

Ron Gannon - I Thessalonians

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[0 : 00] We'll be in Thessalonians this morning, and I'd like you to please turn to chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians.

And in chapter 4, we will begin there with verse 13 and proceed through chapter 5, verse 22. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[1 : 13] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And so we shall always be with the Lord. Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

But you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day would overtake you like a thief. For you are all sons of light and sons of day.

[2 : 38] We are not of night nor darkness. So then, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But, since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build up one another, just as you are also doing. But we request you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you and the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Live in peace with one another. We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

[4 : 13] See that no one repays another with evil for evil. But always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Gary?

That song that we just sang, Who is on the Lord's Side? It was a song that fits right in with what I have to say this morning. And I think as we hear what we have to say about the Thessalonians, you'll see how it ties right into this song.

[5 : 37] Who is on the Lord's Side? Who will serve the king? Who will be his helpers, others' lives he brings? Verse 4. Fierce may be the conflict, strong may be the foe, but the king's own army none can overthrow.

This morning I'm going to be talking about the letter that Paul wrote to the Philippians. Now Paul wrote, I'm sorry, not the Philippians, the Thessalonians. And Paul wrote many letters. And we'll understand when we start reading these letters that the Apostle Paul, when he went to a church or he went to a city and he created it or started a church, he lived there for a while. Some places it wasn't very long. Some places he lived there longer, maybe a year, year and a half. But the Apostle Paul had this knack of reading those who started this church. He had the knack of knowing where these people stood with the Lord, where they were coming from, and what they were doing. Now the Apostle Paul wrote all the letters, mostly all the letters of the New Testament.

[7 : 00] They're called the Pauline Epistles. And we have quite a bit of instruction there. You know, this week we've been going through Leviticus as our Bible reading.

We studied Leviticus this morning and all the rules and the regulations and all the things that God laid out for the nation of Israel and the law. And things are changing. Things are changing. We see the book of Acts is exactly that. It's a book of change. And we see the progression of how things are changing from the nation of Israel to this new church age. And Paul is picking up upon this. And he had the lessons right from Jesus Christ himself. And Jesus said, Paul, these are the things I want you to start this new church out. These are the words that I want you to give to these people. And a lot of these people have never heard this before. A lot of this is a mystery. Something that they've never heard.

[7 : 57] It's something that Jesus has given Paul the Apostle to bring to the churches. And that's what we're going to see as we get into 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

He wrote that in A.D. 50, 52. And the main thing that we're going to see in the book of Thessalonians is Christ coming. Christ coming.

He's not coming to the earth. He's coming in the clouds. And we're going to be talking about the rapture. The going forth. Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians.

He wrote Galatians. Romans. He did this in A.D. 55 and 56. And in those epistles.

He had the idea that they needed to know about Jesus Christ. And the cross. And that's what you see is the primary things that Paul wrote about there in those epistles. Now we come to Paul's prison epistles.

[8 : 59] And we see Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. And here we're going to see the nature of the Christian life is brought forth in these epistles. And then in the second prison epistles.

We see 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus. And there the theme is Christ's people, the church. And in this closing epistles, Paul knows that his life on earth is about to end.

And he's been the main person that's gone to these churches and started these churches. And he's been teaching other people to be able to teach other people. But he has a special heart for young Timothy and Titus.

And in these books, he sets forth to these young men. I will be leaving. Take my horn and go from here. Teach these things to my people.

And that's what we see in the book of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. But to get to the book of 1 Thessalonians. This is the first letter that Paul wrote.

[10 : 05] It's also the first letter to the apostle that the apostle wrote. And he did this during his second missionary journey. It was written to a struggling yet vigorous church that was only a few months old.

And made up of Christians who had just come to Christ under Paul's ministry. This is a revealing letter. Showing the heart of the apostle towards those new Christians. And also showing the struggles that were present in the early church.

We sometimes get the distorted conceptions of these early Christians. There's a tendency to regard them as always triumphant. Always waging the battle with vigor.

Always winning great victories in Christ's name. But they also had very severe problems. Some of which are reflected in this letter. It was written about 50 A.D.

And you may well be the first part of the New Testament that was written. It was very early writing. Even more early than some of the Gospels.

[11 : 06] Or most of the Gospels. So this was new stuff that was going on at this point. The account of Paul's founding of this church is recorded in Acts 17.

And he and Silas were thrown into prison in Philippi just before this. And we all know the story about Philippi. And the fact that he led these women to Christ. And that they had this slave girl that was a witchcraft type thing.

