



Radical Word Bible Study Podcast

1 Thessalonians

Live Streamed on July 17, 2025



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Opening Comments

- Welcome to episode 3 of the Radical Word Bible Study Podcast Live Stream.
- We are coming to you live from our podcasting studio in Murrieta, California.
- You will notice we have made a few changes here and have several more coming.
- If you have any ideas about how we can dress up the studio, please do not hesitate to let me know.
- Today is Thursday, July 17, 2025.
- [coffee mug]
- For all of you ice cream lovers, today is national peach ice cream day.
- I like peaches but I don't know if I have ever had peach ice cream.
- It might be a little late for ice cream, so tomorrow is national sour candy day.
- You can let me know in the chat what your favorite sour candy is. I'm waiting for national black licorice day.
- You might not know this, but every day of the year has at least one food highlighted.
- Also, on July 17, 1955, Disneyland in Anaheim, California opened.
- On a more somber note, on July 17th, 180, Romans Beheaded Twelve Martyrs at Scilli for Rejecting Emperor Worship.
- They were told that all they had to do was swear that the Emperor was divine.
- One by one they declined, and seven men and five women were beheaded.
- That applies to our study this evening in that Thessalonica had a strong Roman presence and Emperor worship was beginning to take root.

- Paul was arrested a couple of times and the last time; he was beheaded for refusing to stop talking about Jesus as Savior and King.
- That is the kind of faith that changes the world.
- One of the changes for tonight is that I will be responding to the chat live.
- If you have questions or comments, put them in the chat.
- If you do that, keep them brief, please.
- Okay, let's get into our study tonight.
- Let's open with a word of prayer.
- **Pray**

Teaching

- Turn to **1 Thessalonians 2**
- We got to verse 9 last week.
- Before we go on to verse 10, let's do a quick recap of the first 9 verses of chapter two.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:1-9** [in Logos]
- We need to keep in mind that one of the reasons Paul is writing this letter is to make sure the Thessalonians aren't deceived by false teachers and false prophets.
- Paul then calls on the Thessalonians to be witnesses to the type of men Paul and his companions were.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:10**
- The Greek word translated as witness is martys, from which we get the word martyr.
- Witness is the literal translation, but this word also came to be associated with those who would bear witness to the point of sacrificing their lives.
- Paul said they behaved devoutly, justly, and blamelessly when they were with the Thessalonians.
- Integrity is not valued to the same degree that it was in the past.
- Politicians give lip service to the need for integrity and then downplay their own indiscretions.
- Even some religious leaders justify or spiritualize the need for integrity.

- To be the kind of person God can use to do great things for Him, we need to be people of integrity.
- Paul describes three characteristics of integrity.
- Devout = holy – not perfect but aiming for perfection. **1 Peter 1:15-16** ...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”
- Paul is talking about his behavior in the presence of the Thessalonians.
- The word holy has the idea of being apart from this world and set apart to God.
- To be holy in our conduct, people must be able to see us doing things for God and because of God.
- That means we are not selfish and self-centered in our actions.
- It means our behaviors reflect Christ as well as we are able.
- Justly = righteously, doing the right things, even when it is hard or unpopular.
- It means doing the right thing even if it means you will suffer because you did the right thing.
- It means not doing the wrong thing even when it means suffering, like those twelve who were beheaded because they refused to swear that the Emperor was divine.
- Only God is divine!
- There will always be forces at work trying to get Christ-followers to do what they know is wrong.
- In my lifetime it has been the normalization of same-sex relationships, then same-sex marriages, and most recently it is gender ideology.
- The culture wants to accept those things as right and normal.
- They aren’t and they never will be. **Genesis 1:27**
²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
- There are no shades of gray in that. **Genesis 2:24**
²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- As Christ-followers, we should never be ashamed of God’s truth and we should have the faith to not let the culture bully us into moving away from God’s truth.
- Paul knew the possible price of doing that, suffering and persecution.

- The third one is Blameless = no guilt – confessed sins to God and repented of sins to others.
- This is another word that does not mean being perfect.
- It means that no one can bring a legitimate charge against you.
- As it relates to God, being blameless means that we cannot think of any sins we haven't repented of.
- If we sin, which we all will, we are to go to God and confess it. **1**

John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- If we do that for every sin we are aware of, we are blameless before God.
- You might ask, what about the sins I am not aware of?
- We have God the Holy Spirit living inside of us.
- If He wants us to repent of sins we have forgotten or are unaware of, He is fully capable of bringing them to our remembrance.
- Paul calls the Thessalonians and God to be witnesses to what Paul is saying.
- It has been said that integrity is who you are when no one is watching, but real integrity shows in the light and in the shadows.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

- Paul did what needed to be done with the Thessalonians to encourage them to walk worthy of their God.
- They exhorted them - to earnestly support or encourage a response or action.
- Paul and his companions didn't just teach them what God said, but they called the Thessalonians to faith and obedience.
- Also says they comforted the Thessalonians.
- If you are anything like you, there may have been times when you felt like a failure as a Christ-follower.
- You try your very best and still fall short of what you know God expects from you.
- I am so thankful in those times for the Holy Spirit.
- God knows what we are feeling and gives us what we need. **2**

Corinthians 7:6-7

⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

- After exhorting and comforting the Thessalonians, Paul and his companions charged them to walk worthy.
- The word charged can also be translated as implored.
- Paul cared for the young Thessalonian church and like a father wanted what was best for them.
- Children don't always know what is best for them.
- As Christ-followers, we are God's children.
- We might not know is best for us but God always does.
- We need to trust Him when things are going the way we want them to.
- And we need to be on the lookout or actively looking for those people God might want to speak through to exhort, comfort, implore us to walk worthy.
- 'walk worthy' = live in such a way that you prove what was done for you.
- God sent His Son to die your death on a cross.
- God gave you eternal life.
- God gave you the Holy Spirit to help you through this life.
- God gave you the Bible to teach you about His kingdom.
- Jesus gave you the church as a place for growth, comfort, and encouragement.
- One of the amazing things about God is that He loves us just the way that we are.
- We don't have to get our act together before we come to Christ.
- The fact is, you can't get your life together until you come to Christ.
- It is the power of God working in through the presence of the Holy Spirit that empowers to live the life God calls us to.
- We come to Jesus just as we are, warts and all.
- But because He loves us, He doesn't want us to stay that way.
- He wants us to be better.
- When we read something like this verse, we should pause and reflect upon our life.

