**REJOICE, PRAY, AND GIVE THANKS**

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Key Verses 5:16-18

**16** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances;for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

**Introduction**



Today’s passage is Apostle Paul's final words to the Thessalonian believers. He encouraged them to acknowledge their spiritual leaders who took care of them and helped those who are weak or caused troubles to others. He also encouraged the believers to rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances. He ensured the believers that God would sanctify them with his faithfulness. Through this passage we can get a clear message about what God’s will for us in the Lord is.

1. Read verses 12-15. What did Paul ask the Thessalonian believers to do for those who work hard in the Lord? (12, 13a) What did he encourage them to do to live in peace with each other? (13b -15)

1-1. Read verses 12-15.

**12** Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

1-2. What did Paul ask the Thessalonian believers to do for those who work hard in the Lord? (12, 13a)

*·* ***acknowledge those who work hard among you****, who* ***care for you in the Lord and who admonish you****.* ***13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work***

· We have to acknowledge those who work hard to care for us and admonish us in the Lord. They are the ones who provide spiritual care to us and help us to grow spiritually such as bible teachers and spiritual leaders in the church and parents in the family.

· We honor them not because they are good in human way but because of the work that they are doing. Their ministry work is very weighty, and very honourable and beneficial.

· They should be acknowledged because they are doing the work for Lord’s sake. The Lord entrusted his sheep to them to take care of them for his sake. The Lord is taking care of us through them.

· Taking care of people spiritually is hard job, especially in terms of admonishing others.

· It is easy to have negative attitude toward those who take care of us spiritually and admonish us with the feeling that they are giving us hard time.

· Recognizing those who take care of us is to recognize the Lord who is taking care of us through them. Dishonoring them is to dishonor the Lord.

Hebrews 13:17 reads,

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you

. By recognizing them we should let them do the work with joy not a burden or unhappiness.

· We need to acknowledge and honor them in love not obligation knowing the value of their work

· The workers for God’s people should work hard edifying, instructing and caring for them. They have great responsibility before God.

· It is their duty not only to give good counsel, but also to give admonition, to give warning to the flock of the dangers they are liable to, and reprove for negligence or what else may be amiss.

1-3. What did he encourage them to do to live in peace with each other? (13b -15)

***Live in peace with each other- God saved for peace with God and others.***

- Because of sin, peaceful relationship between man and man got broken. God wants us to keep peaceful relationship with others as the one who is saved from sin.

· We urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

- We have to warn those who are idle and disruptive because they cause burden and harm to others. We need to warn them to repent and live a life that can please God and bring joy and benefit to others.

- We have to encourage the disheartened, help the weak and be patient with everyone bearing their weakness and shortcoming. By doing this we can build up each other and make the community of believers, the church strong.

- If we don’t take care of weak brothers and sisters or hurt each other we cause the church to become weak and we become weak together as result.

*· Make sure that* ***nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other*** *and for everyone else.*

- For a believers to try to get revenge is a denial of Jesus’ live (Rom 12:17, 1Pet 3:9) and it goes against Jesus’ teaching (Mt 5:38-42)

-17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18** If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

**21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:17-18,21)

- We should pay back wrong to wrong, evil for evil. Rather we should strive to do what is good for each other so that we may live at peace with everyone.

2. Read verses 16-24. What is God’s will for us in Christ? (16-18). What should we not do? (19, 20) What should we do instead? (21, 22) What were Paul’s prayer topics for the Thessalonians? (23) What confidence did he have? (24)

2-1. Read verses 16-24.

**16** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. **19** Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21** but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22** reject every kind of evil.

**23** May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

2-2. What is God’s will for us in Christ? (16-18)

*·* ***Rejoice always****,* ***17 pray continually****,* ***18 give thanks in all circumstances****; for* ***this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus****.*

***· Rejoice always***

- Rejoice always means we rejoice in all situations.

- We can rejoice with the joy from God that is different from the joy that world gives us. We can rejoice always by faith in Jesus regardless our situation.

- In Jesus our joy can be full. Our life of faith is a life of constant of joy, and Christianity is religion of joy.

***· Pray continually***

– It doesn’t mean that we don’t have any break time. It means to pray consistently and regularly.

- It also means that we carry on all the activities in prayer.

- There are many things that discourage us not to pray such as problems that have not been solved for many years, but God wants us not to stop praying but pray continually.

- Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18:1)

***· Give thanks in all circumstances***

- We should give thanks to God not just in good situations but also seemingly bad situations.

- Thanksgiving is the expression of our faith and trust in God.

- Thanklessness is a trait of unbelievers (Rom 1:21)

· Our joy, pray and thanksgiving is beyond our situation. We believers overcome our situations by faith in Jesus and be joyful, pray and give thanks to God regardless our situation.

***· This is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus***

- God wants us to be joyful always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances in Christ Jesus.

- We can do it by faith in Jesus not in our own strength.

- This is God’s will. So we have to obey this command. It is not option.

- When we do it by faith, we can maintain right relationship with God.

2-3. What should we not do? (19, 20)

***· Do not quench the Spirit.***

- The fire of Spirit is not to be doused with sin. Believers are also instructed to not grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30), but to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) and to walk by the Holy Spirit(Gal 5:16)

- Holy Spirit works as fire by enlightening and purifying us. We should be careful not to quench this fire. Also as fire is put our by withdrawing fuel, so we quench the Spirit if we do not stir up our spirits, and all is within us, to comply with the motions of the Spirit.

- As fire is quenched by pouring water, so we must be careful not to quench the Spirit by indulging sinful desire such as lust, anger or seeking earthly things only.

***· Do not treat prophecies with contempt***

- ‘prophecies’ is the messages from God through his servants especially the written words of God in the Bible.

- Since the prophecies come from God, they should never be treated lightly or disrespectfully. Rather when God’s word is preached or read, it should be received with great respect and seriousness.

2-2. What should we do instead? (21, 22)

***· but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.***

- About the prophecies careful examination and discernment is needed in response to the prophecies. We should not accept whatever is preached or read.

- We should respect word of God but examine the preached word carefully.

- What is to be found to be ‘good’ is to be wholeheartedly accepted. What is ‘evil’ or unbiblical is to be shunned.

2-3. What were Paul’s prayer topics for the Thessalonians? (23)

***May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

- God’s work that he is doing diligently is to sanctify his people through and through; through all things and situations continually and consistently throughout our whole life.

- God sanctifies our whole spirit, soul and even body, and all area of our life.

- God wants us to stand blameless before Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back.

- God, the God of peace gives us peace through the sanctification. One of the fruit of sanctification is peace.

2-4. What confidence did he have? (24)

***· The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it***

- Paul’s confidence rests in the nature of God, his faithfulness.

- God’s sanctification work is based on his faithfulness to accomplish it. He will bring his purpose to pass in those who have responded to his call and who follow him.

3. Read verses 25-28. What did he encourage them to do? (25-27) What is Paul’s final greeting? (28)

3-1. Read verses 25-28.

25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

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

3-2. What did he encourage them to do? (25-27)

***· Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.***

***· Brothers and sisters, pray for us***

- Paul asked the believers to pray for him. Paul wanted to receive their prayer support recognizing the need of the prayer support. He knew that he couldn’t do the ministry work by himself and that he needs a lot of prayer support.

- We have to provide our prayer support to those who work for us.

***· Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss*** - A kiss was a normal greeting of that day, similar to our modern handshakes.

- He encouraged believers to express their intimacy through the greeting of a holy kiss. Intimate greeting always helps us to build up intimacy and unity among believers.

- Although a holy kiss may be less acceptable in some cultures today, Christians still need to express their mutual love and intimacy to build up loving relationship and unity.

***· I charge you***

-Paul used strong word, meaning ‘I put you on oath’. Paul cleary wanted every members of the church to read and hear his letter and to know of his concerns and advice for them.

-

3-3. What is Paul’s final greeting? (28)

***· The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.***

- Paul always ended his letters with a benefaction of grace for the readers to bless them in the Lord.

**Conclusion**

We have to honor those who work hard to care for us in the Lord. As brothers and sisters we need to help those who are doing wrong or become weak to be sound and strong with patience. We have to do what is good for each other instead of paying back wrong for wrong. It is God’s will for us in Christ Jesus to rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances by faith in Jesus. We should avoid all things that can quench the Spirit in us. Rather we have to let the Spirit work powerfully through faith, obedience and prayer. God sanctifies us with His faithfulness through and through so that our spirit, soul and body may be kept blameless at the coming of Lord Jesus Christ. May God help to live as children of God who overcome the world by faith and are transformed into Jesus’ image.

**One word, “rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstance”**