And the leaders in Philippi said these guys are causing too much trouble. They put them into prison. And we know the story about them. And the gates opening. We know that the jailer came in. Wanted to kill himself. But Paul said wait. We'll give you a message. And with all the fright that he had. Because that was his thing to do. If those prisoners had escaped.

That was his duty to kill himself. He said you've got something that I need to hear. He took them upstairs to his family. Paul led him to Christ. And of course we know that he was put back.

[12:05] As he was in jail. But the townspeople came to them and said. Now we want you to get out of here. And Paul said. No. Wait a minute. You just can't kick us out. I'm a Roman.

You have to set things straight with the people. And they did that. And now Paul and Silas are leaving. Timothy to go to the next town. Which is about 100 miles away. Thessalonica. Many of the places where Paul preached. Have crumbled to a ruin. But the town of Thessalonica. Is still there today.

Instead of Mesopotamia. It's in Greece. So we know that. Some of these towns disappeared. But Thessalonica is still a thriving community. It's on the port. Of course there's all kinds of commerce there.

From the accounts and acts. We learn that Paul. Had only been there about three weeks. When persecution began. He had to leave the city. For his own safety. And we see this time and time again.

[13:02] In Paul's epistles. Paul goes into a church. He first. Where's the first place he goes? He goes to the synagogue. He preaches to the synagogue. And he gives these people information.

About Jesus Christ. The Messiah that you crucify. And most of the time. These people cannot take it. And they. They put him out of the church.

And Paul will say. Okay. I'll wash my hands. And I'll go some other place. And he always goes to the Gentiles. And Paul is. Christ made him. The apostle to the Gentiles.

So this was a natural thing for him. But being a Jew. He always went to those people first. And he did win converts. So we know that.

But he also. When they came to the place. Where they wanted him out of the church. For what he spoke. Then he would go to the Gentiles. He went on to Cornith.

[13:56] After. No. From. From. Thessalonica. The false teachers came in. Those Jews. From the church. That wanted him gone. And they were going to take him out.

And stone him. And whatever the things. That he's been. Done at other places. He's been visiting. And of course. They departed. And went to Berea. And at Berea. We know that. They accepted his word. Very gladly.

But. Even at that. The false prophets. From Thessalonica. Came from there. And went to Berea. And we see that. Sometimes today. Don't we? Some of the things.

We see in the news. Where people. Get so upset. With what Christians are doing. They'll take. They'll go from here. To there. So that there's always. Trouble going on. And that's the same thing. That was happening.

Here in Thessalonica. These people. Want to pull out of there. So bad. That when he went to Berea. And he started. Teaching there. And they agreed. With what he was saying. Then they would send.

[14:51] These people. A mob of people. Just like we see. In Washington today. That would gather. And try to. Get Paul out of there. And of course. He did leave. He went to Cornith.

I think he went to Athens first. And then he goes to Cornith. And this is where. The apostle Paul. Writes the letters. To the first Thessalonians. And why they. I think before. Even in Athens.

Paul sent Timothy back. To Thessalonica. To see how these people were doing. Because. Paul gave them a new message. There's still persecution going on.

There's still all these false teachers. That's coming around. What were these people thinking? What were they doing? After Paul left. And that's why he sent Timothy back. To these towns. So he could go in.

And check on these Thessalonians. And report back to Paul. The pagans there.

[15 : 47] In Thessalonica. Were severely persecuting the Christians there. Threatening them. And taking away their property. So these early Christians. Perhaps. Only three or four weeks old. When Paul left.

Were called upon. To endure hard things. For the cause of Christ. In Thessalonica. As in all Greek cities. Sexual promise of unity. Was common. Was even regarded.

As a religious right. And to live a life of abstinence. Was to be. Regarded as. Weak. And confusing. Misunderstood. There is.

There is. Therefore. As is the case today. There was great pressure. Upon these new Christians.

To fall into line. With what the common morality. Of the day was. These are the type things.

That these people were facing. The major problem. Of this church. Was that the second coming. Of Jesus Christ. Was greatly misunderstood. The apostle. Had evidently. Told them something. They were confused.

[16 : 43] About this. Was to produce. Another grave problem. Some of them. Were expecting Christ. To come back. So immediately. That they had actually. Stopped working. And were waiting.

For him to come. And we'll get into that. More later. But. It doesn't say. When you're reading that.

But the apostle Paul. Had to have sometime. Mentioned.

The return of Christ. Or the rapture. That we call it today. Because these people. Had problems with it. And they were confused. So where did this information.

Come from? I don't know. Last week. Barb was talking about. In Acts chapter 13. Where he was in. Galatia. And he had this long sermon.

And he took this sermon. All the way from. Back to history. When the people left Israel. All the way up to the present time. And. You know. It's a good possibility. That the apostle Paul.

