

A Word of Conclusion for the Church

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-28

I think we could all agree that our study in this insightful epistle has been encouraging as well as challenging. Clearly the church in Thessalonica stands as a tremendous example for the church to follow. It is evident Paul loved the church there and sincerely desired them to prosper in the work God had placed them. They were growing and reaching the lost around them, even throughout the world.

Paul has covered a great deal regarding the responsibilities and obligations of the church. We would do well to heed these words of wisdom and seek to achieve the standard Paul established for the church there. I have been greatly challenged in my walk with the Lord as I have studied these passages.

We have come to the conclusion of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian church. These are words of exhortation and encouragement. Once again, he offers a reminder of what they possess in Christ and their obligations to continue for Him. Many might consider these just concluding words, but there is an abundance of help and guidance for us in the closing thoughts. As we conclude our study, I want to consider the [instructions](#) Paul leaves as we think on: [A Word of Conclusion for the Church](#).

I. Paul's Closing Exhortation (16-22) – Paul leaves them with an exhortation regarding their continued service unto the Lord. This deals much with their attitudes and actions. Notice:

A. Our Praise (16) – [Rejoice evermore](#). That is a simple statement, but it reveals a great challenge. It is brief, but straight to the point. The church is exhorted to rejoice evermore. This has the idea of "*rejoicing or being glad exceedingly*." Surely if anyone ought to rejoice exceedingly it ought to be the church. We have been redeemed from sin. We have been made partakers of the inheritance of God. We have the hope of heaven and eternal life. That is worth being exceedingly glad about.

B. Our Prayer (17) – [Pray without ceasing](#). Just as we are to rejoice evermore, we are to pray without ceasing, continuously making our request to the Lord. I cannot emphasize the importance of prayer enough. It is the means by which we make our supplications known unto the Lord. We ought to always be in an attitude of prayer and communion with the Lord. [Ephes. 6:18 – Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints](#).

- I fear that we often reserve prayer for church services, at meal time, or at the close of the day, but we need to be consistent and continual in prayer. What a blessed privilege we have to come before our heavenly Father in prayer.

C. Our Petition (18) – [In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you](#). Surely the church in Thessalonica had reason for thanksgiving. They had faced much adversity, but God had blessed them abundantly. Paul exhorted them to give thanks unto the Lord in every situation and circumstance.

- We could handle that much better if we had been instructed to give thanks for good things or pleasant things, but we are exhorted to give thanks in everything. We need to realize that all that we enjoy is of the Lord. I know we have a hard time being thankful for the trials, but they too are for our benefit. It is in adversity that we learn to trust the Lord and are made more like Him. God is sovereign in every aspect of our lives. We can give thanks in every situation.

D. Our Persuasion (19-20) – Paul wanted them to be persuaded of the truth, possessing a desire to maintain truth. This persuasion is two-fold. First we are to be persuaded regarding:

1. The Spirit (19) – [Quench not the Spirit](#). This is yet another simple statement that reveals profound truth. We all know the benefit of the Spirit within our lives. We are indwelt with the Spirit at salvation and He continues to guide us as we seek to live for the Lord. Paul warns of the danger of quenching the Spirit. We are not to extinguish or hinder the Spirit as He works in our lives. He is there to comfort and guide our lives. He reveals sin and brings conviction.

- The Spirit is of immeasurable benefit to the believer, but we must guard against grieving the Spirit. We must ensure that we keep our lives free of unconfessed sin, walking in a way that pleases the Lord through the guidance of the Spirit. It is dangerous to willfully disobey the leading of the Spirit.

2. The Scriptures (20) – [Despise not prophesyings](#). The church was exhorted to treat the Word of God with the utmost respect and accept it with full assurance. They were not to despise the utterance of the Word, whether it was the public reading of the Word or a preacher expounding upon the Word. The word [despise](#) carries a strong indication, literally meaning “*to consider as nothing, to look down upon.*”

- As was noted the prophesying could refer to the written Word or those who expounded upon the Word, teaching and preaching of the Word. The people were not to consider the Word of God

of little value. They were to embrace it and accept its teaching. They were expected to allow the Word to bring about profitable change in their lives.

