

Lessons From II Thessalonians

Benediction

(II Th 3:16-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From II Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we looked at “Idleness Leads To Busybodies.”
 - i. **II Th 3:6, 11** “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us...11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.”¹
 - b. This week we will be looking at the “Benediction.”
 - a. **II Th 3:16-18** “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”
3. Defining the word benediction.
 - a. Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines it as “Blessing, prayer, or kind wishes, uttered in favor of any person or thing; a solemn or affectionate invocation of happiness; thanks; expression of gratitude.” (E-Sword)
 - b. Dictionary.com defined it as, “an utterance of good wishes.” (<http://goo.gl/Q14u0h>)
 - i. Thus what we have here is Paul concluding his letter with a “best wishes” for the brethren there at Thessalonica.
4. With that in mind let us examine our text this evening.

I. May The Lord Of Peace Give You Peace

- A. Paul starts his closing remarks with a prayer for the brethren
 1. That prayer was that they would have peace at all times and in every way.
 - i. Remember the situation with the brethren there. They were under immense persecution.
 - a. **II Th 1:4**
 2. Paul’s prayer was not only timely but I’m sure very welcome.
- B. Man has always searched for peace in pretense
 1. Ronald Reagan once said, “A people free to choose will always choose peace.” (<http://goo.gl/3DpC4s>)
 - i. However the Bible bears out this is not a true statement.
 - a. **Jn 3:19-20** “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.”

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.

Lessons From II Thessalonians

II. The Genuineness Test

- A. Paul then writes that the brethren could have confidence in this letter being from him because it is “signed” by his own hand
 1. Now don’t forget this had been a problem earlier that Paul had to address.
 - i. **II Th 2:1-2** “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”
- B. As a preacher I often get asked “how do we know the Bible is from God”
 1. There are four things that one looks to, to know if a writing is from God.
 - i. The determination of divine authorship.
 - a. “Was the book inspired of God? Was its human author a known and recognized spokesman(prophet, apostle, or inspired writer) of God?” (Notes: How We God The Bible by Boren, Maxie pg. 15)
 - ii. The determination of genuineness.
 - a. “Was the evidence sufficient to substantiate it as being genuine? Could it be traced to the writer from whom it was supposed to have come? Did it have the "marks of identification" as a genuine book from God . . . such as, is it true? Is it factual? Is it authentic?” (Ibid)
 - iii. The determination of recognition.
 - a. “How did the vast majority of mainstream believers view the book? Did they view it as being from God and accepting of it? In the case of an Old Testament book, was it read and studied in the synagogues? In the case of a New Testament book, was it viewed by the early Christians as being inspired . . . was it read in the churches?” (Ibid)
 - iv. The determination by close examination of the content.
 - a. “Were the contents deemed that which blended with the other books, free from contradictions, in harmony with known historical events and people, and beneficial?” (Ibid)
- C. Thus...
 1. We all can be assured we have access to the genuine Word of God.

Lessons From II Thessalonians

III. The Grace Of Our Lord Be With You All

- A. Paul concludes with a very common closing of his
 - 1. In fact this basic closing can be found in all of Paul's writings with only slight variations.
- B. Grace is...
 - 1. That which is found 156 times in the New Testament.
 - 2. From the Greek word "charis" which by N.T. times came to mean favor, goodwill, and loving-kindness.
 - i. The Bible takes this Greek word and meaning and ties it to redemption.
 - a. In other words "...God makes available his **favor** on behalf of sinners, who actually do not deserve it." (The True Meaning Of Grace by Jackson, Wayne at "<http://goo.gl/6IMM7R>")
- C. Brethren when was the last time you parted ways with a brother or sister in this manner
 - 1. I don't think I ever have but if Paul found it so important maybe we should think this through some more.
 - i. Remember he ends every letter this way.
 - 2. I don't mean to imply we do not "think" this about our brethren.
 - i. I'm sure all want God's favor for all our brethren however there is something powerful about saying for others to hear.
 - a. It is just like hearing the words "I love you." We know we love each other but it is good to hear it from time to time.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. Maybe just maybe we should consider being a bit more vocal concerning our desires for one another on the spiritual front.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Brothers and sisters what an amazing benediction to our brethren in Thessalonica.
 - a. My hope and desire for each of you is that the Lord of peace keeps you in peace and may the grace of God be with you always.
- 2. Question: Do you have the peace of God and are you always in God's grace?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
- 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."

Lessons From II Thessalonians

- 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**