[17 : 39] When he went into all of these towns. He may have gave that same message. To every town that he went to. It doesn't say. There. Whether he talked about this. As far as. The rapture.

Or the. Going forth. And meeting the Lord. But somewhere along the line. He had talked to these people. Because they had this misconception. About the return. Of Jesus Christ.

So we'll see that. A lot of the problems. That we've talked about. Are familiar problems. Because sometimes. Today. We face the same type problems.

That these people faced. In the first section. Chapter one. Paul pours out his heart. Out to these early Christians.

He is afraid. That they might have misunderstood. His leaving. As though he had abandoned them. To the persecution. That they were going to face. So he reminds them.

[18 : 33] That he had just come through. This terrible persecution himself. And that he got from Philippi. And that his own heart. Was deeply concerned. For them. Because of the persecutions.

That he had suffered. He knows. But they were also going through. So he says. We give thanks to God always. For all of you. Constantly mentioning you. In our prayers. In remembering. Before you. Our God and Father. Your work. Of your faith and labor. Of love. And steadfastness. Of hope. Here again. I think the Apostle Paul. Understood these people.

In the short time. That he was there. I think he understood. That they were going to be. On God's side. They had a lot of information. They didn't have. They were kind of ignorant.

In some things. About this new Christian life. But he had the feeling. That they were the ones. That we're going to try. To live this new life out. For Jesus Christ. And that's one of the things.

[19 : 28] That the Apostle Paul. Felt about the. The people of Thessalonica. These three things. Mark the Thessalonian believers. That we see in that verse.

Their work of faith. Their labor of love. And their endurance. And hope. These are detailed more. As we go down to verse nine. And we see there.

How God turned. How they turned. From. To God. From idols. Again. This is. This. The city was there on the coast. It was a city of a lot of commerce.

And it was very common thing. For them to have idol worship. And all that type of thing. There in the. In the city of. Philippi. And while Paul was there. He got this message across to them.

That serving idols. Was not the thing to do. That serving Jesus Christ. Christ. Was the thing to do. And also there it says. To serve a living and true God. This was their labor of love.

[20 : 22] That they could serve Jesus Christ. Even at that early. Young age of a church. They had that feeling for them. They became an available instrument. For the love of God.

And all that is. Hey. You've heard the message. You take it into your heart. And then you put it back out. And you put it back out. By the way you live.

By the way you treat your neighbor. By the way you treat your family. And this is what the apostle Paul was seeing. And then third. To wait for his son from heaven. Whom he raised from the dead. Jesus who delivers us. From the wrath to come. So. He knew they knew this information. As we move on to chapter two. This is a wonderful description. Of labor of love again.

But it's not talking about their labor of love. This now we're talking about. Paul is talking about his own labor of love. And. This gives a description of his ministry there. In Thessalonica.

[21 : 16] For you remember. Our labor and our toil. Brethren we work night and day. That we might not burden any of you. While we preach to you. The gospel of God. For you know how like a father with his children.

We encouraged you. And charged you to lead a life worthy of God. Who calls you into his kingdom. And glory. So we see here the apostle Paul. When he went into these towns. He wasn't a slacker. He just didn't go in and say. Okay I'm the leader of your church. Listen to me. And everything's going to be okay. No. He went into these cities. And he worked. Like all the people that there worked.

And he worked right along with them. And on the proper times. They held our church services. And so the apostle Paul says. I worked. We had a labor of love.

And I wanted you to see that. Because. What do we live by? We live by the examples that others show us. What our parents show us. What our teachers show us.

[22 : 15] What our coworkers show us. And that's the things that we will live in our life. When we see that from other people. And he said here in verse.

Chapter 2 verse 14. And this is a really great statement. He says. For brethren. You Thessalonians. Became imitators. Of the churches of God.

In Jesus Christ. Which are in Judea. What a thing to say to these people. To think that somebody would come to you today. And say. You are an imitator.

Of Jesus Christ. We can see it. Written all over your face. And the things that you do. You are an imitator. And that's what he was telling these Thessalonians.

So. These are the things that he did. And Paul mentions this several times. The brotherly love. The giving. The living for Christ.

[23 : 15] Keeping on. He said. Keep on. Keeping on. In other words. Paul saw this. And he said. This is a good thing. Keep on doing what you're doing. Because if you keep on doing what you're doing.

Those of you who are going out and witnessing to other people. They're going to see this in their life. And in your life. And when they see that. You're an example. And again.

You pick up on examples of other people. And it's a great thing. So these people there in Thessalonica. They were doing these things. Turn to chapter 3.

