

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 – Life in the Church

### I. Review of Chapter 1-5

- A. 1 Thess 1:1-3:13 – Paul praises God for the Thessalonians positive response of fear of God, faith in Christ, and example-setting after his preaching ministry there. He reaffirms his pure motives as an apostle of Christ as assures them of his longing, zeal, and love for their church.
- B. 1 Thess 4:1-12 – Paul moves to exhort the church to sexual purity/control as a vital avenue of the Lord's sanctifying work in them, driven by their fear of God, knowledge of Christ, and power from the Spirit.
- C. 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 – Paul clarifies their understanding and hope for the return of Christ, which has radical implications for living in holiness today as we await the glorious day then.

### II. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

*We ask you, brothers, (1) to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,<sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.<sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers, (2) admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.<sup>15</sup> See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.<sup>16</sup> (3) Rejoice always,<sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing,<sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.<sup>19</sup> (4) Do not quench the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies,<sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold fast what is good.<sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.*

*<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

*<sup>25</sup> Brothers, pray for us.*

*<sup>26</sup> Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.*

*<sup>27</sup> I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.*

*<sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (1 Thess 5:12-28)*

1. Commands (1) and (2) relate to the ways church members are to interact with one another. What group is in view in command (1)? What is this group tasked with doing, according to Paul?

*"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Heb 13:17)*

2. What practical lessons about church life can we learn from Paul's command (2)? How do these commands reveal what you should realistically expect in Christ's church? What are you (and I) called to do?

*"And a scribe came up and said to him, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.'<sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'<sup>21</sup> Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.'<sup>22</sup> And Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.'" (Matt 8:19-22)*

*"The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..." (Ex 34:6)*

*All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man. (WCF 26:1)*

3. Aren't the commands to "rejoice always" and "give thanks in all circumstances" too comprehensive for a fallen world? How is this realistic?

*"Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup> lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God... Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' <sup>18</sup> You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day."*  
(Deut 8:11-14, 17-18)

**Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?**

A. We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love; for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move. (Heidelberg Catechism. Q. 28)

4. When Paul commands us to "test everything", does he mean "try everything once"? What is he saying? How does this command relate to life inside and outside the church?

*"...for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (Heb 5:13-14)*

5. What is the Christian's hope in the face of all these commands? How does Paul lift their hearts with his benediction in v. 23?

## The 5-Points of Church Life:

1. Respect, honor, and love the elders over you in the church, as ones who will give an account to the Lord for their labor for your spiritual growth. Have a relationship with them as much as possible. (v. 13)
2. Speak and act towards others in a way that takes an active interest in them. Emulate Christ's individual concern for you in your interaction with people. (vv. 14-15)
3. Exhibit a joyful contentment and perpetually thankful heart both in good and bad times since God's providence governs every detail of your life. (vv. 16-18)

4. Develop a hunger for the Word of God, receive it attentively, and filter both the riches and garbage of our culture through its truth. Like chicken, eat the meat and throw away the bones.
5. Rejoice and rest in the sovereign God who forgives all your sin and will surely complete the renovating work He has begun in you through your union with Jesus Christ. (vv. 23-24)