

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God’s Children

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Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 1 – Loving God Completely and Loving Others Compassionately

Opening Questions

1. What is one of your favorite Bible verses? Why?
2. Why do we still sin and make mistakes and are not perfect like Christ?

Introduction

The city of Thessalonica is in Greece today. Paul went to Thessalonica to bring the gospel. Some people believed and became followers of Jesus Christ (Christians). Though they were new Christians (just two-three years), they were quick to learn and became blessings to many people. They also received opposition and persecution from those who did not like them being Christians—possibly from friends, families, relatives, and local authorities.



To think about:

In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus teaches us the two greatest commandments of God for his people: (1) "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and (2) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus wants us to love God completely and to love others compassionately. We cannot be perfect, but we can always grow.



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.



Discussion Questions

1. As God's children, we have a new life and identity. Our relationship with God has been restored through the sacrifice of Christ who died for our sins. We have peace with God. This is God's grace for us (v.1). What are some examples of God's grace that we receive in our daily lives? Does God's grace affect our love for him?
2. Paul and his ministry team constantly prayed for the Thessalonian Christians (v.2). How can we be more intentional to constantly pray for the needs of others?
3. Some Christians live very self-centeredly and do not care much about others. The Thessalonian Christians were known for their *work of faith and labor of love* to the people around them (v.3). What are some examples of *work of faith and labor of love* that we can do (a) individually in our daily lives and (b) together as a group to the people around us, so they can see Christ through our love and good deeds?
4. All of us have many sins against God and deserve his judgment, but God has chosen us to be saved from our sins. Jesus came to save us. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and calls us to repent and trust our lives to Christ, so we can be forgiven and become God's children (v.4-5). This is all God's grace for us. How can we learn from Paul to be intentionally sharing and explaining the gospel to a friend(s)?
Have you ever prepared a five-minute personal story that contains: (1) my life before I followed Jesus, (2) what made me decide to trust my life to Jesus and to follow him, and (3) my current life as a follower of Jesus and a child of God?

Notes

The gospel: the *good news* that God saves us from our sins through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Persecution: ill-treatment or oppression either physically, verbally, emotionally, or a combination of these. All Christians should expect persecution (see Matthew 10:22 and 2 Timothy 3:12). God allows some Christians to survive persecution and allows others to die because of persecution.

Grace: undeserved or unmerited favor; blessings given by God without any consideration of our merit (quality of good or worth).

Love: the Greek word used here is *agape*, which means self-sacrificing love.

Steadfastness: faithfulness; firm in purpose and faith.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Repent: to regret of our wrongdoing and to turn to God.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.



Discussion Questions

1. Mature Christians are those who intentionally try to imitate Christ's character in their daily thoughts, words, and actions. They love what Christ loves and hate what Christ hates. The Thessalonian Christians become examples to other Christians in their province of Macedonia and even to those in Achaia (v.6-8). What are some of Christ's characteristics that inspire you? In which areas do you like to improve or grow more? How will you do it?
2. The Thessalonian Christians turned away from idols (gods of the Greek mythology) and served the living and true God (God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe) (v.9). Idols can be physical and spiritual. Man-made religions usually have physical idols that people worship. God's first and second commandments for his people are: (1) "You shall have no other gods before me," and (2) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image (idols)." What can be potential *spiritual idols* in our lives? How do those idols make us *worship or idolize* them—give so much attention and time—and make them more important than the true God in our daily lives in thoughts, words, or actions?
3. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the anchor of the Christian faith. Jesus has said that he will return again to take his people to their new heavenly home and to bring God's judgment and wrath upon all sins and evil. The Thessalonian Christians lived their lives in light of Jesus' return. They were faithful and missional (v.10). If Jesus would return tomorrow, would you change the way you live today? Why?

Closing Points

1. God's love for us is *agape* (self-sacrificing) love. Jesus came from heaven to this world and proved his *agape* love for us. He sacrificed himself and died on the cross for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. If we have trusted our lives to Christ, there will be proofs of *agape* love in our lives. It will flow out of our hearts. We will grow more and more in loving God and other people. We will spend time with him daily in prayer and Bible reading. We will serve people out of love for God. We will join other Christians to serve and love others, so they too can know Jesus Christ, our Savior.
2. Sin is any thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. We sin against God when we idolize anything or make anything more important than the true God in our daily lives in thought, word, or action. We grieve his heart as our heavenly Father. He will never deny us or love us less—change his love—because he is an unchangeable God, but he will not be happy seeing us sin against him who loves us greatly. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). He grieves when we disobey him—when we do not do the things that he wants us to do.
3. Christian persecution and suffering are a reality in our lives. As Satan used this broken world and people to persecute Christ, he also uses them to persecute Christ's people. Through suffering, we develop a more Christ-like character (see Romans 5:3-5). Suffering draws us closer to Christ and shapes us better for the work of his kingdom.

Notes

Affliction: pain and suffering.

Joy: unlike happiness that is affected by circumstances, joy is not affected by circumstances. Joy is inward. It comes from knowing God and trusting him.

Macedonia: a province of Greece, where the city of Thessalonica was.

Achaia: a province of Greece next to Macedonia.

Idol: an image or a representation used as an object of worship. Spiritually speaking, an idol is anything we consider more important than the true God.

The wrath to come: God's future judgment. Christ will return to this world to (a) judge all people, (b) renew the world, and (c) bring his people to his heavenly kingdom. For God's children, God's judgment day is a joyful and glorious day.

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Lesson 2 – Characteristics of God's Children as the Lights of Christ in this Broken World

Opening Questions

1. What are some examples of brokenness or “darkness” in this world?
2. What are some ways people try to make this world a better world for everyone?

Introduction

In Lesson 1, we learn about loving God completely and loving others compassionately. Our heavenly Father is a patient God. As his children, he patiently teaches and guides us. He forgives us when we fail and continues to help us learn his will for our lives, so we can love him more and love others better. Without God's people, this world is very dark. Because of us, there is light and hope around us. God has a purpose for our lives.



To think about:

Jesus says to his people, “You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). What are some of the good works that Jesus wants us to do as his lights in this world?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

¹ For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. ³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.



Discussion Questions

1. Paul and Silas were persecuted by those who were against them in the city of Philippi as they tried to share the gospel (Acts 16). Then they went to Thessalonica to share the gospel, and it was not in vain. They had boldness *in God* (v.1-2). What is the difference between having boldness in God and having boldness in ourselves? How do we develop our courage or boldness in God as the lights of Christ in this world? In what small ways can we be bolder in telling others about Christ?
2. Paul reminds us that in sharing the gospel, our motive should be sincere. We should not try to deceive others but to love them and to please God. God knows our hearts (v.3-4). Being sincere, loving, and yet wise are important characteristics of Christ's followers as the lights of Christ in this dark and broken world. How do we grow in these Christ-like characteristics?
3. Our world is full of corrupted people. One of the big problems is that there are many corrupted and false Bible teachers who teach the Bible with greed and seek glory from people for themselves (v.5-6). Jesus, Paul, and Peter condemn false teachers and warn God's people to be careful of them, so we will not be deceived by their words of flattery or *sweet teaching* (Matthew 7:15, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 2 Peter 2:1-3). How can we know that people who use the Bible to teach are not false Bible teachers and do not teach false gospels but are faithful teachers of the Bible?

Notes

Glory: great honor.

Vain: without value or significance.

Philippi: a major city in Greece—like **Thessalonica**.

The *gospel of God*: The *good news* that God saves us from our sins through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Appeal: request.

Flattery: sweet but insincere talk.

Pretext: a motive to cover up the real purpose.

Greed: selfish desire.

Two major false gospels in America and other places:

(1) *Prosperity gospel* that teaches Jesus Christ is a means to health and wealth.

(2) *Self-help gospel* that promotes your ability—what you can do, how you can become a better person and have a better life, while using the Bible and the name of Jesus.

False Bible teachers like to mix or blend Bible teaching with other teachings (other systems of belief, materialism, secular humanism, etc.).

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. ¹¹ For you know how, like a father with his children, ¹² we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.



Discussion Questions

1. Being gentle and affectionate are important characteristics of God's people.
To be gentle and affectionate means to love, care, listen, serve, and help (v.7-8).
How does a nursing mother take care of her own children?
How do we help one another to grow these Christ-like characteristics in our daily lives?
2. Being on mission with God, working with and for him to bring the gospel to others, is very important in the lives of God's children as his lights in this world (v.9). It is our greatest joy. Are you on mission with God and are involved in a ministry to bring the gospel to others? Is there a friend whom God wants you to tell him/her about Christ?
3. God wants us to grow and be more like Christ day by day—be holy, righteous, and blameless in all our thoughts, words, and actions (v.10). All true followers of Christ are *saints* (God's holy people). Do you have a prayer partner with whom you can exchange prayer requests and encourage each other to grow in holiness and righteousness?
4. When Jesus returns, he will complete the work of God's kingdom and bring us into his glorious kingdom. While we are on earth, he wants us to walk or live in a manner worthy of him—to follow his example of life and to be like him. He wants us to be his lights in this broken world (v.11-12). Give examples of some of the things that Jesus did for other people in his life on earth? What practical steps can we do together to be more like Christ and to be better lights of Christ in this broken world?
5. What advice was given to Christians in the cities of Rome and Corinth to be the lights of Christ in this world (see Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 10:31)? Why should the ultimate purpose of all we do be a spiritual worship to God and for the glory of God?

Closing Points

1. Jesus has given us the Great Commission to bring his gospel to all nations. Jesus' joy is seeing all his people scattered in all nations come to him one by one. Jesus says that his people will listen to his voice in their hearts calling them (John 10:16). Jesus wants us to work together with him in bringing his gospel to all nations. He teaches and guides us. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, empowers and encourages us, giving us boldness. Our part is to learn, grow, and obey him. As we are on mission with Christ, we will see his power working in us and through us. As we try to be his lights in this broken world, we will see many people's hearts are changed by him.
2. Perhaps, the most important characteristic we need to develop is humility. A humble heart is a key to seeing our weaknesses, and a humble attitude is the first step to grow in all other Christ-like characteristics. God opposes those who are proud but loves those who are humble and gives grace to them [help, guide, support, and encourage them] (James 4:6). Humility before God is a spiritual worship. It is the key to live and do all things in our lives for the glory of God and to be his lights in this broken and corrupted world.

Notes

Labor: hard work.

Toil: extremely hard work.

Holy: dedicated to God.

Righteous: morally right with God.

Blameless: having no wrongdoings.

Exhort: to advise, encourage.

Charge: to demand a duty that must be obeyed.

Glory: great honor, splendor, beauty, or magnificence.

On mission with God: it brings the greatest joy to his children. Until God and his gospel become the joy of our hearts, we will struggle to find joy.

The Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

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Lesson 3 – The Power of God's Word in Our lives

Opening Questions

1. What do some people think about the Bible? What is your personal view of the Bible?
2. How does God talk to us personally through the Bible? How do you hear him?

Introduction

God created the universe by speaking. "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). When he speaks, his power is in his words. The Bible is the written word of God, and God's power is in his word and will never disappear. As we read and study the Bible, the power of God in his word can change us.



To think about:

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord [the word of God], and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Psalm 1:1-3). What does a person who loves God's word do daily? What is he/she like?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!



Discussion Questions

1. The Thessalonian Christians had a proper respect for the word of God, treating scriptures as the word of God and not the word of men (v.13). One of the devil's deceptions is influencing people to have a low respect of God's word. He did it to Adam and Eve. The Bible is 100% God's word, but many people treat the Bible as containing the word of God and the word of men. They have a low view (not high) and low respect (not high and proper) of the Bible. If we have a high view and respect of the Bible as 100% God's word, what does it look like in our lives?
2. God's word is at work in believers' lives (v.13). God's word brings us to repentance and nurtures our faith in Christ. It sanctifies us. It is the only spiritual food that we need to consume daily for our spiritual health. What are some of your favorite scriptures that talk about the power or benefits of God's word?
3. The Thessalonian Christians persevered in the suffering they received from their own countrymen (Greek people), just as Jesus, the Jewish prophets, and Paul persevered in the suffering they received from other Jewish people (v.14-16). Two things about Christian suffering and persecution: (1) It is spiritual in nature [see Ephesians 6:10-12]; and (2) It is good (see Romans 5:3-5). Why is it spiritual in nature and good? Where are Christians being persecuted today? How can we be praying for our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted? Have you ever been persecuted in some way?

Notes

Wither: to become dry and decay.

Judea: a region in southern part of Israel.

Gentiles: non-Jewish people.

Repentance: deep regret of our sins and turning our hearts to God.

Sanctify: to make us more holy and righteous in the image of God.

Spiritual health: about having good relationship with God and producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

Persevere: to endure, keep going.

Persecution: ill-treatment or oppression either physically, verbally, emotionally, or a combination of these. All Christians should expect persecution (see Matthew 10:22 and 2 Timothy 3:12). God allows some Christians to survive persecution and allows others to die because of persecution. Jesus, Paul, other apostles, and many Christians died because of persecution.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, ¹⁸ because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.



Discussion Questions

1. There was eagerness in the hearts of Paul and his team to see the Thessalonian Christians because they were their glory and joy. Seeing and being part of a person's life journey to Christ and spiritual growth in Christ is a very joyful experience that we can have and share as God's people. Our study and work are important, but the most important and joyful thing in the life of God's people is to be on mission with God to bring his people scattered in all nations to Christ. There are people whom God intentionally put around us because he wants us to reach out to them. Not paying attention to God, not praying for others, or living self-centeredly are our weaknesses. How can each of us be a better listener to God's voice in our hearts?
2. Satan hindered Paul and his team to bring the gospel to other people many times (v.18). It will not be easy to share about Christ to someone. Satan does not like it and will find ways to prevent us from doing that, including giving us obstacles and difficult times. What are some of your personal struggles in helping someone to know Christ? How do our struggles help our faithfulness and dependence on God?
3. Christ's second coming is a certainty (v.19). In his first coming, Christ brought in the kingdom of God. In his second coming, he will complete the work of his kingdom. In his first coming, he came to sacrifice himself and die for his people. In his second coming, he will come as the King and the Judge to judge all people and evil spirits. His wrath and judgment will come upon those who reject and oppose him (v.16). Does knowing Christ's judgment and some of our friends or family members who still reject him give us a motive to keep praying for them and keep trying to tell them about him?

Closing Points

1. The word of God is powerful. The word of God convicts us of our sins, teaches us the will of God for our lives, and sanctifies us. "All Scripture (the whole Bible) is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Reading and studying the Bible daily is necessary for God's people. Without consuming God's word daily, we will be spiritually weak and easily fall into the devil's temptations. God's word will help us to conquer our self-centeredness, but the devil will encourage it. God's word will make us more and more righteous like Christ.
2. It is important for us to read, study, and apply God's word in our daily lives. Without applying God's word, we will not be fruitful Christians. Memorizing scriptures in our mind is also important for the Holy Spirit to use them to remind, help, guide, and strengthen us. The more scriptures we store in our brain, the better we will be.
3. Sooner or later, being a faithful Christian will be very difficult. As Jesus' time to return is getting closer, two things will multiply greatly as he himself has warned us: (1) false Bible teachings and false gospels [Matthew 7:15, 2 Peter 2:1-3], and (2) persecution towards his people. However, we can trust our heavenly Father that our lives are in his hands. Nothing can happen to us without his approval. All things (good and bad) in the lives of God's people work together for our good (Romans 8:28). The best thing for us is yet to come at Christ' return. May he find us fruitful and faithful to the end.

Notes

Endeavor: to try hard.

Satan (the devil): the leader of rebellious angels (evil spirits/demons)

Glory: great honor.

Obstacle: something that stands in the way.

Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of God's people making them more and more holy and righteous in the image of Christ. Our part is to obey God. **God's word sanctifies us** as we study, meditate, memorize, and apply its truths in our daily lives.

Two major false gospels in America and other places:

(1) *Prosperity gospel* that teaches Jesus Christ is a means to health and wealth.

(2) *Self-help gospel* that promotes your ability—what you can do, how you can become a better person and have a better life, while using the Bible and the name of Jesus.

False Bible teachers like to mix or blend Bible teaching with other teachings.

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Lesson 4 – Overcoming Daily Struggles and Spiritual Temptations

Opening Questions

1. What are some of the struggles that God's people experience in their lives?
2. Have you ever felt strongly in your heart that God is warning you of something?

Introduction

We have three enemies: (1) the devil, (2) *the flesh*—our sinful nature that is still attached to our bodies and souls, and (3) this corrupted world. The devil uses this corrupted world and our sinful nature (weaknesses) to tempt us and make us sin against God. Jesus has defeated the devil for us on the cross by his sacrifice. Jesus has also defeated death for us by his resurrection. Although *the big war* has been won by Jesus, his people still have daily spiritual battles against the devil and his army (evil spirits) until Jesus returns.



To think about:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). What advice is given to God's people here?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

¹Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, ²and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ³that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent [Timothy] to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.



Discussion Questions

1. Paul and his team were worried about the Thessalonian Christians' struggles and afflictions. They suffered from persecution. They were new Christians and young in faith (just two-three years). Paul worried the tempter (the devil) would tempt them to abandon their faith in God. The devil always tempts us to make us fall and sin against God. God does not tempt us but tests us in order to build us up. God can use the devil's temptation to test us and build us up. He is sovereign in all things. Has your faithfulness in Christ ever been tested, and if so, how? What is God's purpose in testing our faithfulness (see James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5)?
2. God also limits how much the devil can do. The story of Job tells us that the devil needs God's permission to give Job some severe temptations and sufferings. Job's faith in God has encouraged many Christians throughout history. Job's famous statements are, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21), and "Though he [God] slay me, I will [still] hope in him" (Job 13:15). What did he mean by these words?
3. Communication in ancient time was very slow. People had to travel to bring news to others. Paul could not quickly get the news about the Thessalonian Christians. He sent Timothy to visit them. What did Paul ask Timothy to do (v.2)? How do you think he would do that? Have you ever encouraged a new Christian? How do you do that?

Notes

The devil (Satan): the leader of rebellious angels (evil spirits or demons).

Sober: to stay alert.

Vigilant: to be watchful.

Devour: to eat quickly; to destroy.

Steadfast: to be firm.

Athens: currently the capital city of Greece.

Timothy: a student of Paul and a member of his ministry team.

The gospel of Christ: the *good news* that God saves us from our sins through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Exhort: strongly encourage.

Affliction: pain and suffering.

The tempter: the devil.

Sovereign: having supreme or ultimate power.

Slay: to kill.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— ⁷ for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.



Discussion Questions

1. After staying for a while in Thessalonica, Timothy went back to Paul to bring a report about the Thessalonian Christians. What did Timothy tell Paul about the Thessalonian Christians (v.6)? How did the report impact Paul (v.7-9)? How did it impact his prayer to God (v.9)?
2. How often did Paul pray for the Thessalonian Christians, and what did he pray about (v.10-11)? What does “supply what is lacking in your faith” mean?
3. Paul himself had daily struggles and experienced much distress and affliction in bringing the gospel to other places (v.7), yet he daily prayed for others. His mind was so others-oriented and not self-oriented. He was not consumed by his own struggles but always thought about the well-being of others in Christ. How does praying for others’ struggles strengthen our faith in Christ in facing our own struggles? As God’s children and the lights of Christ in this world, how can we be less and less self-oriented and be more and more others-oriented in our thoughts, words, and actions?
4. What else did Paul ask God for the Thessalonian Christians (v.12)? What is the ultimate purpose of that (v.13)? Why is *agape love* very important in the life of God’s people?

Closing Points

1. The security of God’s children is given by God. Our lives are in his hands. Nothing can happen to us that is out of his will. Everything that happens in our lives is under his watch. If we experience suffering because of our faithfulness to him, we must trust that our heavenly Father has a good purpose for that, although we may not understand it at that moment (see Romans 8:28 and Philippians 1:6).
2. The obedience of God’s children is asked by God. In our union with Christ, God is sanctifying us from the inside and making us to be more and more holy and blameless in the image of Christ. God wants us to be good children and obey him, growing to be more and more Christ-centered and others-oriented and less and less self-centered and self-oriented. He wants us to resist the devil’s temptations and to be sober and vigilant. He wants us to help one-another in our struggles and to be faithful to him in our lives in this corrupted world. When we trust him and are faithful to him, he will use the struggles and temptations we receive to make us more and more like Christ.
3. When Christ returns, he will judge all people, the devil, and all evil spirits. Until then, he allows the devil to deceive and tempt people with limitation. Some of the many temptations and lies that the devil is spreading in this world are: “There is no God. Make your own concept of God. Yes, all roads lead to God. Yes, all gods are the same. There is no devil. Why care about other people? Think much about yourself. Enjoy the world with all its pleasures and wealth.” We must be careful and be watchful.

Notes

Distress: anxiety, sorrow, or pain.

Affliction: pain and suffering.

Stand fast: to firmly remain or hold.

Earnestly: sincerely and seriously.

Abound: to have in large amounts.

Love: the Greek word used here is *agape*, which means self-sacrificing love.

Establish: to build or strengthen.

Holiness: without sin and corruption; pure and perfect.

The coming of our Lord Jesus: the second coming, where he will (1) judge all people and evil spirits who reject him, (2) glorify his people by giving their souls a newly created heavenly body without sin and corruption, and (3) renew the world and bring his people to their new home—heaven on earth.

Saints: usually refer to God’s holy people, but here may include God’s holy angels.

Sanctify: to purify.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 5 – Living a Life Pleasing to God

Opening Questions

1. What makes a fruit tree a good tree? What fruits do you like?
2. How do you stop a bad habit?

Introduction

In chapter 3, we learn that Timothy came back to Paul and gave an encouraging report about the Thessalonian Christians. They endured suffering and persecution. Their love and faithfulness to Christ are shown in their lives. Their obedience to God became a good example to other Christians in other places. They were not perfect Christians. They still struggled with their sinful nature and weaknesses, but they tried to obey God in their lives. In chapter 4, Paul advised them in dealing with their specific weaknesses, so they could overcome those things and please God even more. Our obedience to God is what pleases him. A mark of good children of God is their obedience to their heavenly Father.



To think about:

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).
What should we do and not do to please God?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

¹ Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.



Discussion Questions

1. What did Paul ask the Thessalonian Christians to do? Had they been doing it (v.1)?
2. What is sanctification? Why is it the will of God for all his people (v.3)?
3. Being more and more holy and righteous like Christ is what our heavenly Father wants us to be. He helps us for sure because he is a good heavenly Father, but we must do our part. Oftentimes, it is us who are not being good children of him. He will never deny us, even though we many times do not obey and listen to him. There are many areas of our lives that need to be sanctified. What is one important area (v.4-5, 7)?
4. Sinful desires or thoughts can produce sinful words and actions which can be damaging to oneself and other people. Sinful sexual thoughts can lead to adultery and damaging consequences. What warning did Paul give to the Thessalonians in this matter (v.6)?
5. What is God's purpose in giving his Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and what fruit can he enable us to produce in our lives (see John 14:26 and Galatians 5:16-26)?

Notes

Persecution: ill-treatment or oppression either physically, verbally, emotionally, or a combination of these. All Christians should expect persecution.

Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians, making them more and more holy and righteous in the image of Christ.

Gentiles: non-Jewish people—people who do not believe in the God of the Bible.

Avenger: a person who punishes someone who has done something bad or wrong.

Solemn: seriously.

Christian calling: Jesus wants his people to be holy as their heavenly Father is holy.

Disregards not man but God: God's rule for us is to enjoy sex as his gift for us within the bound of marriage. To reject or disregard his rule is a serious offense against him.

Adultery: sexual relationship outside marriage.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

⁹ Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.



Discussion Questions

1. The Thessalonian Christians were already exceptional in showing love to one another. They even showed love to other Christians in their entire province of Macedonia. Why did Paul urge them to continue showing love more and more (v.9-10)?
2. The fruit of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life is one fruit (not nine fruits) with nine characteristics (or “flavors”) [see Galatians 5:22-23]. When we develop one, we develop the others as well. Love is the first characteristic. When we grow in love, we grow in the other eight characteristics. Which of those characteristics will particularly help the Thessalonian Christians in dealing with sexual temptations? Which of those characteristics are you lacking and want to grow more and more?
3. What advice did Paul give to some Thessalonian Christians who were lazy (v.11-12)?
4. God wants his people to be his lights in this world and not to be lazy. As God’s children, we need to build a good reputation and honor in the society we live in. God does not want us to be lazy nor to idolize work, making work and building career more important than him. God wants us to spend time with him daily and to do his kingdom work in this world, such as getting involved in a local ministry. How do we balance work, spending time with God daily, and involvement in a local ministry?

Closing Points

1. Before we trusted our lives to Jesus Christ and became his followers, our minds were hostile to God. Since we did not have a loving relationship with God, there was nothing that we did that was out of love for him. But since we trusted our lives to Christ, God has given us a new desire in our hearts to love and obey him. We still have our sinful nature in us; therefore, we always struggle between satisfying sinful desire and satisfying holy desire. We have the freedom to obey or not to obey God. We can choose to give in or to overcome sin and temptation. What is the joy of our hearts? Is it in doing whatever we want or in obeying our heavenly Father? Who is the love of our hearts? Is it ourselves or Jesus Christ who has sacrificed himself and died for us?
2. The core of Christian living is a thirst and a hunger for God. When we desire God more than anything, we are the most satisfied and joyful. The problem is our sinful hearts. John Calvin said, “The human heart is a perpetual idol factory.” Our hearts always want other things, not just God. That is why, as long as we still live in this corrupted and sinful body, we always struggle. Paul encourages God’s people to “... walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do (Galatians 5:16-17).”
3. Jesus says to his people, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5). God loves to see us producing more and more fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and the key to be a fruitful Christian is a thirst and a hunger for Christ our Savior.

Notes

Macedonia: a province of Greece, where the city of Thessalonica was.

Urge: to persuade.

Aspire: to have a strong desire.

Outsiders: people outside the church community.

“... **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ...”
(Galatians 5:22-23).

Idolize: to make an idol; to excessively love.

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is **hostile to God**, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God”
(Romans 8:7-8).

Perpetual: never ending.

Abide: to remain or stay.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 6 – A Glorious Hope in the Glorious Coming of the Lord

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever hoped to receive something, such as a gift, and you received it?
2. Has someone who was close to you passed away? How did you feel at that time?

Introduction

Sin brings spiritual death (separation from God) and physical death to us. When we believe and trust our lives to Jesus, God forgives our sins and restores our relationship with him. We will still physically die. But when we die, our souls go to heaven to be with Jesus and be made in complete holiness. When Jesus returns to this world, he will give our souls a new heavenly body without sin and corruption to live with him forever (eternal life) in the new heaven on earth. There will be no more sin, evil, suffering, pain, and death for his people.



To think about:

Jesus said to his disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). What does Jesus want us to do and how is he with us to the end of the age (the world)?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.



Discussion Questions

1. Some of the Thessalonian Christians had died, and those who were alive grieved for them. Paul tried to comfort and assure them that they did not need to grieve without hope (v.13). What will happen to Christ's people who die before he returns (v.14, 16)?
2. When Christ returns, he will resurrect his people who have died and will give them a new body—a heavenly body, not born through a physical sexual union between a man and a woman but created by Christ supernaturally. This new body is the same as the resurrected body of Christ. It is without sin and corruption. It is holy and perfect to live in heaven with Christ. How will Christ return (v.16)?
3. What will happen to Christ's people who are still alive when he returns (v.15, 17)?
4. Christ will also renew the body of his people who are still alive. They will be given heavenly bodies and be brought up to the air. There will be a glorious reunion of all Christ's people in the air. We will meet our loved ones again and all our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is our glorious hope and joy in Christ. We come to believe in Christ at different times and die at different times, but Christ will reunite us all to meet with him in the air. In light of this, what are we supposed to do (v.18)? How?

Notes

Glorious: beautiful and magnificent.

Archangel: a commander of angels.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.



Discussion Questions

1. Many Christians want to know precisely when Christ will return, and some are too curious about it. Jesus' disciples also asked him this question, and he simply answered them that he will return unexpectedly. What does the timing of Christ's return as like "a thief in the night" mean (v.2)? How will those who reject Christ in their lives experience his return? What will happen to them (v.3)?
2. What does it mean that Christ's people are not of the night or of the darkness but are children of light (v.4-5)?
3. We need to be alert and watchful against the devil's works, including his lies and temptations, his attempt to corrupt God's people, and his work of corrupting all areas of our lives to deceptively lead people against and away from God (v.6-7). Although Christ has won the "big war" against the devil on the cross, we still have daily spiritual battles against the devil and his army (evil spirits) until Jesus returns. Like a soldier, we need to put on our *spiritual armor* to fight our daily spiritual battles. What are our breastplate and helmet [defensive armor] (v.8)? What are our other armor items, and what is our weapon for defense and offense (see Ephesians 6:10-18)?
4. What has God destined us for? What practical acts can we do to encourage and build one another up concerning our daily spiritual battles and hope in Christ (v.9-11)?

Closing Points

1. A good battle preparation is to anticipate what the enemy is thinking—what weaknesses he knows we have, and where and when he may attack us. Therefore, we need to know our own weaknesses (pride, selfishness, sexual temptations, etc.), be ready for his attacks, and always put on our spiritual armor. We can take comfort that our heavenly Father is always with us, and we can overcome the evil one with his help. "Let us keep awake and be sober" for the enemy will attack us when we are not. Let the word of God (the Bible, our defensive and offensive weapon) fills our minds. Let us read and study his word daily.
2. Jesus has said to his people, "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3). Jesus loves us and wants us to be with him forever. In his first coming, he came to sacrifice himself and died for us for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. In his second coming, he will come as the Judge. He will unite all his people from all nations. He will bring us to a new home—a renewed world without sin and corruption—where he himself is the King. "... we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words." (1 Thess 4:17-18).

Notes

The day of the Lord: the day of Christ's return to this world to:
(a) judge all people,
(b) renew the world, and (c) give a new heavenly body to his people and to bring them to their new home (heaven on earth).

Sober: not drunk; alert.

Breastplate: to protect our chests and hearts. Our **faith and love** for Christ will keep our hearts strong and will protect them from being corrupted.

Helmet: to protect our heads and minds. Our **hope of salvation** is being glorified by Christ and being with him for eternity. This will keep our minds focus on Christ and will protect them from being tempted or distracted.

Wrath: God's holy anger and judgment against all sins and evil.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 7 – A Praying Child of God

Opening Questions

1. Is God, as your heavenly Father, the most important person in your life?
2. How often do you pray? How has God answered your prayers? Give one example.

Introduction

Prayer is for God's children to praise, worship, and communicate with him. Prayer brings our hearts closer to God's heart. ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication) is a good prayer model for us to learn. We begin prayer by adoring and praising God. Then, we confess our daily sins in thoughts, words, and actions to God and ask for his forgiveness and help for us in those areas. This will develop our humility. Next, we thank God for his love, particular blessings, and daily provisions for us. Finally, we can bring our requests to God, asking God to help our problems and meet our needs, as well as asking God to help others with their specific needs.



To think about:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:13-15). How does this text explain that God always gives us what we need and not what we want?



From the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

¹²We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



Discussion Questions

1. As Paul finishes his first letter to the Thessalonian Christians, he gives some final instructions for their lives as a church—a covenant community of God's people. The first instruction is concerning "those who labor among you." These are the church leaders who work hard to shepherd and serve God's people, teaching God's word and helping those who are in need.
What attitude should the church members give to their church leaders (v.12-13)?
2. God's people are still not perfect. We still have our sinful nature attached to us. We have many weaknesses. We all need to grow and be spiritually mature, wise, and humble. Among the Thessalonian Christians, some liked to argue and were impatient, some were lazy to work, some were timid, and others had different weaknesses.
(a) How should their attitudes be for one another as one people of God (v.13b-15)?
(b) How do we grow our patience for all people with their different characters and personalities? (c) What has helped you not to repay evil for evil in words and actions?
3. Prayer grows our love and devotion to God. Prayer shapes us to be more humble and patient. God delights in seeing us praying to him. How often should we pray (v.17)? Why should we always rejoice and give thanks to God in all circumstances (v.16, 18)?

Notes

Adoration: deep love and respect.

Confession: humbly admitting our sin.

Supplication: request, plea.

Eternal life: a joyful life spending time with God, praising, worshipping, and communicating with him forever. It begins when we trust our lives to Jesus Christ.

Admonish: to advise or counsel against something.

Fainthearted: timid, lacking courage.

Evil: sin, bad, wrongdoing.

Covenant: a binding agreement with promise of faithfulness.

Sin: thought, **word**, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Colossians 4:6 teaches us, "Let your **speech (words)** always be gracious, seasoned with salt ..."

If we surrender our tongue and mouth to sin, they can be very harmful to us and others (see James 3:5-10).

1 Thessalonians 5:19-28

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

²³ 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. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. ²⁵ Brothers, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.



Discussion Questions

1. The Holy Spirit grieves when we are being disobedience or rebellious to his guidance. Recognizing and confessing our disobedience and blind spots pleases him and makes us humble (v.19). What can help us understand our blind spots and weaknesses?
2. What else did Paul advise the Thessalonian Christians to do (v.20-22)?
3. Like Paul, the apostle John warns God's people, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world ... They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:1, 5-6). Why does God allow the devil to spread lies and deceptions in the world and to lead people astray from the truth of God?
4. In order for us to be more and more sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we need to obey him as he sanctifies all areas of our lives (v.23). Paul says similar encouragement to the Philippian Christians, "And I am sure of this, that he [the Holy Spirit] who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). What assurance do we have that the Holy Spirit keeps sanctifying us as God's children regardless of our many weaknesses, pride, and disobedience (v.24)?
5. Christianity is much more about a personal relationship with a loving and faithful God than a religion. Knowing that the triune God (the Father, the Son [Jesus Christ], and the Holy Spirit) loves us sacrificially and faithfully, will it not encourage us to love God sacrificially and faithfully as well?
Will we surrender and trust all aspects of our lives to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit?
6. What were Paul's final requests for the Thessalonian Christians to do (v.25-27)?
His final sentence is to remind them that the grace of Christ is always with them (v.28).

Closing Points

1. As we develop our relationship with our heavenly Father in prayer and reading his word, he will change and sanctify us from the inside out. He will show us our pride and blind spots. He will *lovingly* expose our weaknesses, *patiently* teach us to grow, and *faithfully* sanctify us as we learn to trust and obey him more and more.
2. Less mature Christians usually have little need to pray, and more mature Christians have much need to pray. Why? Because the more mature we become, the more we see our sins, weaknesses, and need of God. This shows God's sanctifying work in us.
3. A praying child of God is one who delights in spending time with his/her heavenly Father. As we spend more and more time with God, he will make us more and more like him, growing us wiser in understanding our lives from his perspective. We will see more clearly about his beautiful work in our lives and about *his story* in the life of each of his people. As God's children, our lives are not about us but about him—his beautiful and wonderful work (what he is doing) in our lives. