

WALKING OUT HIS WORD EACH DAY
THE 1 THESSALONIANS SERIES

COMMENTARY
ON MESSAGE #4
January 28th, 2018

OOPS!

Pastor Jay needs you to make a correction
on page 11 from lesson #3.

It is only one letter but it matters.

In the box that says **KEY**,
the word immanency
should actually be imminency.

Now, on to Commentary #4 ...

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In I Thessalonians 2, Paul states very clearly that the time he had spent in Thessalonica doing ministry was characterized by integrity, honesty and righteous living (Please read I Thessalonians 2:1-12). To the uninformed reader it might appear that Paul was bragging and that he was filled with self-righteous pride. However, Paul wrote what he did (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of his Christian friends in the young church at Thessalonica.

Q1: Have you ever tried to help someone or do something good only to have your motives questioned or attacked by someone?

Q2: Have you ever had a relationship with someone be damaged because he/she believed something he/she heard about you that was not true?

I have a dear friend who is a pastor and he is a man of genuine integrity. He was once falsely accused of doing something that was very unethical, but the accusation was untrue. Even though he was innocent and his accuser clearly had an agenda, this pastor lost some close friends during the process. Did they not believe in the innocence of their pastor/friend? I do not know, but even if they did eventually come to understand that he had done nothing wrong, their relationship with him was never the same.

Before looking more closely at the particular situation in Thessalonica, let's give some thought to the phenomenon of lies and slander.

Q3: Why do people tell lies about other people and slander them? (Slander is a false statement made about someone to a third party that causes harm to the reputation of the person slandered). List some of the reasons people lie about others.

There are many reasons why people tell lies about other people, and people had reasons for the lies they told about Jesus and Paul. But we must never forget the ultimate underlying (no pun intended) reason behind every lie that has ever been told.

Q4: Please read Jesus's words in John 8:43-46. What did He say Satan was the father of in verse 44?

When expressed this way, to say someone is the father of something is to say that he is the founder or original source of that thing. Satan is behind every lie that has ever been told. He is the father of lies.

Q5: In these verses, what kept the people from believing Jesus's testimony about Himself?

Lying about others is a very nasty business and God makes it clear what He thinks about it. Please read Exodus 20:16 and Proverbs 6:16-19. The Bible says that God hates these things, they are detestable to Him.

Let's give some thought to how and why lies were used against Jesus during His trial. We know that Satan is the father of lies. At some level, Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, believed Satan's lies.

*“After He said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified,
‘I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me’ ...
Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon.
As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.”
John 13:21, 26-27*

With Judas now having completely given himself over to the lies of Satan, the chief priests and religious leaders were able to arrest Jesus. They put Him on trial for blasphemy, breaking many of the rules for proper trials.

Q6: According to Mark 14:55-59, what outcome was the Sanhedrin (the Jewish rulers) determined to get? What were they willing to do in order to get that outcome?

We need to understand the human heart and its true nature:

*“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?”
Jeremiah 17:9*

Man is a sinner by nature, and all sin is rooted in rebellion against God. The bottom line is that, left to himself, sinful man **does not want Christianity to be true!** Why is this so? Because Christianity teaches that all people are sinners and are guilty before a holy and righteous God. Deep down inside people know that this God exists and they know they are accountable to Him

(Romans 1:18-21, 32; 2:14-15). Christianity also teaches that no amount of good works can earn forgiveness or eternal life. The sinful heart, steeped in pride, resents being told that only those who humble themselves and seek God's mercy through faith alone, in Christ alone, will be saved. Unless God, by His grace, changes the heart of the sinner, no one will come to Christ.

In his natural state as a sinful rebel,
man does not want Christianity to be true.
To keep from having to bend his knee, bow his heart and say,
"Jesus is Lord", men will tell lies about Jesus and the gospel
and they will gladly believe lies if it gives them
an excuse to say no to God's truth.

A guilty conscience is easily provoked to tell a lie,
and it is easily persuaded to believe a lie.

After the miraculous resurrection of Jesus and His ascension to Heaven, the apostles began sharing the good news of the gospel. While many people in Jerusalem responded by faith in their message and became Christians, the Sanhedrin commanded the apostles to be silent and warned them of severe consequences if they continued to share the gospel of Jesus.

*"Then the high priest and all his associates,
who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.
They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail."
Acts 5:17-18*

Q7: According to Acts 5:27-28, why did the Sanhedrin want to silence the apostles?

The sad irony in the actions of the Sanhedrin to suppress Christianity was that by their own words they knew it to be true (Wow! Read John 11:45-48, 12:9-11 and Acts 4:13-17).

Now, on to Thessalonica ...

Remember that in Acts 17:1-9 the gospel took Thessalonica by storm, winning many to Christ and also facing intense opposition and persecution. Paul was forced to leave the city, probably after having been there for 3-5 months. He left behind an infant church filled with brand new Christians. When he wrote I Thessalonians approximately six months later, he used a large portion of the letter to recall the honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness of his ministry among them.

Q8: Do you think Paul defended his reputation because he was proud, or did he have a different motive?

I don't think Paul was even close to having an issue with pride. Paul's concern was for the spread of the gospel and the spiritual health of the church. Paul was also very aware of how Satan uses lies to keep people from coming to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If Satan, and the people he deceives in order to do his bidding, could destroy Paul's reputation, the spread of the gospel in Thessalonica and the spiritual growth of the church there would be greatly hindered. This is the only reason Paul guarded his reputation.

To varying degrees, we all have concerns about what other people think of us. Ask yourself why it is you care about your reputation. In Luke 6:26 Jesus said, "*Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.*"

Q9: Why does Luke 6:26 seem to indicate that Jesus doesn't want all people to speak well of us? What is your understanding of this pronouncement when combined with other verses such as I Peter 2:12; 3:13-17?

When it comes to your reputation, here are two things about which to be mindful:

1. If no one ever has a bad thing to say about you then you have probably tried too hard to be liked by everyone. In other words, you have probably avoided speaking out about sin, repentance and the need for people to place their trust in Jesus Christ.
2. If people speak ill of you or believe negative things others say about you, let it require that a lie be told about you.

NOTE: Over the years I have known about lies which were told about me or slanderous things which misrepresented my words or my actions. While that experience is never fun, do you know what really upsets me, what truly bothers me? It is when my reputation is stained or sullied not because of lies, but because of the truth! My character, my words and my actions have not always been honoring to Jesus Christ. To make things worse, when people see these character flaws in me and they know that I am a Christian and they know that I am a pastor, then I become a hindrance to the gospel and a detriment to other Christians and to my family.

We will never be perfect this side of Heaven,
but no matter how often we mess up, let's not quit!
Let us seek to grow in personal holiness and in
becoming a truer reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Let us commit ourselves to
WALKING OUT HIS WORD EACH DAY.