- Have yourself if your life proves the grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness of God to the world around you.
 - You have been called into God's kingdom, His perfect kingdom that radiates His glory.
 - Jesus is coming back, maybe very soon.
 - As a Christian you don't have to change, you don't have to be better than you are.
 - But if Jesus is your Savior, King, and friend, and He is coming for you, shouldn't you want to be the best you can be.
 - To be better we need to be willing to change.
 - And here is an absolute fact: You can't change who you are if you won't change what you do!
 - If you want to be better, choose to do something that will help you to be better.
 - Find a church, a Bible Study, or another believer who can help you.
 - You can stay the way you are, but if you do, you will miss out on the abundant life Jesus came and died to give you. **John 10:10**
- 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.**
- If you stay the way you are and don't let the Holy Spirit change you from the inside, you might be letting the thief, the devil, steal, kill, and destroy the good God wants to give you.
 - Paul then thanks God for the Thessalonians responded to the gospel.
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:13**
 - Paul came to Thessalonica with the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.
 - The Thessalonians perceived that what Paul said were not just the made-up words of men but were the truth.
 - I had a conversation with a man this week who suggested the Bible was no different than a Harry Potter book.
 - He believed that the Bible was just another book written by men.
 - As Christ-followers we view the Bible as the holy words of God.
 - Not only are they God's words, they are truth. **Psalm 119:160**
- The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.**

- Every word of this book is true and truth.
 - Notice the phrase, effectively works.
 - The Word what it is sent to do.
 - But you should also note that is conditioned – in those who believe.
 - In our study on Sunday mornings in the book of Romans we have seen over and over again the role of faith in the life of a believer.
 - Paul summarizes the role of faith in **Ephesians 2:8-9**.
- 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.**
- It is so important that you can't be in a real relationship with God without faith. **Hebrews 11:6**
- ⁶ **But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**
- You can memorize the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation but if you don't believe it is true, it will not work in you or for you.
 - Personally, I have discovered the Bible is deeper, more comprehensive, and all-encompassing than my small human brain can comprehend.
 - After a couple decades of study, teaching, and ministry, I am convinced that I have only scratched the surface of what God has revealed in His Word about Himself and this world He has put us in.
 - The more I learn about God, the more I discover how little I know about the nature of God.
 - God is bigger than the universe and knows every minute detail of everything in the universe.
 - I can't even tell you everything that is in my wallet.
 - We can trust God with everything, especially those things we don't know or understand.
 - That is also true when things get difficult in life.
 - Paul commends the Thessalonians for that in the next verses.
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**
 - When they became Christians, they turned away from their pagan lifestyles.
 - We are not told how they were persecuted, but things got harder.
 - Paul knew that and it concerned him.

- The same thing happened in Judea to Jews who received Christ.
 - Remember, in the beginning of the church it was almost exclusively Jews who came to faith in Christ.
 - Paul was well-acquainted with what happened to Jews who turned to Christ because he was one of the people who persecuted Jewish converts to Christ.
 - Paul had experienced plenty of that persecution also.
 - Paul says they do not please God.
 - But if you asked them, they would say they are serving God by persecuting the church.
 - We see something very similar in Islam.
 - When a radical Islamist kills Jews or Christians, they believe they are serving God.
 - Just to be clear, their god Allah is not our Jehovah God.
 - The god they worship is false and those who are true to the teaching of Muhammad will do horrific things in the name of their false god.
 - Paul says they ‘forbid us to speak to the Gentiles’.
 - Thankfully Paul and his companions didn’t listen to those who do not please God.
 - We should always do what God says, no matter what others in the world tell us to do or don’t do.
 - Paul was driven by faith in Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and see people get saved.
 - There is a consequence for rebelling against God, especially when it involves hindering the sharing of the gospel.
 - They are filling up the measure of their sins.
 - One of the ways God expresses His grace in the world is that He doesn’t judge sin immediately. **1 Peter 3:9**
- ⁹The 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 doesn’t judge immediately but that doesn’t mean He is ignoring it or forgetting about it.
 - He stores it up until it is the right time for Him to act.

- The image of where God stores our sin is seen in the Garden of Gethsemane as Christ is preparing to go to the cross. **Matthew 26:39; 42**

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” ...⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

- There is a point when God determines it is time to pay people back for their sin.
- When that happens, He pours out His wrath, and nothing in the universe can stop it once He starts pouring out His wrath.
- Thankfully, every human has a way to escape God’s wrath.
- Through faith in Christ, the wrath we deserve was poured out on Christ on the cross. **Colossians 2:13-14**

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- By faith I receive forgiveness for every one of my sins, past, present, and future and never have to concern myself about wrath again.
- Now my concern is for those who do not know Christ by faith.
- They are still under God’s condemnation. **John 3:18**

¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- Those who hinder or oppose the spread of the gospel deserve the wrath that is coming to them.
- We shouldn’t rejoice in that but it is right to acknowledge the justice of it.
- It was not enough for Paul just to see the Thessalonians accept Christ.
- He cared that they grew in their faith – became strong.
- He wanted them to be a part of the ministry of sharing the gospel with the whole world.
- Paul seems to love this young church, even though he had very little time with them.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:17**
- Paul wants to get back to them.

- ‘having been taken away from’ = orphaned – abruptly and unplanned – Acts 17.
- Paul felt like a spiritual father to the Thessalonians.
- They had come to faith through his ministry.
- He feels that he was taken away before they were mature enough for him to leave.
- That is one of the reasons for his letter, to fill in some of the gaps in their faith.
- But someone was preventing Paul from getting back.

