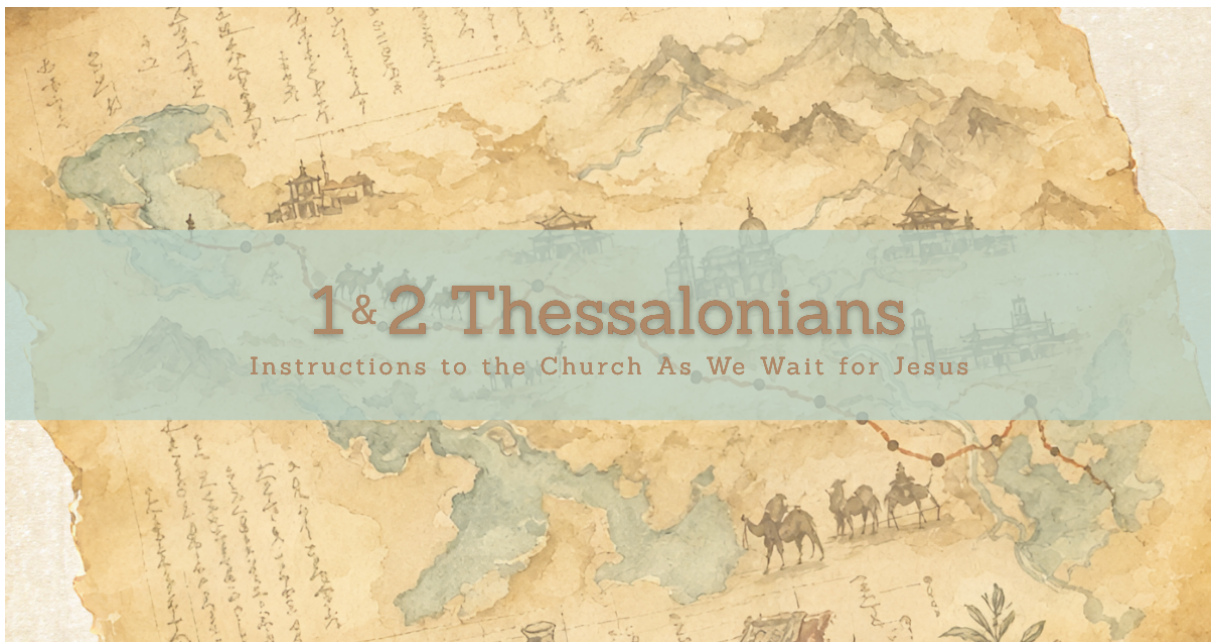




A STUDY OF 1 & 2 Thessalonians

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Introduction

I see parallels between the church in Thessalonica to today's church, especially the American church. These parallels are in all of the New Testament letters, but there is something timely about these two in particular.

- We are waiting on Jesus to return
- Thessalonica was a port city importing/exporting culture. We live in a "port" world that exchanges cultures easily—at a click of a button.
- The end time harvest will produce many baby communities of believers like the Thessalonians — Fatherly heart for new believers and the truth
- Being aware of the times we live, increased lawlessness, and how we stand firm
- Hope of the glory in Jesus Christ

Overview

- Instructions to the church as we wait on Jesus
- Descriptions of a thriving church
 - *Just as you are doing, that you do so more and more*
- Descriptions of godly leadership, apostle's conduct
 - Fatherly, dear love that Paul and his companions had
- Hope we have as believers
 - We are children of the day, and Christ will be glorified in us
- Apostolic prayers we can echo

Objectives for Each Week

- Understand the Thessalonian church and parallels for today
- Application of the passage
- The gospel in the passage
- Prayers from the passage (apostolic prayers)

Week One

1 Thessalonians 1:1 - 2:16

Description of Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Take note of the sincerity in these new believers and of Paul's love for them

