

“In Everything Give Thanks, for This is the Will of God”

Review:

- ***To review, we have seen in this letter some significant dispensational contrasts. A central focus has been on the coming of our Lord Jesus for his church, the Body church, called often the Rapture, as contrasted with his coming for the elect of Israel at the end of the Great Tribulation. These dispensational contrasts between Grace and the Tribulation are, he writes here in chapter 5, like night and day!***

1 Thess. 5:1-3

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

1 Thess. 5:4-8

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children [lit. “sons] of light, and the children [lit. “sons] of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation *[the Rapture itself!]***.**

This is not only about morality or about these believers being lights in the darkness because they are living so differently than others. The larger implication here has to do with “the day and the night.” They are IN THE DAY AND ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DAY, NOT OF THE NIGHT! This is not due to their morality or even their maturity as believers. No, it is because of who they are. That makes all the difference Paul writes here.

- ***So we see that the life of believers living under Grace is dramatically different from those living in the Great Tribulation! These are, of course, dispensational distinctions.***

- ***Paul provides those contrasts using clear and powerful language here. Remember, the believers in Thessalonica had been taught truth by Paul and their expectation regarding the return of the Lord was appropriate therefore for those living DURING GRACE and its abundance. But the false teachers had turned their lives upside down teaching a contrary view. His “correctional” teaching finishes with the central truth he deemed so critical for their understanding:***

1 Thess. 5:9-11

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

- ***Remember the words and phrases used here:***
 - ***Verse 9: “appointed to wrath” — Those living in the night, or in the day of the Lord surely have been “appointed unto wrath”. That is the teaching of the Old Testament and the New as we have seen in our studies on the Long War Against God. The Thessalonians, on the contrary, are not “appointed to wrath” but to obtain salvation. This is not an exhortation to holy living but a statement of fact.***
 - ***Verse 10: “wake” and “sleep” — This is the fundamental distinction that is so practically important for us all living under grace. Exhortations given to us living in this dispensation are based on facts as verse 9 indicates, on truths that are secured by God’s plan of redemption and promises given to us even “before” the foundation of the world. The exhortations are gracious in their very nature. This one we have considered today is one such and one that should change our living.***
- ***The underlying Greek words used here are very important and need to be compared with the words used in other scriptures such as in chapter 4 of this letter:***
 - ***καθεύδω - “sleep”, a word never used of death, the opposite of watching (not κοιμάω as in 1 Thess. 4:15, a***

word that is used both of real, literal sleep and figuratively of death as in John 11:11). This is NOT the same word used of actual death found for example in 1 Thess. 4 three times or in 1 Cor. 15 where the mystery of the rapture is revealed with its physical resurrection of those that have died.

- *γρηγορεύω - “watch” [or “wake” as here, “wake or sleep”], the most common word of exhortation in the scriptural teachings regarding the Tribulation period preceding the Second Coming of our Lord to earth and the establishing of the Millennial Kingdom.*
- **So WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE ALERT AND WATCHING OR NOT, WE SHALL BE LIVING WITH HIM ETERNALLY. AMEN AND AMEN. SUCH A WONDERFUL GRACIOUS EXHORTATION THIS IS!**

Again, this teaching is absolutely NOT true of the Jewish saints living in the Tribulation period. They WERE APPOINTED TO WRATH, THE TIME OF WRATH, and they were told that they had to endure to the end to be saved. The teachings by our Lord in the gospels so clearly testify of that. We could look at the book of Jeremiah to read more about that (see Jer. 30:7 and following), for that is the message of the Old Testament and the book of Revelation as well. You will remember the parables that teach accordingly, perhaps the most well known being the parable of the ten virgins.

So the issue is enjoying God's work under grace today. Those that will not receive that and continue in the legalisms and religion, no matter their fervor or level of commitment, will suffer great loss. Their loss is the enjoyment of what God is doing today — AND, the opportunity to share in his work of grace. And what a loss it is!

Our Scripture Today: 1 Thess. 5:9-28

Our Outline:

- **Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It's Privileges**
- **Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It's Priorities**
- **Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It's Prospect**

- ***This outline may seem familiar and indeed it is somewhat, for we have used similar outlines before, even here in 1 Thessalonians. But we must confirm to Paul's writing, must we not?***

I. Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It's Privileges:

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:11-13

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.

- ***Verses 9 & 10 give us the needed teaching on how under grace and not law we today shall “live together with him” even if we may be “sleeping” and not “watching” when the Lord returns for us. Such grace is contained in these words of grace and truth.***
- ***Verses 11 - 13 begin the practical exhortation. It has to do with harmony in the churches to begin with. In particular, believers ought to have proper relations with those who are “over you in the Lord”, that is, with the pastors, teachers, elders, and so forth. They are to be highly respectful and to honor them highly without conflicts. “Love for their work's sake” and keeping the peace seems to refer to known issues in that assembly. But these issues are very common, are they not?***

II. Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It's Priorities:

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:14-15

14 Now **we exhort you**, brethren, **warn them** that are unruly, **comfort** the feebleminded, **support** the weak, **be patient** toward all [men].