• **1 Thessalonians 2:18**

- We don’t know how Satan hindered Paul and his friends.
- It might have to do with the troublemakers that followed Paul from Thessalonica to Berea.
- The Devil hates God and can’t stand the idea of humans worshipping God instead of him.
- All humans have been made in the image of God.
- As Satan prowls around this world, every time he sees a human he sees God’s image in them, and he hates that.
- So, he does everything he can to steal, kill, and destroy to good things God made for man to enjoy.
- And if someone does come to faith in Christ, the devil will set out to hinder their faith and if possible, shipwreck it.
- And if they seek to be used by God, to minister to the lost and hurting in this world, the devil will do what he can to hinder that work.
- Thankfully, we don’t have to fight Satan, he would destroy us completely. **Ephesians 6:10-12**

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

- For reasons only God knows He may allow Satan to hinder the work God sets before us.
- Our responsibility is to be faithful to God and ready to respond to the Holy Spirit when God removes the hindrance.

- I have also found that God is doing a work in me while I wait for Him to act.
 - The faith of the Thessalonians was important to Paul.
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**
 - Few things bless the heart of a pastor more than seeing people growing in their faith.
 - Paul rejoiced in the hope he had of seeing the Thessalonians in the presence of Christ when He comes back.
 - When life gets hard, remind yourself that Jesus is coming back, maybe soon.
 - And then rejoice in the knowledge that you are one of His people.
 - And then consider what God has done through you to share His love, grace, mercy, and hope with others.
 - Every tiny thing you have every done in the name of Christ or in service to God or His church played a part in bringing someone into the kingdom of God's glory.
 - You may not have been the one who shared the gospel with them, but you may have helped the person who did.
 - Every little thing matters to God.
 - Paul loved the church at Thessalonica, and he was concerned about how they were doing after he left suddenly.
 - After a while Paul couldn't stand not knowing what was going on with them.
 - **1 Thessalonians 3:1-3**
 - Paul sends Timothy from Athens back to Thessalonica.
 - **Map of Macedonia**
 - Timothy – minister = servant – fellow laborer = co-worker.
 - Notice, not to relieve them of their affliction.
 - But to establish and encourage them in their faith.
 - Afflictions or suffering is a part of life. **John 16:33**
- These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**
- God has appointed our afflictions, tribulations, or suffering.
 - It doesn't mean He is angry with us.
 - It means He is not finished with us.

- Jesus was perfect and in perfect alignment with God's will and yet He suffered.
- Suffering in the life of a Christ-follower is not a mistake.
- It is possible that God allows suffering into our life to teach us something we can't learn any other way.
- It could be because He is preparing us for a ministry and the suffering will be part of the testimony God uses to minister to others.
- And it is possible that suffering comes because of our own poor choices or the choices of others.
- Whatever reason suffering comes into our life, God will use it to grow our faith if we allow Him to and trust Him through it.
- God never wastes pain and suffering.
- He will use it to glorify Himself, grow our faith, and somehow to bless others.
- We have probably all heard of people who have gone through seemingly impossible things with calm assurance of faith.
- Hearing of their faith encourages our faith.
- That is God using their suffering for some good. **Romans 8:28**
²⁸ **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**
- In verse 3 Paul says he doesn't want anyone to be shaken by these afflictions.
- 'shaken' = to wag, like the tail of a dog.
- Looking for an exit ramp from difficulty, even compromise faith.
- Looking for the easy way.
- The easy way is almost never the right way.
- Paul says don't be shaken because we are appointed to this.
- That is another way of suffering is not a mistake.
- Some suffering is necessary for us to be conformed to the image of Christ who suffered on our behalf.
- God is protecting us from unnecessary suffering.
- In heaven we will discover just how much God protected us from.
- Last night at the Men's Bible study we talked about something that will happen in the last days. **2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**

⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

- This refers to the last days and the role of the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation Period.
- Many interpret this verse to mean that the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth.
- That can't be true because people will get saved during the Tribulation Period and no one can be saved without the Holy Spirit.
- What this means is that the Holy Spirit will stop restraining evil in the world.
- As bad as the world is right now, it is hard to imagine what it will be like if the Holy Spirit doesn't hinder evil anymore.
- Right now, He is restraining evil and wickedness in the world.
- Some evil will touch everyone but not as much as the devil would like.
- That is something to thank God for.
- Paul had warned them suffering and tribulation was coming.

• **1 Thessalonians 3:4**

- If anyone ever tells you that Christ-followers should suffer in this life, tell them to go back and read their Bible because they missed something.
- We shouldn't be afraid of suffering.
- God allows it, He uses it for His glory, and He will carry us through to the other side.
- In difficult times I am reminded of **Psalm 23:4**

⁴ **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

- Suffering will come into the life of Christ-followers, but God is there with me in the valley.
- The storm may rage around me, but Jesus is walking on the waves to come to me.
- I may feel helpless in the tribulation of life, but I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit who is the manifestation of the power of God in me.
- Never forget, God is with you, and when you are able, rejoice.

- Paul then reminds us that there is someone who wants us to forget all that.
- **1 Thessalonians 3:5**
- The ‘tempter’ is Satan – temptation is one of his favorite tactics.
- When Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days being tested, Satan tempted Him to escape His suffering – refused.
- God had Him there for a reason.
- And in the end of His time of suffering angels came and ministered to Him.
- Timothy caught back up to Paul in Corinth with a report.
- **1 Thessalonians 3:6-8**
- Even in the midst of affliction they were holding to the truth.
- The Thessalonian’s faith was solid, and they expressed their love for Paul and his companions.
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy are comforted by this news.
- In verse 8 ‘now we live’ = we are revived by this news.
- Paul was well acquainted with suffering – more than most.
- It comforted him to know that others were also hanging on during their own trials.
- ‘stand fast’ = to be constant, or to persevere.
- Trials, afflictions, temptations, storms, difficulties have two possible effects upon us.
- They either drive us deeper into the Lord, or away from Him.
- As a young man, I served aboard a Navy Submarine in the Pacific.
- Our mission was to remain within a specific area until our deployment was complete.
- Periodically, while we were on station, a storm would come up.
- If we had been a surface ship we would have had two choices, run away from the storm or power their way through it.
- If you have been at sea when one of those storms hits, it is a very unpleasant experience, not to mention, potentially dangerous.
- As a submarine, we had a third option, we would go under the storm.
- On the surface, giant waves are destroying anything in their path.