Chapter 3 is an account of how Paul and Timothy. To them. Or how Paul sent Timothy to them. Brought back the word of persecution. They were undergoing. And yet they're steadfastest in the midst of it.

So Paul sent Timothy. Timothy went there. And he could. All he could do was come back. And give Paul. A good report. It was basically a good report. Now there were some flaws. Don't get me wrong.

[24 : 13] I mean. We have flaws today. Don't we? We try to live that Christian life. And maybe we are living it. But somewhere along the line. We've got flaws. Just like everybody else. And these Thessalonians had the same.

They had problems. And we're going to talk about some of those later on. So. So that. So in verse 3. It says. So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions.

For you yourselves know. That we have been destined. And for this life. Paul here is afraid that. These people were going to be. What do I want to say?

They were going to be put off in their Christian life. Because of the persecution that they were still facing. After Paul left. So he wanted to bring that forth out. And that's why he sent Timothy. But now that Timothy has brought us good news of your faith and love.

And that you always think kindly of us. Longing to see us. Just as we long to see you. For this reason brother. In our distress. In our affliction. We were comforted. About your faith.

[25 : 12] Again. Paul was very comforted. When he heard the good news. About these Thessalonians. Let's go on to chapter 4. Chapters 4 and 5.

The practical section of this letter. Are divided into four brief sections. That would take up the problems. That were confronting this church. And the society. The first command the apostle gives. To the. Is to live cleanly. In the midst of a sexual. Sacrificed society. These words. Have great importance to us. Who have to live in the same kind of society today.

And he begins by. Reminding them. That he had taught them. How to live. And. The apostle Paul. Somewhere along the line.

Taught them about these principles of life. And I think he got these principles. Well. I know he did. Today we did Leviticus. There are Sunday school class. And God specifically.

[26 : 09] Talked to the. Nation of Israel. About how to handle. These things. And some of those things. Were homosexuality. Those type of things.

And Paul. It was addressed. Moses addressed it. Back then. And I think Paul. Probably addressed. These same type of things. To these people. But even though you address it. Some of these things. Still fall aside.

He had taught them. As many people think. The Christian teachings. That is. You ought to live a good. And clean. Life. That's what you would think. That he would be taught. Teaching them. But he did not teach them that. Because that alone. Is not what Christianity. Is all about. I mean. You could say. Hey. Live a good. Clean life.

And a lot of people say. Oh. Hey. No problem. I do that. I do that every day. But you. That's not what the word of God says. Because. We are all capable.

[27 : 12] Of falling back. And we do live a life. That's pleasing to the Lord. But also. There's a lot of times. That we please a life. Or. To have a life. That is not pleasing to him. So what is it.

That pleases God here. What one call. Quality of life. Is essential. To please God. It's faith. Without faith. It's impossible.

To please God. A life of expectation. That the God. Who lives in you. Will manifest his life. Through you. Is the kind of life. That pleases God. It isn't a life.

Of your efforts. Struggling to live up. To the standards. That you have imposed. Upon yourself. Or someone else. Has imposed upon you. It's a life. In which you are. Constantly dependent.

Upon the one. Who indwells you. To keep you able. To do. And to be what. You ought to be. And that's Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Savior. This kind of results.

[28 : 07] In purity. That is practice. If Christians. Are practicing impurity. That is very clear. In revelation. That we are. Going to have. That type of thing. Coming out.

In our life. But if we. Practice pure. Purity. This is a sign. That the principle. That Paul is talking about. Now we go to.

Verse 4. 3 and 8. And Paul says. For this is the will of God. Your sanctification. Your sanctification. That you. Abstain from.

Immorality. That each of you. Take a wife. For himself. In holiness. And honor. And not in the passion. Of just lust. Like heathens. Who do not know God. That no man. Have transgressed. Or wronged his brother. In this matter. Because the Lord. Is an avenger. And all these things. We have solemnly. Forewarned you. For God has not called us. For uncleanness. But in holiness. Therefore.

[29 : 01] Whoever. Disregards. This. Disregards. Not man. But God. Who gives his Holy Spirit. To you. So the big item here. Is sanctification.

Sanctification. When does. Sanctification start. Now what is sanctification? Sanctification.

Sanctification is being set apart. We're set apart. By God.

To live. As he lives. When does that. Sanctification start? The moment we accept. Jesus Christ. Into our life. That's when our. Sanctification starts.

And from that point on. The rest of our. Christian life. The sanctification. Is growing. We don't. Just become. Completely perfect.

And sanctified. Like somebody. May read that word. And say. And think that. Sanctification. Is a starting process. It's a growing process. And that's what we're doing today.

[29 : 58] We're growing here. This morning. And that final. Sanctification. Will come. When Jesus Christ. Returns. That's when that. Sanctification. Will be there.

And up until that point. We don't have. All the information. That we think we have. We're never too old. To learn. Never too old. To learn.

That brings. That brings. A memory. To mind. Joyce's father.

Was 93. Years old. And he did not know. Jesus Christ. As his personal savior. The man. Had no education. He could.

Could not write. He worked. For 70 years. Some people. Took advantage of him. And he had a loving heart. And one day.

[30 : 55] We went to a Christmas service. That my son-in-law had. And he talked about Jesus Christ. The birth of Jesus Christ. And what he did. And as we was going home that night. We had him with us.

He asked the question. About. What is this? And we had the opportunity. To sit down. And talk to this man. And he accepted Christ.

So. We're never too old. We're never too old folks. We can always. Get information. Sorry about that. But that's just. I was saying that.

And it just. Dropped my mind. About Pappy. That's what we call him. Pappy. And he accepted Jesus Christ. When he was 93 years old. And. We got to do that service.

When he died. And what a. Blessing it was. To say. Pappy. Is there in heaven. With Jesus Christ. So. We're never too old. Never too old.

[31 : 52] And that's not what I was supposed to be talking about. Okay. Let's go. Now in verse 13.

Go to verse 13. We come to a major problem. This book. Addresses. The misunderstanding. About the coming. Of the Lord. These Christians. Had gotten the idea.

That when Jesus returned to earth. His second time. To begin his millennium kingdom. They knew about that. The nation of Israel. Knew about that. Didn't they? That he would return.

And have a millennial. Middleennial kingdom. So they knew about that. When the dead. Would be raised. The good. And the bad alike. I got ahead of myself.

The Christians. Had gotten the idea. That when Jesus Christ. Returned to earth. The second time. To begin his millennial kingdom. Those who are alive. When he came back. For they were expecting. They were expecting.

[32 : 51] This to happen. Very quickly. And I think. We got to keep that in mind. We're thinking about. The Bible. And how it's laid out. And the time frame. How it. Was expanding there. In the book of Acts. When Jesus Christ.

Was there. He told them. Believe. I came here. To die for your sins. And when I do that. And go to heaven. I will come back. Now to me.

If I'm sitting out there. I'm thinking. Hey. That sounds like. It's pretty quick. And it could have been. Very quick. If a nation of Israel. Would have picked up on this. And accepted the fact.

That Jesus Christ. Was their Messiah. Their Savior. But they didn't. And as we get into. The book of Acts. We see what was going on there. Jesus Christ. Ascended into heaven. But the nation of Israel.

Never. Never. As a nation. Now we know about. Chapter two. Of Acts. Chapter three. And chapter four. Things were going good. Things. The people were coming to Christ. Things were growing.

[33 : 50] But not the nation of Israel. These were just some individuals. Not the nation of Israel. Maybe four or five thousand people. Look how many people there was. At that time. So. The nation of Israel.

Just never. Never got the idea. About this. So. It was not uncommon. And it's definitely not for these people. In Person and I.

To think. Hey. The Lord is coming back. And it's going to be soon. It's going to be soon. So they were expecting.

With him. In their lifetime. They were expecting him to come back. In their lifetime. He would enter with him. They would enter with him. Into this kingdom. But they would. But they were deeply troubled. That those who had died.

In the meantime. Would somehow miss the benefits. And the blessings. Of this millennium. And that was the problem. That these people were having. Paul had told them about it. And they knew about the millennium.

[34 : 44] That Jesus Christ coming back. For the second time. But they were saying. We know that. And we are expecting to go. My mother just died. My father just died.

My son. My daughter. What's going to happen there? What happens? So they were very concerned. They were confused. Because of the misunderstandings. Of the doctrine. Of the resurrection. They were thinking. In terms of one resurrection. A single event. That would come. At the end of the millennium. When the dead would be raised. And the. When the dead would be raised.

The good and the bad alike. To stand before. The judgment seat of God. And they were. Our passages. Of course. That speak to this resurrection. To come at the end of the millennium. But this is not the thing.

That we're talking about here. But the group of believers. But that group of believers. Are resurrected. At different times. We as believers.

[35 : 39] Are going to be resurrected. At different times. Than the people. That's going to be. Here. And raised. During the millennium. And those would be. Those who believe. And those who have not believed.

They're going to come before Jesus. At the judgment seat. But we would not have you ignorant brethren. There in verses. 14. Or 13 and 14. Concerning those who are asleep.

That you may not grieve. As others who do not have hope. For since we believe. That Jesus died. And rose again. Even so. Through Jesus. God will bring with him. Those who have fallen asleep. In other words. Those who have died. Are going to be raised again. And they will come back. With Jesus. When he comes to establish. His millennial kingdom. Also. But they'll also be raised.

At the rapture. Well this presents another problem. How is it that. They are going to come back with him. Bodily. When their bodies have been placed in the grave. What reassurance can they have on this.

[36 : 37] Paul says. Let me give you a new revelation. And I think here. He's going to be talking about a rapture. That he may have mentioned before. For this. We declare to you.

By the word of the Lord. That we who are alive. Who are left until the coming of the Lord. Shall not precede those. Who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself. Will descend from heaven. With a cry of a command.

With our angels call. And with the sound of the trumpet. And the dead in Christ. Will raise first. Then we who are alive. Who are left. Shall be caught up together. With them. In the clouds.

To meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore. Comfort one another. With these words. This is something new. Being taught. Caught up in the clouds.

To meet the Lord in the air. We call this the rapture. And we also see this. If we go. If we read in. First Corinthians. As Paul was talking about.

[37 : 30] The life of Christ there. And his birth. His resurrection. And that he was dying. For the sins of the world. And we put on a new body. And all these things. There in chapter 15. Verse 51. He talks about.

This coming. Also. The coming of the Lord. Here does not refer to the second coming of Christ. The dead in Christ will be raised.

So that we will be with him. When he's ready to establish his kingdom. So you will. So you see how this answers the problem. They need not grieve. Over those things.

Over those people that have already died. They actually precede those. Who are alive. When the Lord comes. To bring his own. And his own. Are those. Are us. The saints. All of us.

Who have accepted Jesus Christ. Into our life. Those. Are the ones he's talking about. Those are the us. Now between the rapture. Of the Lord. Between the rapture.

[38 : 26] Of the Lord's coming. To establish the kingdom. We learn from other passages. Of scripture. That there will probably be about. A seven year period. In the meantime. The great tribulation occurs. And Paul now.

Goes on. To speak of this. As he continues. In the next chapter. So not only. Talks about the rapture. And this is. The people. Right now. But now he's going to go on. To explain. About the second coming.

And he says there. In chapter five. Verses one and two. That as to the times. And the seasons. Brother. You have no need. To have anything. Written to you. For you yourselves. Know well. That the day of the Lord.

Will come. Like a thief in the night. Now where do they get that? Jesus. Jesus said that. When he was here. In Matthew 24. Nobody can set a date.

For this event. It's coming. It's come suddenly. Quickly. And when the Lord comes. In the rapture. Two great changes of events. Will be initiated. The Lord will begin. One series of events.

[39 : 19] In which all believers. Will be caught up. To be with him. And at the same time. He will bring another series of events. On earth. Known as the great tribulation. Or in the old testament.

The day of the Lord. The apostle says to them. That no one knows. When this is going to happen. So when people say. There is peace and security. Then sudden destruction.

Will come upon them. As for they all comes upon. A woman. With child. It will surprise the people. Of the world. Like a thief. But it didn't surprise you. Like a thief at all. Because you are looking forward to it.

You are. Ought to be. Expecting it. And that is the good news. That we have today. We are expecting it. We are waiting for the Lord. To come. And pick up his.

Saints. What good news that is. And actually. I am going to run out of time. And I want to get to some of the other things. Paul talked about. I think they are very important.

[40 : 14] When he closes this letter. But this is the main problem. That the Thessalonians had. Was this problem. About the second coming. Or the. Lord coming in the air. To pick up the saints.

And that is just one facet. Of the second coming. He is going to come and get us. And we will be with him. When all this stuff. About the revelation. And the tribulation.

Begins. And we will be there with the Lord. To see those things happen. So as we close out the chapter. Paul has some things to say.

About different things in life. And I think we are all going to be familiar with him. When we talk about it. And 5. 12. 13. He says. We beseech you. Implore you brother. To know them.

That labor among you. And are over you in the Lord. And admonish you. And esteem them. Exceeding highly in love. For their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Paul points out here.

[41 : 11] That the spiritual brothers and sisters. Born into the family of God. By the spirit. That no family is perfect. Without a family to protect him. And provide for him. A child will live a very disappointing.

And confusing life. The child of God. Needs to have a church family. He is to grow. Develop gifts. And be served by the Lord. And to serve God.

He needs to have a church family. Without leadership. A family falls apart. The father is the head of the home. The mother stands with him. In love and cooperation. The children are to obey their parents.

This is the order. God has laid down. And for us to serve this order. Is to ask for trouble. Trouble will come into our life. When you're not going. Unless God would have you to go.

God has laid down an order for the church. He has ordained leadership for the church. And we see that. If we read the epistles. To 1st Timothy. And 2nd Timothy.

[42 : 06] And Titus. Paul is laying down there. The instructions. On how to establish a church. And one of those instructions are. Get yourself.

A group of leaders. Get you some people in there. That has. Not only book knowledge. But life knowledge. Because that's so important.

To have that life knowledge. We can have a lot up here. But it's what people see us doing. With the heart. That really matters. Especially when we're talking about church. So.

What he was telling. To Timothy. And Titus. Is. After I leave. Keep on establishing these churches. And the one thing that I've done. Is to create leadership in these churches.

When I leave. I want you to continue doing that. Create leadership. In your churches. It's not good for one man. To be in charge of the whole church. Nobody can question.

[43 : 04] I'm in charge. You do what I say. And that's where a lot of false doctrine. That we have today. Comes from. It's from some of the churches. That is a completely pastor led church. And I'm not saying that.

A pastor shouldn't be involved. In the leadership of the church. My goodness. He is. But he should not have absolute control. Of the church. There should be a board. Any great business. Has a board of directors.

The same thing goes for the church. We should have a board. That sits there. That's able to hold the pastor accountable. That's able to hold the congregation accountable.

Because. Face it. Sometimes. Things come up in church. And they're not pretty. And we have to know how to handle that. And hopefully. You're going to pick the people. And if you go by the principles.

That he gave Timothy. And Titus. We're going to have people. Sitting in those. Positions. That will be able to handle. Those type positions. They come. Because they can be very.

[44 : 00] Very troubling. And they can be very private. And very hurting. So. That's an important thing. That we need to do there. So. This leadership thing here. Is very important.

Very important. He says. He says also. He says. Whenever you find a vision. And contention. In the local church. It is. Usually because of what? Selfishness. Hey. I want it done this way. Well. Maybe we. No. No. Do it my way. And that's usually where all the problems start. When we have quarrels in a church. It's. It's about something. That somebody wanted. And they didn't get their way.

Or whatever. And then they get a little faction here. And a little faction there. But it all comes down. Hey. This is what I want. And if I want this. Then I should get it. Um.

[44 : 53] We shouldn't be that way. James makes it. In 413. Makes it very clear. That selfishness. On the inside. Leads to strife. On the outside. So when we have selfishness here.

It's going to show on the outside. As selfish. Or as problems. Troubles. Uh. In 413. In 513. Uh. Now we turn to. That. What is the source of quarrels.

Of conflict. Or conflict. Among you. Uh. What is. Is it your pleasures. And your self entrance. That wages war. In your members. It is. Only as we submit. One to another.

That Lord. We can. Uh. Enjoy his blessings. And. Be at peace. With the family. And being at peace. With the family. Is the church. And.

My nose is running. I can't. Don't have anything. To do it with. Uh. So. Verse 14 and 15. As we exhort you. Brethren. And amoners to this orderly. Encourage the faint hearted.

[45 : 49] Support the weak. Be patient. And long suffering. Toward all. See that no one. Render to anyone. Evil for evil. But always follow. After that. Which is good. One toward another.

This is the things. That we should be doing. As a church. These are the things. The apostle Paul. Was teaching. Those churches. That we see. Back there. In the first century. When we have. The other type of attitudes. That we're talking about. That's what splits. Within the church. That's what does that. So we need to encourage. And we need to comfort. Those. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Excuse me. Now Paul has some other things. To say before we close out here. And. Well before I mentioned. The one verse in.

Verse 16. It says. Rejoice always. The shortest verse in the scripture. We see that also in Philippians. Rejoice always. There's always something to rejoice.

[46 : 49] When you have Jesus Christ in your life. And also prayer. And also prayer. Paul instructs us to pray without ceasing.

And in everything give thanks. For this is the will of God. For you in Christ Jesus. He reminds us here to pray regularly. And to be constantly in the attitude of prayer. And folks that's something that you can do when you're driving your car.

And you don't have to have a special chapel set up. You don't have to have a special place that you go. I mean it's okay to do that. But hey. We have busy lives. And there's nothing to say.

We can be driving down Interstate 70. And say. Oh. I just thought about. My daughter. That was having trouble somewhere else. And then. You can pray while you're driving. You can pray anywhere you want to pray.

So. That is part of the Christian life. Is to pray seasonally. Verse 15. 19 and 21. Is a very interesting verse to me.

[47 : 48] It says. Do not quench. The spirit. Do not despise pathetic tolerances. But examine everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good.

How do you quench the Holy Spirit? This is something that. Is put in you. When you accept Jesus Christ. Into your life. He plants it there. How he does it.

I don't know. But he does. And we have that Holy Spirit. Living inside us. And Paul here. Is saying to them. Those people. In. In Thessalonica.

Don't quench. The Holy Spirit. Now if we turn to the Gospels. And John. The baptizer. He talks about baptizing with fire.

And what is it. That puts out a fire. How do you put out a fire. You quench a fire. By doing what. Grab a bucket of water. And throw on it. That's the only way.

[48 : 48] That. That. He's talking about here. He's talking about that principle. Quenching. Something that's going on. Don't quench the Holy Spirit. God put that Holy Spirit in you. For a purpose.

And that is to. Live out. The instructions. That you get. From the Apostle Paul. We don't have him today. But we got his word.

Don't we? We have his word. We have a man up here. At the pulpit. That has a. Wonderful gift. Of teaching. For the last 45 years. These are the things.

That were taken into our spirit. And these are the things. The Apostle Paul is saying. Don't quench the spirit. Don't go against God. Don't go against God. Keep that spirit alive.

Keep that spirit alive. He also talks about. Aphetic utterances. Again. We don't have prophecy today.

[49 : 43] We don't need prophecy today. Because we have the written word. But we can be sure. That when God gave out prophecy. It was going to happen. And we see things now. Everything is set.

For the coming. The second coming. There's only one thing left. Isn't there? And that's for the Lord to come. To pick up the saints. And for God to start dealing.

With the nation of Israel. Again. And he's going to do it. He is going to do it. And it's all in that time frame. Of the rapture. And all the things. That's going to start picking up.

That we see there. In the book of Revelation. What a glorious time. That's going to be. The last thing here. Examine everything carefully.

We need to be diligent. To present ourselves approved to God. As a workman handling accurately. The word of truth. Second Timothy 2.15. All scripture is inspired by God.

[50 : 41] And profitable for teaching. For reproof. For correction. For training in righteousness. That the man of God. May be adequately equipped. For every good work. Search the scriptures.

They have the answers. To all of our questions. So how do we apply this. That we've talked about this morning. Do you ever feel as though. Your Christian faith is run stale.

That you are withering on the vine. When you would rather be flourishing. In his service. Paul's first letter. To the Thessalonians. Is a perfect remedy. For such a feeling.

It focuses on Christ's return. Provides water for the thirsty. Encourages growth and maturity. By developing hope. In the midst of suffering.

And uncertainty. These are the things. That was going on. In the lives of those people. At that time. And I'm here to tell you. Today. It's not much different folks. There's things going on. In our life.

[51 : 37] That's hurting. For suffering. And Jesus Christ. Is the answer to that. So examine. Everything. Very carefully.

When somebody comes in here. And talks. Examine it. When you go out to a conference. Or something out there. Examine. What that man is saying. Or what that woman is saying.

Scripts to scriptures. Because it's there. Paul's practical. Instruction. For this process. Of sanctification. Can be applied directly. To our current circumstances.

Today. By clinging to the hope. In Jesus Christ. We may see clear. Results. In our lives. Our lives. Avoiding immorality. Refusing to defraud others.

Appreciating those Christians. Who serve you. On your behalf. Refusing to repay. Evil for evil. Rejoicing always. Praying without ceasing.

[52 : 35] And giving thanks. In all things. Just to name a few. Of course. The list does not stop there. The list of course. Is not exhaustive. But the first letter.

To the Thessalonians. Makes it very clear. Christians. Should expect to grow. In holiness. Over the course. Of their life. And that's what sanctification.

Is all about. God is a holy. And righteous God. And he wants us. To be holy and righteous. And we are. You know. Today I can face God.

Saying God. I come to you. Holy. And righteous. Not because of what I've done. But because of what Jesus Christ.

Did. On the cross. Father. We just thank you. We thank you for the. The work that you did.

[53 : 30] In this. That's unlike a church. Church. We thank you. For the work that you. Did in all the cities. That you. That you. Visited. The instructions. That you left for them.

And the fact that you. Loved them enough. That you would go back. And check on them. To see how they were doing. I just pray that we could. Do that today.

If we have a witness today. And we know somebody. Has accepted Jesus Christ. In their life. Help us not to abandon. That person. That accepts Jesus. Because now. They are in the most important. Step of their life. They need somebody. To come along. Beside them. And help them through. This new life. That they've been given. So we thank you for that. We thank you today. For your amazing love.

That you give to us. Each and every day. And we just pray. That all those. Who may be here today. Do not know you as Savior. They would have. No rest. And no peace. Father.

[54 : 28] We just thank you again. We praise you. And we just ask. These saints today. In the name of our Lord. And Savior. Jesus the Christ. Amen.