- vs 1:3 Work of faith and labor of love
- vs 1:3 Steadfastness of hope in the Lord, Jesus
- vs 1:5 They are chosen (think divine appointment or seen by God) because the gospel came in word and power, and in the Holy Spirit—with full conviction
- vs 1:6 Imitators of the apostles and of the Lord, *specifically* for receiving the word with the joy of the Holy Spirit, despite affliction
- vs 1:7 Became an example to other believers in Macedonia and Achaia and, from there, the word of the Lord sounded forth to the whole world (port city)
- vs 1:9 Turned to God from idols so that they could serve the living and true God
- vs 1:10 Waiting for Jesus' coming

Description of the conduct of Paul, Timothy, and Silas

vs 2:1-12

Remember, one of the characteristics of the Thessalonians is that they imitated the apostles and the Lord. So, in a way, we are getting a deeper look into the group of believers.

- vs 2:1 They knew their work was not in vain
- vs 2:2 They had boldness in God to declare the gospel—even in the midst of conflict
- vs 2:4 They were there to please God and not man—no error, no deception. Entrusted with the gospel
- vs 2:5 They did not use flattery, nor were they greedy

- vs 2:6 They were not seeking glory, nor were they demanding
- vs 2:7 They were gentle like a nursing mother with her young
- vs 8 They were affectionate toward the Thessalonians—ready to share the gospel and themselves (vs. *you had become very dear to us*)

Keep Going

- vs 2:9 The apostles were not a burden, but worked while ministering
- vs 2:10 Their conduct was holy, righteous, and blameless
- vs 2:11 They were like a father with his children while they exhorted and encouraged the Thessalonians. Specifically, they charged the church *to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory* (vs 2:12)

Application

As you read through the descriptions above, list a few of them that stand out to you or that you want to grow

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about these things
2. Search the Bible for those qualities, turn the verses into prayers. This is one way to hide the word of God in your heart (Psalm 119)
3. Take practical steps toward aligning with what God's word says.

Gospel Takeaways

- vs 1:4 The gospel is for everyone, but often times there is a window of opportunity with individuals or a group of people.
- vs 1:5 The gospel goes out and is received in word and power, and the holy spirit—with full of conviction
- vs 2:2 The sharing of gospel is a bold venture, especially in opposition
- vs 2:4 We are entrusted with the gospel. If you are a believer, you are now minister of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5)
- vs 2:9 The gospel of God is not a money maker. Beware of slothful ministry and/or wrong motivations

- vs 2:13 The gospel is to be received as the word of God, not as the word of men. We have to believe that it is at work
- vs 2:14-16 The gospel will be hindered to thwart or delay salvation. Expect obstacles

Prayers from the Passage

These are prayers the apostles prayed over the churches. If we are imitating them as they imitated Christ, then we will be people of prayer. These prayers are not off limits to us, they are examples for us. We can pray them for ourselves, for our families, for those we are discipling, and for the church at large. Like the apostles, however, we do so in love and blamelessness—no judgement, no ulterior motives.

- vs 1:2 We give thanks constantly for our brothers and sisters in Christ and for what God is doing in and through them
- vs 1:2-8 We intercede. The description of the Thessalonians (see above), in context, is Paul remembering them before God. He is accounting for them before the Father. This is a form of intercession. Intercession stands between two things and pulls them together
- vs 2:13 We pray for people to receive the gospel and the word of God and that it will be at work in them
- vs 2:16 We pray for salvations
- vs 2:19 We rejoice in the success of the disciples/church before the Lord. People maturing in Christ is a joyful thing!
- vs 2:7 & 11 We pray for love and hearts that would nurture, encourage, and charge others

Week Two

1 Thessalonians 3 & 4:1-12

Purpose of Paul's Letter

- Affection and joy for the Thessalonian church
 - vs 3:1-13, many apostolic prayers (see below)
- Eager to disciple them even though *torn* apart
 - ...*that no one be moved by these afflictions* (vs 3:3)
 - Paul is writing from Corinth (I may have said Athens in the video)
 - Reiterating what has already been said AND adding depth (vs 3:10)
- Life pleasing to God—for sanctification
 - Abounding in love (vs 3:12)
 - Established in Holiness (vs 3:13)