- We would go deeper and deeper until we were no longer moved by the storm.
- The storm was still going on, but we weren't being shaken by it.
- We can try to run away from the storms of life, the trials and tribulations, but if they were sent by God, He will just send another one.
- We can try to power our way through it, but we might be suffering when we don't need to.
- Or we can dive deeper into our faith with Christ.
- Trust God and walk with Him through the storms and He will take you deeper and deeper and the storms will rattle and shake you less and less.
- They are still storms and will be unpleasant, but you will be able to endure through faith in Christ.
- Unbelievers don't have that choice.
- That is why suffering and tribulation is so hard for them.
- If you want a faith that is unshakeable let the storm drive you deeper into Christ.
- We are going to stop there tonight.
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- As good as the news was, Paul knew his work was not finished
- 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10
- Paul didn't take credit for the work that God had done, but he rejoiced in it
- And his great desire was that he could get back there to them
- To 'perfect what is lacking in your faith'
- 'perfect' = repair, or furnish completely
- The same word used for fishermen repairing their nets
- They were standing fast in their faith, it was not complete faith
- The same is true for all of us, our faith will not be complete until we see Jesus face-to-face

- We need other Christians that care enough about us that they will show us where the holes are in our faith
- Paul is going to address some of those things in chapters 4 and 5
- Paul ends this chapter with a prayer for himself and for the church
- 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13
- First prays that Father and Jesus get him back to Thessalonica
- Puts his destiny in God's hands – tells God specifically what he wants
- But then trusts God to direct his path Proverbs 3:5-6
- Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
- One of the things that encouraged and comforted Paul was word of the Thessalonians faith and love
- His prayer for them was that love would grow even more
- One of the surest signs of a Christian is love for other Christians John 13:35
- By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
- The sign of a healthy Christian is a growing love
- A love that expands to not just Christians, but 'to all'
- Paul doesn't pray that they be delivered from their affliction
- Knew God was doing something supernatural in them in their affliction
- Paul, who was well-acquainted with suffering wrote about it 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
- For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- Every difficult thing that has come into my life was temporary
- And the same is true with your life
- Even chronic illness is temporary – right now Jesus is preparing a perfect body for you

- And when Jesus comes back, which could be very soon, it all ends
- Then there is just an ‘exceeding and eternal weight of glory’
- It takes faith to experience the hope and joy that promises
- And that faith is produced as we allow God’s love to flow through our lives in community with other Christians
- If you want a faith that is unshakeable, get connected
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- Paul is writing to the young church he started
- He sent his friend Timothy to check on them because he was worried about them
- Timothy came back with word that even though they were going through some tough times, they were standing firm in their faith
- He then told them that he was hoping to come visit them
- While they had faith, it was not complete
- Chapter 4 and 5 are very practical – how to live instructions
- Will see they apply as much today as did 2,000 years ago
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2
- Paul starts by giving them a word of affirmation – you are doing good
- Then tells them to keep at it
- ‘abound more and more’ – don’t get comfortable where you are spiritually
- In much of Paul’s writings there is an emphasis on spiritual growth
- ‘how you ought to walk’ – walk = manner of living
- In the short time he was there he told how to live in a way that pleased God
- Came in the form of the commandments he had received from Jesus
- Spiritual growth is how we live a life that is pleasing to God
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3a
- ‘sanctification’ is the word we use to describe the process of growing spiritually
- A definition of sanctification is, ‘The process of being set apart for holy service to God.’

- The root of sanctification is holiness – so our goal in this life is holiness
- Peter quoted the OT 1 Peter 1:15-16
- As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”
- Holiness is not some high and lofty thing that only the spiritual elite can accomplish on top of some barren mountain
- It is to be the goal of every single Christian
- Not a goal we will achieve overnight, it is lifelong goal, takes time
- To help us along the way, we are given some things to do, and some to avoid
- Paul starts here with one to avoid
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3b-5
- Sexual immorality was not the worst sin they could commit
- It is just one that every person in Thessalonica could relate to
- It is also one that we can relate to
- We live in a time when our culture is striving to remove all restraints from sexual behavior
- As bad as our culture is, the Greco-Roman culture was even worse – there were no restraints
- Whenever we talk about sex we usually view it from the negative perspective
- I want to pause for a moment and view sex from God’s viewpoint
- Physical intimacy is a gift from God and as such it is sacred and holy
- But to be sacred and holy, must be done in accordance with God’s design
- Sex is holy or sacred only within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman
- This is the only context in which sex is holy or sacred
- Anything outside of that is sexual immorality, sex before marriage, adultery, same-sex, even pornography are all perversions of God’s design for sex
- Within marriage, sex is a wonderful gift, that we are encouraged in the Bible to enjoy

- Part of living in a way that is pleasing to God, abstain from sexual immorality
- We do it when we ‘possess our own vessels’ = control ourselves
- Our physical desires are natural, and we honor God and we control ourselves and satisfy those desires in the way He designed
- In verse 5, tells us not to do it like the world does
- Paul quotes OT 2 Corinthians 6:17
- Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.
- The sad truth is that most Christians are not different from the world that God says He will someday have to judge for its wickedness
- We should be different people
- I remember how some Christians responded when I said I wouldn’t let my daughter date – not safe – my job is to keep her pure until I hand her off to her husband on her wedding day
- Paul then puts this in context of the Christian community
- 1 Thessalonians 4:6-7
- When we give in to our carnal desires, and commit sexual sin, it harms the Christian community
- Pastor falls – spiritual carnage follows
- Called to holiness – pleasing God – choosing holiness in all areas
- Then has a word for anyone who wants to argue about these things
- 1 Thessalonians 4:8
- As a pastor, it bothers me when people don’t accept the things that I say to them on behalf of God
- But then I remember this, their problem is not with me, it is with God
- And if they are a Christian, God has given them the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is holy, and lives in us
- He will not tolerate sin in us
- A true Christian cannot sin freely and not feel the Holy Spirit convicting them of their sin
- The Holy Spirit is continually drawing us nearer to God, doing the work of sanctification in us

- Paul focused on sexual sin because it was so prevalent in their culture, but the same principles apply to all sin
- Three quick things to help you live a life that is pleasing to God
- First – Know the Truth
- The truth is what God says it is – it is God’s Word
- Jesus, who was the expression of God, said John 17:17
- Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
- Your ability to please God is directly related to your knowledge and understanding of the Bible
- Second – Obey What You Know
- As your knowledge of God and His Word grows, He expects you to obey what you know
- And when you do, it pleases Him
- Third and finally – Love God and Others
- Most sin is selfish and self-centered
- It is about satisfying our own needs, wants, and desires
- One of the things that I am learning more and more, if I will focus on meeting the needs, wants, and desires of others in a God-glorifying way – He will make sure I am taken care of
- As my life becomes more pleasing to God, I am finding that I am more satisfied and fulfilled than I have ever been before
- I am daily learning what Jesus meant John 10:10
- I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
- The abundant life comes as our life pleases God
- Want an amazing life filled with the good things of God?
- Allow the Holy Spirit to change your life to make it more pleasing to God
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- Last time we learned about what it means to live a life that is pleasing to God

- True Christianity is not experienced living in a way that seeks to please me; but God and others
- And if I do that God promises to take care of me
- Paul then commends them for doing that
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
- We prove we are Christians by loving Romans 5:5
- Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- The Thessalonians were doing that, Paul said do it more and more
- We can never love too much
- Then tells them how they should live
- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
- ‘quiet life’ – don’t try to be the center of attention
- ‘mind your own business’ – don’t be a busybody, Holy Spirit police
- ‘work with your own hands’ – provide for yourself and for your family – be dependent on no one but God
- The Thessalonians believed that Jesus was coming back soon
- Some responded to that truth by quitting their jobs
- Another response is to live it up, borrow everything you can, leave debt
- Paul says here, that is a terrible witness to ‘those who are outside’
- Paul then shifts gears and gets into what appears to be his main reason for writing
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13
- ‘ignorant’ = uninformed – about one aspect of Christ’s return
- They believed that Jesus was coming soon – it is imminent
- The Thessalonians were waiting – and then someone in the church died, and another
- Paul uses the idiom or saying ‘fallen asleep’ = died
- Questions started coming up, what does Christ’s return mean for them
- Did they miss out on the blessing of His coming?
- What were they to think? How were they to act?
- ‘sorrow as though who have no hope’

- Paul divides the world into two groups – those with hope, and those without hope
- Not saying that we shouldn't grieve for the passing of loved ones
- We just do it differently than those who have no hope
- Then tells them how they can know which group they are in
- 1 Thessalonians 4:14
- 'if we believe that Jesus died and rose again'
- The people that have hope are those who believe that Jesus died for their sins and then rose again
- The resurrection of Jesus is our hope, makes the gospel good news
- Two of the things that resurrection proves
- First, that God the Father accepted Jesus sacrificial death as sufficient to satisfy the sin-debt of the whole world
- Second, it is proof that we also will be resurrected 1 Corinthians 15:20-23
- But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.
- When Jesus comes He is not going to come alone
- Will bring everyone who has believed in Him
- 1 Thessalonians 4:15
- This is not Paul's opinion of what is going to happen
- He got it directly from Jesus
- Notice also that Paul is living Jesus will return in his lifetime, 'we who are alive'
- Paul then describes this upcoming event
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 'the dead in Christ will rise first'
- 'in Christ' = true Christians – received Jesus as Savior
- 'rise first' – what does that mean?
- Death occurs when the soul leaves the body

- Jesus, on the cross dismissed His spirit – died
- Body does but not the soul = eternal – what happens to the soul
- Not soul-sleep – goes to be with Jesus 2 Corinthians 5:8
- We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
- When soul departs body, if in Christ, goes directly to Christ in heaven
- To live in heaven need a heavenly body, incorruptible, doesn't get old or sick, doesn't wear out
- Paul tells us in Thessalonians, dead in Christ get theirs first
- Then in a twinkling of an eye, uber-fast, millionth of a millisecond
- Then it is our turn
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- If we are alive when Jesus comes back for His church
- We 'shall be caught up' – 'caught up' we get word 'rapture'
- The unbelieving world is not going to know what is going on
- In a moment, millions of true Christians will simply vanish from around the world
- Many who claim to be Christians but are not, will probably understand, but it will be too late
- Paul says when we are caught up, we will be caught together with the dead in Christ
- Promise of a wonderful reunion with our saved loved ones who go before us
- And then, for all the rest of eternity, we will never be separated from Jesus, God the Son, lover of our souls, or our loved ones
- Paul then exhorts the Thessalonians to use this information
- 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- Death is never easy, but as a pastor I have attended many funerals
- Have seen the difference the hope the resurrection brings
- Without Christ there is only despair, emptiness, hopelessness
- There is fear about the future, there is uncertainty about where the loved one is
- Attempted words of comfort are empty and devoid of power

