



Thoughts from First Thessalonians ...

## Key Considerations & Closing Comments

Jesus was very serious in His quoting from Deuteronomy, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Thus the words in the letters, such as the opening and closing comments, are very necessary in establishing the authenticity of the epistles, and give us a look at the interrelationships of the first century church. Additionally, they often add punchy or encouraging exhortations in the form of one-liners, and strengthen the modern reader as well as those to whom they were directly addressed.

● **God of peace** — God's critics often accuse Him of being evil and warlike. This is dispelled by the title given by Paul, with the attestation of His character displayed throughout history and throughout the word of God. "Now may the *God of peace* Himself ..." is how the apostle opens

his closing comments.

- **Sanctify** — God is holy, and He desires His children of faith to be sanctified — holy — also. "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely," is the apostle's prayer. God has to perform the sanctification in the initial sense when the individual is immersed into Christ, but God requires obedient cooperation from the saint for the sanctification to continue.
- **Without blame** — At Jesus' second coming, the spirits and souls of the saints will be brought with Jesus out of Paradise, and be joined to their resurrection bodies on the surface of the earth. "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete," the prayer continues, "without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is exciting to realize that if the follower of Christ attains to the positive resurrection of the dead, he is declared blameless before the judgment throne of Christ!
- **Faithful** — Another of the characteristics of the great God that shines through the inspired scriptures is God's faithfulness; he is constant or unchanging. He keeps His word, and will execute His promises. "Faithful is He who calls you," comments the apostle, "and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). God has promised His faithful brethren to give them a resurrection to life, and He is guaranteed to do so at Jesus' return.
- **Prayers** — Another constant in the revelation of God is the continuing need for prayer; obviously the Father desires much communication from His children of the faith. "Brethren," says the apostle Paul, clearly one of the most favored of people upon earth, "pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25). Even he earnestly petitioned the brethren to pray for him and his co-workers; how much also would every other saint need prayers on their behalf, and how much should they also be in the process of praying for others.
- **Greeting the brethren** — Christians are not mere numbers in a box on someone's organizational chart; they are important individual sheep for whom Jesus died. Paul knows personally many of the brethren in Thessalonica, and loves even the ones whom he had not the pleasure to meet. "Greet all the brethren," he requests, "with a holy kiss" (1 Thessalonians 5:26). The "holy kiss" was a standard greeting of the time, and can be imitated carefully in modern times.
- **Read this letter!** — Paul is writing this letter from prison, and earnestly desires the doctrinal issues and encouragement to reach every single Christian in Thessalonica. Hence he gives this directive, "I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren" (1 Thessalonians 5:27).

Have this letter read by all the brethren!

This awesome letter of encouragement for the suffering brethren of Thessalonica was deemed worthy of inclusion in the inspired record by the Holy Spirit. Its scope is broad, detailing the apostle Paul's thankfulness for the faith of the believers, his recall of his time with the saints, his encouragement from the word he received from Timothy about the continued faithfulness of the saints, his admonition on sexual purity, his information about the visible return of Christ, and his closing points in exhortation. Appropriately, the epistle closes with standard but important words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (1 Thessalonians 5:28).

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