

Lessons From I Thessalonians

Worship Caretaking

(I Th 5:16-22)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we looked at “Brotherly Caretaking.”
 - i. **I Th 5:14-15** “And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”¹
 - b. This week we will examine what Paul taught concerning “Worship Caretaking.”
 - i. **I Th 5:16-22** “Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.”
3. As Paul is finishing up his letter he continue to go over some things that will help the Thessalonian brethren esteem their elders in love.
 - a. We noticed first that he taught them to help out by going to a brother that is in sin and pointing it out.
 - i. Paul taught the churches at Galatia the same thing.
 1. **Ga 6:1** “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”
 - b. Now Paul is going to encourage the brethren to stay very focused on taking care of the worship habits.
 - i. A congregation that focuses on strengthening their worship without the constant urging of the elders is a congregation that grows spiritually.
4. Thus we find our lesson today.
 - a. With these things in mind let us examine our text.

I. **Worshipping Without Ceasing**

- A. Before I begin to look at what Paul wrote concerning this idea let me say...
 1. I do not hold to the idea that everything we do is worship.
 - i. Mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, and the like are not forms of worship.
 - ii. When one is sinning they are not worshipping God.
 - a. Such as driving drunk...
 - iii. You can sin while worshipping God but that doesn’t mean that all sin is false worship.
 - a. **Mt 15:9** “in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- B. Though not everything done is worship Paul does expect a certain continuous attitude of worship
1. Paul expect the brethren to “rejoice always.”
 - i. Considering the persecution they were under this would have been an much need admonition.
 - a. They were being persecuted by the Jews and Gentiles.
 - b. Paul did not allow them a chance to “get down” at the their circumstances.
 - ii. I know and you know members of the church that seem to have no concept of what Paul is saying here.
 - a. Brother Parrish put it, “They always find something to complain about; they always emphasize the negative; they seem to work overtime to find something to be down in the mouth about. I’ve wondered if some ever have anything positive to say.” (Notes I Thessalonians by Parrish, Eddie pg. 28)
 - iii. Rejoice always, does not mean there will never be times of sorrow.
 - a. **Ro 12:15** “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”
 - b. It means, Christians, will be able to handle the circumstances of life with a positive outlook because of their inner peace in Christ.
 1. **Ph 4:7** “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
 - iv. Therefore we need to heed the words of Paul to our Thessalonian brethren and rejoice always by finding and holding close the inner peace that comes through Christ.
 - a. **Ph 4:4** “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”
 2. Paul expect the brethren to “pray without ceasing.”
 - i. Paul here urges the brethren to live a prayerful life.
 - a. The Bible is full of this type of terminology.
 1. **Lk 18:1** “And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”
 2. **Ro 12:12** “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”
 - b. The idea is not have ones mouth moving in prayer 24/7.
 1. It means prayer should be a habitual part of one’s life so much so that one’s subconscious is ever mindful of God.
 - ii. Therefore we too much make sure we are living a life of prayer.
 - a. **Co 4:2** “Continue steadfastly in prayer...”

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3. Paul expected the brethren to “give thanks in all circumstances.”
 - i. Paul does not say give thanks “for” all circumstances.
 - a. It would not be right to attribute every circumstance “especially when evil” to God.
 1. See Job as an example.
 - ii. Paul wrote give thanks “in” all circumstances.
 - a. In other words no matter what is going on one can always find a reason to thank God.
 1. We see Paul & Silas doing this very thing.
 - i. **Ac 16:25** “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”
 - iii. Therefore we too must understand that no matter what the circumstance we are to find the reasons (which shouldn’t be hard) to give thanks to God.
 - a. **Ep 5:20** “giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

C. Thus...

1. We see clearly the expectations Paul had for the brethren to pay close attention to their worship and take care of it.

II. Worshiping No No’s

- A. Paul warned against despising prophecy and as such quenching the Holy Spirit.
 1. It could very well be that Paul is talking about the miraculous here.
 - i. Remember that Paul, an apostle, was there when the church was established and as such most likely laid hands on some there who then in turn would receive one or more of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.
 - a. As such Paul would be saying that the Thessalonians must not despise the teachings of God that are coming through the one that is prophesying.
 - b. Disregarding the message of God would naturally quench or extinguish the Holy Spirit by “remove(ing) one’s self from the life giving revelation of God.” (Notes on I Thessalonians by WVBS pg. 59)
 2. Today we must understand this principle as well.
 - i. When we despise hearing the Word of God preached we in essence quench or extinguish the Spirit.
 - ii. When we overload our life with worldly cares we smother out, in a sense the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - a. **Ep 4:30** “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

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- B. Paul warned against allowing everything
 - 1. Paul did not want the our brethren there in Thessalonica to become ones that have their ears tickled and start allowing everything.
 - i. Paul exhorted them to “test everything.”
 - 2. We too if we are not careful can be caught trying to worship God in a manner that is not sound but rather in vain.
 - i. We must “test everything” to see if it can withhold itself against the Scriptures and be found true.
 - a. **I Jn 4:1** “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
 - b. **I Co 14:29** “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.”
- C. Paul warned against allowing sin in any form to be present
 - 1. Paul here, in context, appears to be specifying those things that are dealing with worshiping God Almighty.
 - i. This passage, of course, is great advice for our everyday Christian walk.
 - a. In fact this should be our mental mantra.
 - ii. Here though we have worship in mind and as such Paul wants the brethren to refrain from doing anything sinful to the worship.
 - 2. Consider how much stronger the church would be today if it had only heeded what Paul told the church at Thessalonica.
 - i. Instead of people asking “is this sin” they simply ask “why not do such and such” to change the worshiping of God.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. We can see clearly there are things that we are to strive for in our worship and there are things we are to run from.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Brethren this was printed a number of years ago in the Glide Memorial Methodist Church bulletin.
 - a. “We are all of us Christians—Jews, liberals, Bolsheviks, anarchists, socialists, Communists, Keynesians, Democrats, Civil Righters, Beatniks, ministers, moderate Republicans, pacifists, teach-inners, doctors, scientists, professors, Latin Americans, New Africans, Common Marketers, even Mao Tse-Tung. Doubtless. From Lyndon Johnson to Mao Tse-Tung, we are all Christians.” (Tan, P. L. (1996). Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.)
 - b. “Today, many of its services are performed in the mode of the modern dance. Suggestive gyrations are indulged in and the church has become a haven for dope addicts, hippies, homosexuals, and sex-pots.” (Ibid)
 - i. We are not far off from this. Example of the sermon by the North Richland church of Christ in 2005 that had the teens start at the back of the auditorium and dance their way on stage where keep saying “now this is a party for God.”
- 2. Question: Are you vigilant to make sure you worship to the God of heaven is paved in righteousness?
 - a. Is so continue therein and grow thereby. If not why not?

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3. Invitation

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**