E. Our Perseverance (21) – *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* They were to “*test or examine*” all things. Their lives were to be lived in light of the holiness and righteous standard of God. They were to embrace that which was good and refrain from that which was sinful. He again urges them to remain steadfast and committed to the things of God.

- We need to examine all aspects of life in light of God’s Word and His will. We must embrace and hold fast to that which is holy and forsake all that hinders our Christian lives.

F. Our Perception (22) – *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Paul continues to urge them to maintain a godly witness among the world. They were expected to refrain even from the appearance of evil. If anything caused a brother to stumble, they were expected to forsake it.

- The modern church needs reminded of this fundamental truth. We must guard our witness. We must be careful how we present ourselves, so that we are perceived in a positive manner that exalts the Lord and points others to Him. We are not our own; we have an obligation to live upright and above reproach.

II. Paul’s Closing Benediction (23-28) – The closing verses reveal Paul’s blessing and prayer for the church in Thessalonica. Consider:

A. His Intercession (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.* Here Paul offers a closing intercession for their sanctification and purity. He desired that they remain pure and holy before the Lord, being found without spot at His coming. He wanted them to maintain the relationship they had with the Lord and continue to live in a way that honored and magnified His holiness.

- That ought to be our prayer and desire as well. We ought to seek a sanctified life, one that reveals the God we serve in a positive and influential manner. We should desire to be found faithful when He calls us home. We have an obligation to live upright before the Lord.

B. His Affirmation (24) – [Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.](#) Here he offers an encouraging reminder of the faithfulness of the Lord. Christ had saved their souls and placed them into Christian service. He had called them from a life of sin and darkness unto His marvelous light. They had started well in the Lord and He would be faithful in equipping them to continue. Paul was simply reminding them of the source of their strength.

- We need to be reminded of the faithfulness of our Lord. He has saved us by His marvelous grace. He has placed us within His family, calling us to a life of service. He has equipped us with the gifts we need to serve Him. He has never failed and He never will. Our Lord will be there to lead, guide, and strengthen us throughout the journey!

C. His Supplication (25) – [Brethren, pray for us.](#) Paul offered a humbling and profound reminder to the church. He desired that they pray for him. Paul was well aware of the need and power in prayer. He earnestly wanted the church to pray for him.

- I can assure you that if the apostle Paul desired and needed the prayers of the church, we do as well. We need to continually lift one another up in prayer unto the Lord. We are living in a difficult day. We will never endure without the help of the Lord. We need to make it a daily priority to pray for the church!

D. His Conclusion (26-28) – Here Paul reveals his closing desire for the church. In these closing remarks we discover three things he desired of them.

1. Their Unity (26) – [Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.](#) Paul desired that they love one another and dwell together in unity. Paul knew that more difficulty would surely come, but if they stood together, in love, they could endure. We desperately need unity and Christian love for one another. We need the help and strength of those around us.

2. Their Conformity (27) – [I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.](#) He knew the Holy Spirit has inspired the writing of this epistle. He knew the benefit it would be to the church. He charged them to read it among all the brethren. Paul desired them to continue to grow and mature in the Lord, conforming to His image.

- We need to hear and heed the Word of God in our day as well, conforming to the image of our Savior. We need to make it a priority to study and meditate upon the Word of God. It must continue to be the emphasis and priority of our services and our lives.

3. Their Victory (28) – [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.](#) What closing words of comfort for the church. Paul prays for the grace of the Lord to be abundant in their lives. He wanted them to experience His grace and enjoy the victory that He gives.

- Oh, how we need His abundant grace in our lives as well. We need Him every moment we live. We need the grace and guidance of our Lord. I pray that we will continue to grow in His grace!

Conclusion: As we conclude this wonderful study, I wonder how our lives compare to those in Thessalonica. I am aware that they were mortals just like we are, but I have been greatly challenged by their testimony. I think we all would have to agree that we could be closer to the Lord than we currently are. No doubt we could be accomplishing more for His glory.

I pray that we will see our Lord for all that He is and seek to be more like Him. May we strive to be more like Thessalonica in service to our blessed Lord!