- With Christ there is grief mixed the hopeful expectation of a future reunion
- There is joy in the knowledge of where our loved one is – with Jesus in heaven
- The comfort of others strengthens us, brings us peace, and even joy
- Paul believed that Jesus would come during his lifetime – He didn't
- Chuck Smith believed that Jesus would come back during his lifetime
- I believe Jesus will come back during my lifetime – I am waiting
- The question we all need to answer is, 'How do we wait for Jesus?'
- The Thessalonians thought Jesus was coming back, some sat around waiting for Him
- Paul said that wasn't how we are to wait
- Paul started this chapter telling them and us to live a life that pleases God
- A life that pleases God is one that knows Him, obeys Him, and loves Him and others
- Today, love more and more
- Then live a productive life – don't be dependent upon anyone but God
- Take care of your witness to those who are outside of the faith
- And then be looking forward to the coming of Jesus 2 Timothy 4:8
- 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.
- We all have goals and dreams, I want to see my children have children
- I want to take Kelly to Israel
- I want to teach through the whole Bible
- I want to see this church flourish and plant other churches
- Souls saved, marriages healed, families restored
- But more than all of that I want to see Jesus come to get me – and you
- We wait for Jesus by walking with Him today, by letting others see Him through our love for Him and for others
- I don't know when Jesus is coming back, no one on this earth does

- But I do know that even if He doesn't come back in my lifetime, I will be expecting Him to and looking forward to it until my very last breath
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- Paul has comforted them about the death of their saved loved ones
- They are with Him now, and when Jesus comes back, will bring them with Him
- Then tells them about what happens after the Rapture
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2
- Paul had taught them a lot in the short time he was with them
- They knew about 'the Day of the Lord'
- Both the Old and New Testaments tell us about this future event Isaiah 13:9
- Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.
- It is so bad that God limits its time so that all life is not destroyed Matthew 24:21-22
- 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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.
- 'Day of the Lord' – not a 24-hour day – period of time
- Begins after the Rapture and goes all the way through the Millennium
- And when it comes, the unbelieving world will be surprised
- 'thief in the night' – speaks of being surprised and unprepared
- 1 Thessalonians 5:3
- 'Peace and safety!' = false – come when they least expect it
- Destruction – not annihilation – ruin, loss, suffering = Tribulation
- Illustration of pregnant woman – once the labor starts, no stopping it
- A pregnant woman is a good illustration of the coming Day of the Lord

- You can tell a woman is pregnant, the signs of the Lord's coming are discernable, but we don't know exactly when
- 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5
- The world is divided into two realms – light and darkness
- The Kingdom of God is light 1 John 1:5
- This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- The Kingdom of God is where God is King
- Everything and everyone not under His authority is in the kingdom of darkness
- In this context darkness = moral and spiritual separation from God
- Bible says that is where we all were before Christ
- Something supernatural happens when someone is saved Colossians 1:13-14
- He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
- If you are saved = son or daughter of God – in kingdom of light
- Not physically – but spiritually
- Not only that – Day won't overtake us = catch us
- Because Jesus will come and take us physically out of kingdom of darkness – live in eternal light
- This should have an effect upon the way we live this life
- 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7
- In the last chapter Paul used the word 'sleep' to refer to believers that had died
- Here he changes how he uses it
- Here the word 'sleep' = morally and spiritually indifferent
- Means – don't care about what God thinks is right or wrong
- Don't care what God thinks or wants
- If you are a son of the day or light – Jesus died for your sins – your sins are forgiven – eternity in heaven
- To be indifferent to the things of God is to despise the cross of Christ

- Should be watching and sober – attentive to the things of God and watching for the return of Christ
- 1 Thessalonians 5:8
- Paul uses one of his favorite illustrations – a soldier's uniform
- Two pieces – breastplate and helmet
- Breastplate protects vital organs, especially the heart
- Helmet protects the head
- Faith and love guard our hearts from the darkness around us
- Faith is knowing and depending upon God
- By loving God and others, my heart is protected from loving the things of this world
- And faith and love combine to produce hope
- Notice – ‘hope of salvation’ – not hope that we will be saved, but that we have been saved
- Salvation can be expressed in three tenses; past, present, and future
- Past – Christ, Lord and Savior – saved from penalty and guilt of sin
- Present – being saved from the power and pollution of sin by the Spirit of God
- Future – will be saved from the very presence of sin when God the Father welcomes me into His holy presence
- That is the hope of salvation that we have as Christians
- But that is not our only hope
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10
- Another name for the ‘Day of the Lord’ is the ‘Day of God’s Wrath’
- God’s wrath is reserved for those who reject His love and grace – Jesus
- As Christians, we are not ‘appointed to wrath’
- Doesn’t mean we won’t experience difficult times John 16:33
- These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.
- As long as we are in this world – good times and bad times
- But before God’s Wrath comes – Jesus comes for us
- As believers we should have no fear of future judgment

- Colossians 2:14 says all charges against us ‘nailed to the cross of Christ’
- In verse 10 says whether we wake or sleep
- Some interpret to mean whether we are dead or alive when Jesus comes – based on ‘sleep’ in chapter 4
- But Paul uses term to mean ‘morally & spiritually indifferent’ in chapter 5 – believe that is better interpretation
- Means that whether we are living for Jesus with our whole being, or morally & spiritually indifferent, if you are a true Christian, you will go to be with Jesus forever
- Paul told them in verse 6 – watch and be sober
- Taking the return of Christ seriously, watching for it
- That we shouldn’t be sleeping – not morally and spiritually indifferent
- Christians can be divided into two groups
- Those who are living this life watching and waiting for Christ to return
- The other group are sleepwalking through this life
- They have confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior and received forgiveness for their sins
- They have the Holy Spirit living inside them
- But there is little or no evidence of that in their life
- Someday, maybe very soon, Jesus is coming back
- What will your response be to His coming 1 John 2:28
- And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
- Will you be ashamed of the life you are living when Jesus comes back?
- Are you spiritually sleepwalking through this life?
- Is there any evidence in your life that you care about the things of God?
- Well, I am here. Isn’t that enough? No, not really!
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Church life is all about giving and taking – comfort and edification
- Comfort = coming alongside to help or encourage