Life Pleasing to God: Instructions to the Church

- vs 3:3 & 5 Prepare for affliction, beware of the tempter
- vs 3:12 Increase and abound in love for one another and for all
- vs 3:13 Let the Lord establish your hearts blameless **in** holiness
- vs 4:1 Walk pleasing to God *as you are doing, more and more*:
 - Abstain from sexual immorality
 - Know how to control your own body—in holiness and honor
 - Avoiding passions of lust—like those who do not know God
 - Why?
 - So no one would wrong their brother in this way — the Lord is an avenger in all things...*We solemnly warned you about this* (vs 3:13)
 - God has not called us to impurity, but **in** holiness
- vs 4:8 Disregarding this teaching is to disregard God who gives the Holy Spirit

Keep Going

- vs 4:9-11 Call to love one another, brotherly love. Taught by God (1 John 4:19)
- vs 4:11 Aspire to live quietly, mind your own affairs
- vs 4:22 Work with your hands (Genesis 2:15)

- A testimony to outsiders, being dependent on no one. Sets up a larger theme later in the letters.

Application

Same as last week. As you read through the instructions above, list a few of them that stand out to you or that you want to grow in.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about these things.
2. Searching the Bible for those qualities, turn the verses into prayers. This is hiding the Word in your heart (Psalm 119)
3. Take practical steps toward aligning with what God's word says. (see week one video for an example)

Gospel Takeaways

- vs 4:1: The attributes of the gospel/kingdom of God are always increasing (Isaiah 9:7). Kingdom living is never static
- vs 3:2 The gospel needs coworkers. The kingdom of God is a community, we exhort each other in faith
- vs 3:12-13 The gospel binds love and holiness together.
 - *Abound in love for one another so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God at the coming of Jesus*
 - 1 Corinthians 13. If we are experiencing envy, resentment, pride towards other people, especially in body of Christ, we ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, and then repent and grow into maturity—established in holiness
- vs 4:2 The gospel calls us to sanctification (holiness), walking it out. We have access to purity through the blood of Jesus and that sets us apart. Jesus' blood buys us back from sin and makes us new. Now, we get to live accordingly

- 1 Peter 15:14-16, *as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*
- Consider Matthew 6:19-24 for a little deeper study

Prayers from the Passage

- vs 3:3&8 We pray to stand fast in the Lord, not being moved afflictions
- vs 3:10 We pray for faith to increase, and for every weak spot to be strengthened through God's word and the church
- vs 3:11 We pray that our love, Lord, the way you have to us, would increase and abound
- vs 3:13 We pray to be established in holiness as we follow your ways. That we would be found blameless at the coming of Jesus
- vs 4:1 & 10 We pray that as we are doing these things, that we would do them more and more. Faithful to the end

Week Three

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:1-11 and 2 Thessalonians 1

Parallel Passages

- Mark 13, Matthew 24-25, Luke 17
- Daniel 11:31, 36; Ezekiel 28:1-10; Isaiah 14:4-20
- See End-time Chapters link at brave-sparrow.com

The Coming of the Lord: Instructions To Church

Remember, everyone was waiting on the Lord's return, just like us. The new believers in Thessalonica wanted to know what happened to believers who died before Jesus returned. Paul writes so they will not be uniformed and so that they know the hope of the resurrection

- vs 4:14 *Because we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so will those who die before he returns*
- vs 4:15-17 *For we declare this to you by a word from the Lord*
 - *Those who are left until the coming of the Lord will not preceded those who have died.*
 - *The Lord will descend with a cry of command, the voice of and archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God*
 - *The dead in Christ will rise first, those who are alive will meet them in the air*
 - *And so we will always be with the Lord*
- vs 4:18 Encourage one another with these words

The Day of the Lord: Instructions To Church

- vs 5:1 Get a vision for the time and season we are in (Proverbs 29:18)
- vs 5:2 Believers have nothing to fear, the coming of the Lord will be obvious—a steady unfolding. We are awake and ready - like the wise virgins (Matthew 25)
- vs 5:2-3 For unbelievers or those who are sleepy, the coming of Christ will come like a thief in the night. They won't be ready, saying, "Peace and security," but...

