

Paul's Final Encouraging Words to the Christians at Thessalonica

Text: **1 Thessalonians 5:16-28**

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul, in ending his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, gave the Christians some encouraging words. Some final words of exhortation.
 - a. The Christians were comforted by the words of Paul, in that the Lord Jesus Christ had not come back as some had been told, in that the Lord Jesus Christ will return when people least expect it and that they were to be prepared at all times.
 - b. The same way it is for us today, we need encouraging words to give us comfort and these words can be only found in God's Holy Word.
2. Paul is telling the Christians to rejoice, pray and give thanks to our Great God, not to quench the Holy Spirit that resides within each and every Christian, to examine everything and to abstain from all evil.
3. The words that Paul gave to the Christians at Thessalonica can also be applied in our lives today.
4. This morning we will look at some of these final encouraging words that the apostle Paul gave to the Christians at Thessalonica in his first letter to this church.

I. Rejoice Always

- A. Shout for joy, be happy, be comforted, be cheerful and be glad that you are a Christian – Paul is telling the Christians at Thessalonica and for us today.
- B. And, these are the reasons why:
 1. The burden of sin removed when we became a Christian in obedience to the gospel.
 2. A **'way** that is lighted by Jesus Christ – for Jesus said that He was the way to God.
 3. **Hopelessness** changed to **HOPE** (utter futility has been changed to usefulness), "*Christ Jesus, who is our hope.*" – **1 Timothy 1:1**
 4. **Wandering** changed to **PURPOSE** (what is my purpose has been answered), and **why changed** to a **REASON** (why I am here has been answered), "*The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*" – **Ecclesiastes 12:13**; "*And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*" **1 John 5:11**
 5. **War** changed to **PEACE** (with God), "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" **Romans 5:1**

II. Pray Continually and Give Thanks

- A. To our Great God, whom we can go to through in our Great Mediator Jesus Christ. At one time we did not have this access until we became a Christian.
 1. Christ as our go between, between us and our Great God.
 2. Lifting our petitions and prayers asking for help in times of need (*when do we not need help?*)
 3. Praying for forgiveness of our iniquities and our sins that we have committed against our God – and "*He is faithful and righteous to*

forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” –
1 John 1:9

4. Prayers lifted upward for others who need healing, either physically, emotionally or spiritually.
5. Giving thanks to our Great God to all that He has given us (*for He supplies the air, the water, the food, the clothes and everything that we NEED*).
 - a. Giving thanks for a **sunny** day or an even a ‘**gloomy**’ day – for it is all about our attitude on how we are going to view the day. “*This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*” – **Psalms 118:24**
 - b. Giving thanks to our Great God for going through some traumatic ordeal that only He can provide the comfort.
- B. Praying for each other, our family in need of a savior, our government leaders whether they are local or national and even our enemies, because – “*The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*” – **James 5:16**
- C. Praying and giving thanks for our families, our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 1. Thanking Him for our very life because, “*for in Him we live and move and exist*” – **Acts 17:28**

III. Do No Quench The Spirit

- A. The word for “*quench*” was used of putting out a fire, and the thought is that the child of God should not put out the sacred fire within.
- B. The reference here refers to the Holy Spirit given to every Christian upon his obedience to the gospel of Christ - “*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” – **Acts 2:38**
- C. Just as fire may be smothered by an element such as earth or water, so the spirit of God may be quenched in people's hearts by things which the Spirit cannot abide.
 1. The cares, riches and pleasures of life choke out the word and quench the Spirit.
 2. The blessed fire can be put out by the **cold drizzle** of **worldliness**, by the **heavy blanket** of **selfishness**, or by the **companionship** of **evil people**.
 3. The **negligent student** of the Holy Scriptures can let the fire go out.
 4. The stormy winds of **false doctrine** can blow it out!
- D. Paul is encouraging and exhorting the Christians at Thessalonica and for us today, not to put out the fire of the Holy Spirit – for if we do, the Holy Spirit will leave us.

IV. Despise Not Prophetic Utterances; Examine Everything Carefully; Hold Fast To That Which Is Good; Abstain From Every Form Of Evil.

- A. Despising not the prophecy that was told refers to charismatic gifts of the early church period before the New Testament was written.
- B. Paul often used the word (*prophecy*) in the sense of teaching the Holy Scriptures.
- C. In this light, therefore, “*examine everything carefully*” and “*hold fast to that which is good*” would be illustrated by the ancient Berean’s who “*received the word*

with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” – Acts 17:11

- D. For us today, there is no more prophecy (*foretelling*) being given to us, since we have received the word of God in its finality – “*but when the perfect (the completed and final word of God – the Bible – JDL) comes, the partial (the charismatic gifts – JDL) will be done away.*” – **1 Corinthians 13:10**
1. We are to examine whatever is being preached and taught, to us, by God’s Word – for His Word has the final say so and it is His word that we will be judged by at the judgment for Jesus said, “*He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.*” – **John 12:48**
 2. We must also be like the Berean’s in the first century to ‘DAILY examine the Scriptures to see if what is said is so – read and meditate upon God’s word daily for it is life – “*This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that Your word has revived me and given me life.*” – **Psalms 119:50 (AMP)**
- E. In the context of Paul’s writing to the church at Thessalonica, the term ‘*hold fast to that which is good and abstain from every form of evil*’ that after testing everything or examining everything according to God’s word the believer should cling to the truth and abstain from the false. You will notice that it takes **examining** to see what is right and wrong and that is up to each and every one of us individually.

Conclusion:

1. The final encouraging and exhorting words that Paul told the Christians at Thessalonica are for us today, as a Christian, for they are from God and He wants us to be encouraged to **stand fast**, to **hold out the hope**, to **remain focused on heaven**, to **remember the great salvation** the He sent down to us **in His Glorious Son Jesus Christ**, to **focus upon the promises, eternal life *by remaining faithful to Him*** and that someday **He will return for us** to take us into His arms and give us eternal life.
2. Yes, this is for all of mankind, the blessings can be yours today in obedience to the gospel message that Christ has left us with. Won’t you be encouraged and exhorted to become a child of God, today because He does want you and because of His Great love He sent His Son to die on that cruel old cross for your sins. (**That is you and I**)