

letters to Thessalonica

#11 unruly brothers, II Thess 3:1-18

The day probably started like this. At the crack of dawn, just as occupants made their way to the morning meal, a knock was heard at the door. Opening the door revealed some smiling faces who said, “good morning brother, what’s for breakfast?”

In closing his letter, Paul had to write concerning some unruly brothers. Basically they were doing no work and living off of their working Christian brothers.

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

[1.] v:1-3, pray for us, Paul’s prayer request was in three parts. What were the parts?

[2.] v:1 again, spread rapidly. . be glorified, just as it did also with you; Thessalonica was an example of how Paul would like his prayer answered. Think through these two letters and jot down some examples of a “rapid” spread and “glorified” word?

[3.] v:2, evil men, When Paul used the word “rescued”, in his mind, what do you suppose he was thinking?

[4.] v:3, the Lord is faithful, How might the Lord go about strengthening us in our time, or was the promise only for the brethren at Thessalonica?

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4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

tradition, NT:3862 (*par-ad'-os-is*); from NT:3860; transmission, i.e. (concretely) a precept; specifically, the Jewish traditionary law:
KJV - ordinance, tradition.

Strong's Numbers and Concordance

In v:4-5, Paul was preparing the believers for the teaching that he would start in v:6. Looking at the word “tradition”, we see that, in the New Testament, it is used two ways. The first, in Matt & Mk it is used with regard to the traditions of the elders in Judaism. Also, (ancestral traditions, Gal 1:14), where Paul uses it with regard to his persecution of Christians. Secondly, (I Cor 11:2 and II Thess 2:15 & 3:6) we see that he taught believers ordinances and traditions. The difference being that the second group of scriptures were for those under the new covenant.

[5.] v:6, *tradition*, Paul had previously written about this word in the last chapter. Turn back to II Thess 2:15 and note the command, “stand firm”. Now back in II Thess 3:6 write down the word picture this word portrays along with the rest of what Paul commanded in the verse.

[6.] v:6 again, *we command you, brethren*, So there were some who were ignoring Paul’s teaching. Write down what the unruly Christian could expect if they continued in disobedience?

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7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

[7.] v:7-9, follow our example, Thinking on Paul's example of real "team work", let's apply it to congregational tasks. Without defining the tasks, why do you suppose it is so difficult for some to be involved in doing some of the jobs?

[8.] v:7-9 again, a model, our example, How would it benefit the congregation's children if these same ethics, that Paul taught, were passed on to them?

[9.] v:10, List some of the comments a rebellious member might make when members started with holding food etc.?

[10.] v:11, undisciplined life, We see two things the undisciplined were doing. What were they?

[11.] question [9.] Since the non-workers had to depend on the workers for their needs and the workers, in turn, could not depend on the non-workers, what would this do to love and Christian unity in the congregation?

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[12.] v:11 again, busybodies, What is it about a “busy body” that people do not trust?

[13.] v:11 again, I Tim 5:13 gives an interesting insight on how busy body’s spend their day. How do they pass their time?

Something To Think About

We recall that Christ told his disciples that they would always have the poor with them. Also, at Jerusalem James, Cephas and John encouraged Paul to remember the poor. He in turn said that he also was eager to do that. Now this seems to be a “turn about”.

[14.] If this is not the same kind of poor, what is the difference and what can we learn from this?

12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

[15.] v:12, work in quiet fashion, Give some examples of what you feel this means.

[16.] v:13, do not grow weary, From this context, what would cause some to grow weary?

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14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

[17.] v:14-15, take special note, Experience has taught some of us that there is always some one who disregards scriptural principles. In our time, if associations were severed in a congregation, we know the guilty would just start attending another church. Choose from the list below where the biggest problem lies.

- a) The original church.
- b) The guilty person.
- c) The guilty person's new church.

[18.] v:15, admonish him, We all know who would be tagged to do this job but, to whom was the task given?

[19.] v:16, peace in every circumstance, This is very important! If a person is involved in admonishing a brother, what types of emotions are they probably going through?

[20.] v:17-18, a distinguishing mark, Because of the problem mentioned in 2:2, a message or a letter as if from us, the mark was to authenticate the message. A few hundred years ago these letters etc. were compiled into the Word of God so that every one would know the truth. Jot down some tactics that Satan uses today to keep people from knowing the truth?

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