- It will be sudden destruction, and like labor pains that can't be escaped. (Isaiah 13:6-8, Jeremiah 6:22-30)
- vs 5:5 Believers in Christ are children of the light, children of the day. We are not children of darkness. (1 Peter 2:9)

Children of Light, vs 5:8-9

- Not surprised at the Lord's coming
- Awake and ready and sober
- breast plate of faith and love (Ephesians 6:10-20)
- helmet of salvation
- obtained salvation through Jesus

Children of Darkness vs 5:7

- The Lord's coming unexpected
- sleepy, not ready
- drunk
- experience the separation from Jesus
- vs 5:11 Keep encouraging each other in this way, just as you are doing.

Judgement at Christ's Coming

Two things happen in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

1. Believers in Jesus get caught up with him, and in God's justice, they will be avenged and relieved from the afflictions and their afflictors.
 2. Unbelievers will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord
- Good news: for those who are worthy of the kingdom of God, children do light...
 - we will be relieved from the affliction imposed on us
 - Jesus will be glorified in us and we will marvel at his appearance (vs 2 Thessalonians 1:10, Isaiah 60)
 - Bad news: when the Lord is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels flaming in fire, those who do not know the Lord and did not obey the gospel of Jesus...
 - Justice will be served for all the affliction

- They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. (vs 9)
- To this end, we pray that we are found worthy of his calling

Application

What should we do with these passages about the Jesus' return?

As you read through the verses

1. Give thanks that we have been called out of darkness and into marvelous light.
2. Give thanks what we will be with Jesus forever
3. Give thanks that Jesus will be glorified in us
4. Intercede for those who don't believe in Jesus and gospel
5. Stay ready and awake by seeking the Lord all the days our lives

Gospel Takeaways

- vs. 4:14 *Because we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so will those who die before he returns.*
 - John 11:25, Jesus says, *I am the resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.*
- vs. 5:9 Salvation is obtained through Jesus
- vs. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 The Lord will be glorified in believers, and his appearance will be a welcomed sight. For unbelievers, his appearance will be eternal separation

Prayers from the Passage

- vs 4:18 & 5:11 We pray to encourage one another
- vs 5:23 We pray that the God of peace will sanctify us completely, and that our whole self will be kept blameless at the coming of Jesus
- vs 5:25 We pray for our leaders

- vs 2 Thessalonians 1:3 We give thanks for the evidence of faith, of increasing faith we see in our brothers and sisters throughout the world. And, for the endurance of the church
- vs 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 *...that our God may make you worthy of his calling and fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of the our may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*

*excerpt read from *Days of His Presence* by Francis Frangipane

Week Four

2 Thessalonians 2:1 - 3:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

False Reports and More Descriptions of Jesus' Coming

- vs 2T 2:1-2 Don't be quickly shaken in mind or spirit 1 Thessalonians 3:3, 1 Timothy 1:7
- vs 2T 2:3 Beware of deception 2 Peter 2, Matthew 7:15, Matthew 24
- vs 2T 2:3-12 Descriptions of what must take place before the coming of Christ
 - vs 3 Man of lawlessness (man of sin, possibly anti-christ)
 - he opposes every god and object of worship, exalting himself god
 - vs 6-7 Mystery of lawlessness is already at work, even today. What is currently restraining him/sin? Most simply, there is an appointed time for the end of sin
 - vs 8 The lawless one will be revealed — whom Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring him to nothing. How? By the appearing of his coming. Wow!
 - vs 9 The lawless one is by the activity of Satan with false signs and wonders. Wicked deception for those who are perishing—*those who refused to love the truth and so be saved ... but had pleasure in unrighteousness*
 - strong delusions is part of the suffering of eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
- vs 2T 2:13-17 We can give thanks is because we are saved and sanctified by the Spirit and believe in truth.
 - Stand firm and hold to the gospel
 - Comfort your hearts in every good work and word