- Edify = to build up – to make stronger
- Back in verse 8 there are three areas that we should focus on; faith, love, and hope
- Paul says we need to put these three things on
- We can't do that in isolation – we are to help each other
- Someone who is sleepwalking is not going anywhere, is a danger to self and others
- If you want your life to matter, if you want it to be better, you need to wake up
- It begins by accepting this as truth, confessing it to God
- Then you must choose to do something
- Get involved – Bible Study, Service, activities & fellowships
- If Jesus died for your sins, he did, shouldn't you get yourself ready for His coming
- When is Jesus coming? Soon! Are you ready?
- If not, wake up, put on faith, love, and hope. Get connected to others to both give and receive comfort and edification
- Let none of us be ashamed when Jesus gets here
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- Paul is speaking to the young church that he started
- Was only able to stay there about three weeks
- As he comes to the end of this letter he gives them a series of short instructions on how they ought to behave toward each other
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12a
- 'brethren' – uses this word 27 times in 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- The church is not an organization, even though it is organized
- It is not a business, it is not a club, it is not an association
- The word that best describes what the church is supposed to be is 'family'
- When we were saved, we were made part of the family of God
Ephesians 1:3-6

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 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.
- That means we are all brothers and sisters in Christ
- Turn to a couple of people around you and tell them they are your brother or sister in Christ
- When Paul says ‘brethren’ referring to the whole church
- The church is a family made up of families
- God created the family, and established how it should function
- Created man to be the leader, woman, as his equal to stand beside him and help him, and children are to obey their father and mother
- The church also is God’s creation, established how it should function
- The elders are assigned to lead, the deacons and other ministers help them lead, and the people are to obey
- Paul gives us three functions of the leaders and two responses of the people
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- First function of the leader – Labor among you
- ‘labor’ = toil to the point of exhaustion – ministry is hard work
- Someone called to be a minister to the people of God works hard
- Second function – Are over you in the Lord
- Literally = ‘to take the lead’ – lead by example of life
- This does speak of authority, but a very special kind Mark 10:42-45
- Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

- A true Christ-like leader is a servant before he is a leader
- ‘in the Lord’ is key – in His name and in His way
- Third function = Admonish you
- ‘admonish’ = ‘put in mind’ – warning and instruction
- A true Christian leader will warn of danger and sin, and instruct in the things of God
- Paul tells the church how they should respond to those leaders
- First response – Recognition
- ‘recognize’ = ‘know the worth of’ – it is a call to respect the men that are fulfilling the three functions of leaders in the church
- It implies that the church should accept them as leaders – which then implies that the leaders should be followed
- Second response – Esteem them very highly
- = ‘hold them in the highest regard’ value them, appreciate them
- With the main motivation being love – knowing you love me is worth a lot to me – causes me to feel appreciated
- The church is not just about the leaders giving to the congregation
- It goes both ways – that is life in the church
- And one of the fruit of this two-way church life = peace
- Paul now turn from the leaders to the whole church
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14a
- ‘brethren’ – who is he talking to? The whole church! That means you
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15
- Six quick things that the congregation is to do for one another
- First – Warn the unruly
- Unruly = disorderly = soldier who has stepped out of ranks
- These are the troublemakers
- Who should warn the troublemakers? The pastor? Nope! The church!
- Second – Comfort the Fainthearted
- ‘fainthearted’ = easily discouraged or frightened, the quitters
- Called to ‘comfort’ them = ‘speak tender words to’
- Who? Pastor? Nope! You!
- Third – Uphold the Weak

- While this may refer to the physically weak, probably referring to moral and spiritual weakness
- ‘uphold’ = to hold before – face-to-face – FIND VOLUNTEER
- Help him to walk a few steps – then can find his own way
- Fourth – Be patient with all
- ‘patient’ = put up with the weaknesses of others
- Who does ‘all’ include? Pretty much everyone
- Fifth – Do not retaliate
- When someone does something to us, we want to retaliate, get even, get justice, make things right
- After all, the Bible teaches, ‘An eye for an eye’, right? Yep
- If punishment is given – should fit the crime – to limit punishment
- But Jesus taught something radically different Matthew 5:38-39
- You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.
- Jesus would call us to forgive
- Who should do this, the pastor? You!
- Sixth – Pursue what is good
- Definition of Agape Love – unconditionally doing what is in the best interest of others
- Church life is not supposed to be a spectator sport – supposed to be interactive – dynamic
- We should do good for others not just when it is convenient
- It was inconvenient for that young man to interrupt our Bible Study
- But it was good for him to meet his Savior
- And it was good for us to be used by God in the miracle of his spiritual birth
- Most churches are not what they ought to be because the people don’t know what their role is
- Your role in this church is just as important as mine, maybe more
- The next three verses are usually taught from the perspective of an individual believer
- But in context they are given as part of the life of the church

- Next week I will share their individual applications
- We get three very quick statements, written in the imperative – commands = not optional in church life
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- When the church gathers, should be a time of rejoicing
- We should lift our voices in joyous praise
- That is why most of our songs are upbeat
- We have a lot to rejoice in – we are the children of Almighty God
- He saved us from sin and spiritual death
- He lives in us, helps us, guides us, protects us, teaches us
- Whether we come in burdened by life or overjoyed with life, we all can add our voices to the joy of the church
- Been said, not willing to join in the praises of the church, not ready for heaven, because that is the main occupation of heaven
- As a quick aside – who knows what the shortest verse of the Bible is? John 11:35
- Jesus wept.
- In the Greek, it is this verse – ‘Rejoice always’
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- When we gather as the church, prayer ought to be peppered throughout it
- Someone once described worship singing as ‘prayers set to music’
- We will talk about next week how on a personal level this is speaking of the attitude of the heart
- Paul is not saying that the whole service should be non-stop prayer
- What he is saying is that we ought to be aware of God’s presence throughout the whole service
- When we are praying, we are speaking to God
- When we are singing we are singing about and to God
- When we are giving, we are giving to God
- When we are listening to the teaching we are hearing from God
- All of this is because of Jesus, and for God
- Next Paul says our gatherings should reflect an attitude of gratitude
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- There are things that come into our lives that it is exceedingly difficult to be thankful for
- And in many cases we shouldn't be – like wickedness in the world
- But when we gather together, we have much to be thankful for
- We have a church family that loves us
- We have Christ who saves us – Spirit who comforts us – God who loves and adopted us
- These are commands, 'this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.'
- If you are going to go to a church, you should want it to be a good church – but is good, good enough?
- I don't want this to be a good church, I want it to be a great church
- Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do to make this a great church
- For a church to be truly great, not about the preacher, not about the building, not about how many people are coming, not about the events, ministries, or programs
- It is about the people – all of the people – it's about you
- Jesus died to create this church
- He sent the Holy Spirit to give it the power it needs to be great
- He gave it leaders to work hard, lead it, and teach in it
- But the only way any church can be truly great is when the 'brethren' respond
- This little church can be a great church
- What's in it for you – great churches help people to be great people enjoying great lives, to have great marriages and families
- We serve a great God, we are His sons and daughters and our destiny is greatness
- All you need to do to help this church become a great church is find out what the church is doing and start showing up
- And if we all do that, great things will happen – wouldn't that be great?
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- Paul has been telling this young church things they should keep in mind as they relate to God and to each other
- Just told them three things they ought to do
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**
- Now focuses on two they shouldn't do – first one
- **1 Thessalonians 5:19**
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- God the Father is seated on His throne in heaven
- Jesus is seated next to Him and intercedes for us before the throne of God night and day
- The Holy Spirit is in the world - Jesus told us about Him **John 16:7-8**
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. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.
- In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised
- Came upon the disciples – tongues of fire
- All of Jerusalem came to see what was going on – guys were on fire for Jesus
- When we receive Christ as our Savior, Spirit comes into our lives, lights a fire in our heart
- Supernatural things start happening
- But it often doesn't last. Why?
- Paul says here, 'Do not quench the Spirit'
- 'quench' = to put out a fire
- Paul doesn't say what they were doing that might be quenching the Spirit, but the next verse, might be a clue
- **1 Thessalonians 5:20**
- One of the ways you 'quench the Spirit' is to 'despise prophesy'
- A 'prophesy' is an inspired utterance
- When God wanted to speak to humans, He usually did it through another human
- God would inspire them, put His words into their minds
- The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah was a young man when God called him to be a prophet

- He was a little concerned about how he was going to do it **Jeremiah 1:9**

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."

- It shouldn't surprise us that God still wants to talk to humans
- God talks to humans in several ways
- The main way is through His Word **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 'given by inspiration of God' = compound Greek word – God+breathed
- 'breathed' – same root as 'spirit'
- If you don't esteem, value, take seriously, read, and obey Bible = despising prophecy = quenching the Spirit
- Another way God speaks is through people – especially preachers and teachers
- A preacher/teacher can despise prophecy by teaching man's opinion, rather than God's truths
- A person can despise prophecy by wanting to hear man's opinions
- It is one of the signs that we are to be watching for of the end-times **2 Timothy 4:3-4**

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- The truth is sometimes hard to hear, but when presented by a Spirit-filled teacher, it brings life
- You should pray that the person that stands up here is speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- But they are not the only ones that God speaks through
- God can and does speak through anyone who has the Holy Spirit
- We despise prophecy when we refuse to listen to what God is saying through our brothers and sisters
- We can also despise prophecy when we refuse to share the things God inspires us to tell others

- There is rarely a day that goes by that I don't hear something from God through one of the people He has placed in my life
- I don't hear those things because I am super-spiritual
- I hear them because I believe God wants to speak to me, and I am listening
- We despise prophecy and quench the Spirit when we are not listening
- But we can't accept everything we hear
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22**
- Not everything that Christians say is inspired by the Spirit of God
- not even the most faithful Christian preacher/teachers should be trusted absolutely
- When someone speaks, as I do every Sunday as a representative of God
- I pray for God's inspiration, I try allow the Spirit to put these messages together
- I have people pray for me that the Holy Spirit does the speaking through me
- That doesn't mean that it always happens
- Paul says, 'Test all things' = 'inspired utterances'
- Judge what is being said as either good or evil, based on what?
- Not on your opinions or how it makes you feel – but with God's Word
- For my words to be considered inspired utterances – must line up with what God has already said in His Word
- If it is good – cling to it, hold fast, grab it and don't let it go
- If it is not good, it is evil - stay away from it, reject it
- Paul closes his letter with a blessing
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28**
- God's goal for your life is to make you whole
- For you to be totally whole, all parts of your life need to be aligned with God
- It is the Holy Spirit that does the work to accomplish this wholeness

Philippians 1:6

He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.

- You can't do it yourself, the Holy Spirit must do it

- But you must let Him – and you can't quench Him
- You can't do the work of becoming whole, but you can block the work
- Jesus told the disciples that they were the light of the world
- All those that follow in their footsteps are also the light of the world
- We are light because the Spirit of God is burning within us
- It is up to us to keep that fire burning hot
- We do that by getting to know the Holy Spirit
- The Bible has a lot to say about Him and the things He does in the world and in the lives of God's people – read it
- Listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit – teachers, preachers, other Christians
- And then respond – this is where discipleship and small groups come in – can help us learn how to 'test all things'
- This world is cold and dark – and if you don't do something to keep the fire burning, you will end up at the same spiritual temperature as this world
- We have an enemy that wants us to be room-temperature **John 10:10a**
The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.
- If your life is just like the world, empty, pointless
- If we quench the Spirit – open the door for the thief
- He will take all he can, and kill or destroy everything else
- But that is not the kind of life that Jesus came to give you **John 10:10b**
I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
- The abundant life is lived in Christ and through the Spirit
- Impossible without the Holy Spirit
- Which life would you rather live?
- Ask your spouse which life they want to live? Ask your kids?
- And the cool thing is that we can all live that abundant life
- The same Holy Spirit that is in me is in you
- He can take the weakest ember in the heart of a willing person, and fan to flames to life that brings light and heat to everyone around you
- It all begins when we choose to say yes to the Spirit
- Let's pray and do that right now

- **Pray**