we finally meet the promised Savior; we learn that it was not only Adam and Eve's sin that necessitated the coming Savior but that it is our sin, throughout our lives, each of us individually, that caused the requirement of His vicious Crucifixion so that all of our sin could be laid on Him. It's an ugly yet marvelous story of the unimaginable love, grace and mercy of God and yet we are never to forget His Righteousness, Holiness and Justice which could never have fellowship with us in our sinfulness.

A pastor, teacher or elder is to comfort with God's love but he must also charge and exhort in light of the sin and rebellion that requires His love. It's the same with us, with each other; it's the sin in others that requires the love, grace, mercy and patience in us in order to be obedient in loving others. All of God's Word is for us.

'All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.' 2 Tim 3:16

Verse 12: 'that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.'

Every one of us have the responsibly to 'walk worthy of God.' Elsewhere he writes: '(I) beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Eph 4:1 To walk worthy of God and of our calling means, basically, three things. **Love God, love and serve the Body of Christ, the Church, and take the Gospel to everyone we meet.**

He means, 'In light of all that God has done for us, in light of His never ending love, grace and mercy, we are charged with also walking in love, grace and mercy toward one another. This is the main point Paul is making: the absolute command toward our love, patience, mercy and grace in our interactions with each other, all others in the Body of Christ.

Again, it always concerns our interactions with each other; God's command to love and serve, is that we love and serve **each other... all others in the body of Christ.** Any pastor, teacher or elder who teaches our need to love and serve our city, or the world, is teaching falsely; that has become the heart of false teaching today. The 'emerging church,' the new apostolic reformation and so many others, all teach this false gospel.

Here is the verse that they usually use to teach that: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and dwell *in them*; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶ Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. ⁷ **And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive**, and pray to the LORD for it; **for in its peace you will have peace.** ⁸ For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. ⁹ For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.' Jer 29:4

The entire passage is God's instructions to Israel concerning their captivity in Babylon. He is simply telling them: You, like us, will be there for a long time. Don't seek to disrupt or destroy your captors. Pray for, and seek the peace of, that place.' That's it: pray for your city; He never tells us to love and serve our city, only to seek the peace of our city. This has become the heart of false teaching today, that we are tasked with loving and serving anything or anyone other than God's command to 'Take care of your own, first! Then you can look into helping others outside the Church, but only in the context of Evangelism, always seeking their salvation.

He tells us the same thing: 'You are living in a foreign place: the kingdom of darkness. Do not seek the destruction or disruption of your government; submit to the governing authorities. Take the Gospel to all you know or meet; love and serve each other; take care of each other... that is, each other **in the Body of Christ.**'

Verse 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.'

The Thessalonians saw, in Paul, the result of the Gospel; they saw, in him, a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ and, so, they were willing to listen to the Gospel and to recognize that It was, in fact, the Word of God.

This is why it is so important that we are, '*walking worthy of God who calls us into His own kingdom and glory,*' because, by our testimony, of the work of God in our lives, borne out by our conduct, others, and especially the lost, will also be more willing to listen to the Gospel and allow it to bear, in their lives, the fruit of repentance unto Salvation.

If we are witnessing to our neighbor, he will only listen if he believes he is not listening to a hypocrite. Our prayer should be, that God would reveal Himself to our neighbor and that God would grant unto him, repentance unto Salvation: Paul told Timothy, 'And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, **if God perhaps will grant them repentance**, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.' 2 Tim 2:24

Then, God's Word will accomplish His Work in those who believe. Not all will believe; in fact, most will not but we are still commanded to take the Gospel wherever we go.

We are also expected, by God, to understand the prophecies He has given, to rightly divide His Word and to warn others of the impending doom of the soon coming seven year Tribulation which will be avoided by all who've put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation. In the description of David's army, we read of a small group of men who recognized and understood the working of God in their time: '... of the sons of Issachar **who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;' 1 Chron 12:32

We are expected to understand the times and to know what we should do as well as what the Church, our Church ought to do.