Warning Against Idleness

- vs 2T 3:1 Paul asks for prayer. That others would received the gospels in the same way the Thessalonians did
- vs 2T 3:2 The Lord will guard you against the evil one and direct your hearts to his love and steadfastness

- vs 2T 3:6-9 Command you brothers — in the name of Jesus
 - Stay away from those walking in idleness and those not in accord with the gospel
 - Imitate us in working: paid for our food, worked day and night, did not burden others with needs
 - Why? To give you an example to imitate: Don't work, don't eat.
- vs 2T 3: 11 & 14-15 Idleness leads to busybodies. Unruly. Warn those who are idle and keep your distance (Proverbs 29:18)
- vs 2T 3:12 & 13 So, work quietly and earn your living. Do not grow weary in doing good

Application: Lawlessness and Idleness

In the Bible, lawlessness and idleness are twin heart attitudes. Both are in opposition to the ways of the kingdom. In my research, I read that idleness leads to moral chaos, while lawlessness is active rebellion against God's standard. Throughout the Bible we are steered away, if not warned, from them.

- Lawlessness — Sinfulness, without the law, whether ignorant or opposing it
- Idleness — Unruly, disorderly

Lawlessness

- *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?* 2 Corinthians 6:14
- *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.* 1 John 3:4
- *And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.* Matthew 24:12
- *And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'* Matthew 7:23

Idleness

- *She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.* Proverbs 31:27

- *And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'* Matthew 20:6
- *Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.* 1 Timothy 5:13

Idleness is neither hot nor cold. Like the five foolish virgins with no oil, it is utterly unprepared. If we are not pursuing the Lord, and walking in a manner worthy of the calling, we are idle. By default, it is opposition to the Lord. Consider Revelations 3.

'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing," not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Revelation 3:15-17

The foolish virgins were unaware and unprepared, like the children of darkness, they did not know the importance of the time. The Lord would rather us refuse the truth than be neutral to it. But, either way, at Jesus' appearing, eternal separation begins. We will either be ready with oil in our lamps and separated to him always, or we will be unprepared and separated from him. Stay awake, friends, burn hot for the Lord.

Gospel Takeaways

- Spirit, vs 2T 2:13
Sanctified by the Spirit
- Grace, vs 2T 2:16
Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself...who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace
- Faith, vs 2T 3:2
The gospel of Jesus Christ requires faith—the substance of things hoped for with the evidence not seen
- Peace, vs 2T 3:16
Shalom is wholeness.
 - We are made whole through the blood of Jesus, brings us peace with the Father.

- We are not fragmented by fear, but remain established

Final Instructions 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

- vs 1T 5:12-13 Respect and esteem highly those who labor among you and who are over you and admonish (correct) you
- vs 14 Admonish the idle (unruly)
 - Encourage the fainthearted
 - Help the weak
 - Be patient with them all
- vs 15 Don't repay evil for evil, but seek to do good
- vs 16 Rejoice always
- vs 17 Pray without ceasing
- vs 18 Give thanks in all circumstances—this is the will of God
- vs 19 Don't quench the Spirit
- vs 20 Do not despise prophecies, but test everything — hold on to what is good
- vs 22 Abstain from every form of evil

Prayers from the Passage

- vs 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. He who calls is faithful.
- vs 2T 2:13 Give thanks for those who believe and are being sanctified by the Spirit and encourage one another
- vs 2T 2:16 Now may the Lord Jesus Christ ... comfort and establish your hearts in every good work and word
- vs 2T 3:3-4 Established you and guard you against the evil one, stay faithful
- vs 2T 3:5 The Lord will direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ

Benediction

- vs 2T 3:16-17 *Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*



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