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any [man]; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all [men].

This verse 14 is actually quite wonderful indeed. This is for the “brethren”, for we have as brethren some very special and God given enabling given by the Holy Spirit. All is for the sake of the brethren — and for all as well.

- ***There are four verbs here used and they are all different from one another. One speaks of getting into their minds (“warn”), one of holding them close through our simple words (“comfort”), one of***

holding up the ones who are falling (“support”) and then another that means suffering deeply (usually translated “long suffering” but here “patient”). All the dimensions of our spiritual ministry towards those possibly in spiritual peril as well as peril in other ways are here entertained.

- ***But rendering evil for the evil we may receive in the process (verse 15) is never right, and never godly. Goodness is always the order of the day, even for those outside the family of faith.***

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:16-18

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

16 “Rejoice evermore.”: ***Privileges should lead to a resetting of priorities, or “rights demand responsibilities”, as we have heard and that is so true. The question is this, will we enter into the sphere of his working? One step at a time here. Firstly, his joy. Will we enter into that?***

17 “Pray without ceasing”: ***This is not asking for what we want. It is perfectly compatible with the rejoicing in the previous verse. It is an act of worship! And is to be practiced without interruption! This is a state of mind that should never be given over to worldly endeavors and all their evil. Redeeming the time for the days are evil! Will we enter into this? It is our prerogative to do so boldly and without reservation!***

18 “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”: ***Again, in every-thing, yes, in every circumstance of life give thanks. Why, for it is God who worketh in us and in all things according to his will and our good! Will we enter into his working and into his will always, giving full recognition to his working in our hearts and in our midst, whatever the circumstances? Will we? Only this godly and humble response gives God the glory he alone deserves — to be always thankful.***

Eph. 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

Do we want to enter into the midst of his working and grace?

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:19-22

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

19 “Quench not the Spirit”: ***For he is the one dwelling in us to “will and to do of his good pleasure”. If God is working in us with such power and grace, how can we not desire that greatly? For God works in us by the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, don’t try to put out his fire.***

20 “Despise not prophesyings”: ***Satan will use various means to lead us astray by mimicking the work of the Spirit. See 2 Thess. 2:2.***

21-22 “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good ... Abstain from all appearance of evil”: ***Lit., stay apart from every form of evil, not merely the “appearance” as we use the word today. I think the word probably meant “form” or “kind” in 1611 King James English.***

III. Such a Great Salvation Under Grace — It’s Prospect:

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:23-24

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].

- ***Here is the famous “tripartite” reference to the human nature, body, soul and spirit. God’s work has as its focus the end which he knows full well and is therefore tending in that direction. For he will surely bring each of us to that final endpoint. We shall reach that because “the God of peace [will] sanctify us wholly [Lit. “complete until the end”. So wonderful indeed.]***
- ***Verse 23 states the truth and 24 explains it by securing the truth with strong affirmation. This is his final teaching here.***
 - ***There is nothing here on what we must do. It is focused entirely on what God has and will do himself. Note also the***

passive verb “be preserved”. That is accomplished by the Lord God Almighty, of course. This is not a wish or hope but the apostle’s statement of an established fact. That is made clear in the following verse with these words:

- **“Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it]”: *In the eyes of the Lord, we are already justified and therefore righteous. No claim may be brought against us since the Lord himself is our advocate and intercessor. Here in this life we lack much in body, soul, and spirit, but that shall all be rectified at his upward calling, at the Rapture. That his final teaching in this letter centers on his gracious working in catching us up to be with him forever, is most wonderful.***

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:25-28

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you. Amen.

- ***We have now reached Paul’s final exhortations are here: Firstly, to pray for the apostle; secondly, to greet all the brethren with a holy kiss (really, a very special sort of kiss indeed); and then thirdly, to make this letter known everywhere by public readings. The first not to be forgotten. The second is the mark of true and authentic agape love and the third was needed to proclaim the message of the letter “from every hilltop” and most assuredly to every believer. The implication is that this will need to be done repetitively.***
- ***Paul’s most common and nearly universal salutation is this one, of course: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you. Amen.” Should this be ours as well is a good question. Well?***

Conclusions / Application:

- ***How glorious indeed is this letter with its simple but powerful content. Clear teachings and compelling exhortations abound. The focus is on what Christ has accomplished and what he will yet bring to pass for us. We are in the very center of that, praise God.***

- *And, as I have said many times before, every chapter in these two Thessalonian letters contains this Rapture teaching and usually it is repeated again at the end of the chapter, as it is here. We are therefore to remember it always. Amen and amen.*
- *Now may we live to the fullest and enjoy his working under grace, to his and our eternal blessing. May it be so!*