If we think we can understand and explain God's Word to anyone, we had better study to know His Word and understand It correctly: 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' 2 Tim 2:15

There are never two or three different interpretations of any area of Scripture; there is only one correct interpretation of any and every area of Scripture and God expects us to study that His Holy Spirit can reveal to us the truth of His Word. Just because the understanding of an area of Scripture is not necessary for Salvation does not make it any less important to God nor should it be to us: 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' 2 Tim 3:16

'Romans' is not more important to God than Ezekiel; Ephesians is not more important to Him than Daniel or His Revelation to John. All of His Word is true and all of it is for us; it may not all be *to us* but it is all *for us* and He expects us to study under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit. Every one of us are every bit as capable of understanding the truth of His Word as are any teacher, pastor or evangelist. All of It is '... the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.'

Verse 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,'

'For' connects this verse with the previous, verse 13: 'You received the Word, you welcomed It as truth and it works, effectively, in you'...'**For**... like the Judean believers (the area around Jerusalem) you embraced the truth and suffered persecution, from the Thessalonians, Jews and Pagans alike, because of the truth and you have persevered on.'

Verse 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,'

Here is Paul's, and God's, answer to those who say, 'The Jews didn't kill Jesus, it was our sin that killed Him.' No, our sin had nothing to do with killing Jesus, He was killed in order to pay the penalty for our sin but it was the Jews of Jerusalem who killed Him. To say anything else is to deny Scripture. The Jews are the ones who killed the prophets and persecuted Paul and the other Christians. They have not pleased God in their 2000 years of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul says that they are contrary to all men.

According to Daniel 9, this gap of time in which the Church is being created, as God's chosen Bride for His Son, this indeterminate gap of time between the 69th week of Daniel which ended with the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginning of the 70th week, which will be the 7 year Tribulation, beginning with the Rapture, Israel has been paying the price for their rejection and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ for all these years. Everything that has happened to them has been according to God's will and plan which He clearly laid out in Daniel 9:

"Seventy weeks are determined..... 490 years

For your people and for your holy city,..... Jews and Jerusalem

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.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand,

That from the going forth of the command

To restore and build Jerusalem..... Nehemiah

Until Messiah the Prince,..... Until Jesus comes

There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;..... 69X7, 483 years until Jesus' Triumphal Entry

The street shall be built again, and the wall,..... Nehemiah rebuilt the city and wall while
Even in troublesome times. being harassed by 'Palestinians'

²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks..... After 483 years, Christ's Triumphal Entry

Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;..... Crucified for the sin of others

And the people of the prince who is to come..... Rome

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary..... AD 70 Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed

The end of it *shall be* with a flood,

And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; 7 year treaty between Antichrist and Israel

But in the middle of the week..... Halfway through the Tribulation

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering..... Enters Temple declaring himself to be God

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined, End of Tribulation with return of Christ

Is poured out on the desolate." Daniel 9:24

Just like every unsaved person, Paul says that the Jews do not please God and even that they are 'contrary to ALL men.' This means they are opposite, or, opposed to, every man which is easy to understand since God has seemingly caused all men to be contrary to them.

Certainly, we, as believers, as Children of God, we are to bless Israel and pray for the peace of Jerusalem but we must be careful not to love or honor their '*lostness*.' Jesus said, to them, 'You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

The Jews do not have a special dispensation from God to be able to come to God in any other way than through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their Rabbis are not 'men of God' to be listened to or emulated. I have heard 'Messianic Jewish' 'Rabbis' quote, 'Rabbi this or that said this or that.' Every non-Messianic Rabbi fully denies the Lord Jesus Christ and so do all those sitting under their teaching.

Again, we are to love and bless Israel and Jews but we are never to cowardly shrink back from presenting the true and full Gospel to each one. If we do not, we are saying, just like to any other lost person, 'I'm not really concerned about your eternal salvation. I'd much rather you didn't think ill of me.'

Sadly the heart of all pastors, teachers, elders, Christians who are sliding down into the morass of liberal, '*false christianity*' is that they are more concerned with what people think of them, especially the lost and for caring for the lost, than they are with what God thinks of them and for the care and feeding for their own flocks within the Body of Jesus Christ.