

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 12
The Second Missionary Journey: The Ministry in Thessalonica and Berea
— A Time of Remembrances!”***

- ***As we have seen here on Sunday mornings, Paul’s first missionary journey was beset with many difficulties and challenges, even stoning and attempted stoning. But in the end it was counted a great success. The report was made in Antioch from which Paul and Barnabas had been sent forth by the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. Indeed, as Acts 14:27 says, the Lord God had “opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles”. Praise God. He did this incrementally, city by city, and there were many adversaries, heavenly and earthly.***
- ***The Theme Continues, first the suffering and then the glory as Paul (with Silas) goes then to Troas (Troy) and then to Timothy’s home town in Galatia where Paul calls Timothy into the service of the Lord. Except in unusual circumstances, from here on Timothy will be with Paul suffering the same trials and the same rejoicings.***
- ***The Theme Continues, first the suffering and then the glory, as Paul is called to Philippi, jailed, but nevertheless, fruitful:***
 - ***A demoniac woman was delivered and the city’s pagan religious and economic system was severely challenged! You know the rest of the story that developed there in Philippi. Though Paul and Silas are jailed for effectively disturbing the peace, even turning the economy of the area upside down. they were delivered by an earthquake and the jailer was saved and an assembly was founded there around his family who were all saved.***

The fruit borne in this ministry here is so clearly magnificent. Paul’s later letter to the church in Philippi underscores this so well. Grace, grace and more grace!

- ***The Theme Continues, first the suffering and then the glory, as Paul’s ministry bears fruit elsewhere in Macedonia:***

Introduction:

- ***Think of the assemblies founded and then the ongoing fellowship and the letters written. What was the content of Paul’s teachings***

during these three or four weeks in Thessalonica? We know something of this from his letters, don't we? When he left the synagogue and taught fundamentals, yes, but also practical truths regarding the faith.

Today we will look at those letters to see the depth of teaching Paul provided the Thessalonian believers. It will truly be "mind-expanding" to learn how much truth Paul shared in those few weeks. And the theme of these letters reinforces the purpose of the apostle in providing such substantive teachings was the maturing of the saints. This is so contrary to the ministry of the word so often today, isn't it, shallow at best and often promoting misleading and dangerous doctrines at the worst?

- *The Thessalonians were greatly blessed by Paul's visit as it was for them "A Time of Remembrances." The apostle reminded them of what he had already taught them and of the truths they should never forget ... for if they do forget, they may grieve as the world grieves and not have the fullness of the joy the Lord offers his children.*

Their faith had grown along with their hope, but the apostle desired to remind them of that and of the faithfulness of Almighty God. He is with them in a very special way...

Our Outline Today: Our Theme Today is the Same as Paul's: "Remembrances"

He reminded them often here so that their own Remembrances might be effective:

- *Their Election by God and How They Were Living in the Light of It*
- *The Practical Power of God's Word of Truth in a Believer's Life*
- *How Encouraged They Were by Paul's Edifying Fellowship*
- *How Their Hope Should Give Victory Over Life's Greatest Trials*
- *How Under Grace They Were Not Appointed to Wrath as Were Others*

I. Their Election by God and How They Were Living in the Light of It:

Chapter 1 Sets the Stage for the rest of the letter which in each following chapters builds on the Remembrances the apostle reminds these believers of here in this first chapter:

- ***Truth's Reception***

- ***Truth's Response***
- ***Truth's Repetition***
- ***Truth's Reward***

Truth's Reception —

[READ] 1 Thess. 1:1-5

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Truth's Response —

[READ] 1 Thess. 1:6-7

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

Truth's Repetition —

[READ] 1 Thess. 1:8-9

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Truth's Reward —

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

- ***The whole point of Paul's opening words here in this letter is that the Lord was at work and is still at work in the lives of these believers — and that they now need to REMEMBER all that! And he exhorts them here to remember that in the context of his teaching while he was***

with them for those short weeks during his Second Missionary Journey.

- *Going on into the rest of the letter now, we will see how these themes repeat and build up into a great crescendo with the power of God's word magnified to nearly an extreme, for example here in chapter 2:*

II. The Practical Power of God's Word of Truth in a Believer's Life:

Chapter 2

[READ] 1 Thess. 2:13-14 [Both Received and Responded to ...]

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, **ye received it** not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For **ye, brethren, became followers** of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

- *The apostle's main teaching here is the power and faithfulness of God as personally displayed in these believers. But this display of the faithfulness of God (which they are asked to remember) started with their hope in Christ Jesus and developed into an enduring hope as he writes in several verses. Without that his exhortation in chapter 4 (and all here leads to that as that is at the heart of his motivation for writing this letter, due to the false teachers and their hope-dashing dispensational heresy) loses its power.*
 - ***1 Thess. 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;***
 - ***1 Thess. 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?***
 - ***1 Thess. 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.***
 - ***1 Thess. 5:8 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.***

- *So now we see the divine logic in this letter, don't we? In Rom. 5 we see the same summarized at the beginning of that chapter. So their hope was being magnified and intensified through trials. That is one of the lessons so clearly taught in the Thessalonian letters:*

Rom. 5:1-5

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The same is found in 1 Thess. 2 here and Paul encourages the believers: trials and disappointments may come, yes, but in the midst of them God is at work and when his work has been completed here, we will all be gathered together with him! The apostle knew this well and his hope was not compromised — and theirs could be also, he writes:

1 Thess. 2:17-20 [So the hope is even intensified as Paul's own hope was tied to theirs!!]

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

III. How Encouraged They Were by Paul's Edifying Fellowship:

[READ] 1 Thess. 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

1 Thess. 3:9-13 [Here we see how Paul's future is seen by him to be linked to theirs ... and this must have been so evident to them as they read these words...]

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

- ***The process of faith hoping through rekindled hope in the Lord. Their futures are linked together by God. How can it be otherwise. Here there is a reassertion that they are Paul's and he is theirs, and NOT THE FALSE TEACHERS!***

IV. How Their Hope Should Give Victory Over Life's Greatest Trials:

1 Thess. 4:1-2 [Again, he had taught them all of this on his visit. But they had begun to forget and needed to be reminded ...]

1 Furthermore then **we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.**

2 For ye know **what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.**

[READ] 1 Thess. 4:13-18

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

- ***Their futures were all bound together with Christ's. They were his inheritance (see Eph. 1) even as he was theirs. So the actual timing of one's home-going has no effect of the reception of the promised blessing. Whether physically alive or physically dead and in the grave, the promises are true for all, he writes so powerfully here!***

V. How Under Grace They Were Not Appointed to Wrath as Were Others:

[READ] 1 Thess. 5:1-11 [Again, reminding them of what he had already taught them!]

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.

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

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children 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.

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. [... and even more considering the mutual ministry and mutual edification that will occur as they keep these truths close as these two pre-Tribulational verses state so very clearly (as we have seen before)].

- ***Cp. Matt. 24 & 25 - those with the Kingdom hope certainly ARE appointed to the coming Wrath (the Great Tribulation period), but not the Thessalonians — and not us!***
- ***It is not conclusive but is significant that the Rapture is found revealed in chapter 4 before the Great Tribulation which is contrasted with it in chapter 5.***
- ***So we see that the true and authentic hope of the Thessalonian believers was based on the preaching of Paul when he was in Thessalonica. They did know “perfectly” that the Rapture would precede the coming Tribulation and should not have deviated from that precious truth following false teachers.***

He is asking them to “Remember”! For Remembrances Can Make All the Difference.

- ***REVISE Consider also what must it have been like for these believers? They turned to God from idols!! What persecution they suffered as Paul recounts in his letter to the Thessalonians! Those believers learned to properly count the cost of being a believer (in difficult times)! Do we?***
- ***So there was often a very short ministry in each place but much fruit was gained. Praise God.***

Summary of the Second Letter (very similar topics, of course):

2 Thess. 2:1-17

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us,
and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,
17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

2 Thess. 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any
would not work, neither should he eat.

- ***Remembrances, necessary and effective in our walk as believers.
The challenges are great but the rewards are sure and available,
even now. In the midst of trials the light of God's love and grace
shine brightly.***
- ***First the suffering and then the glory! Amen.***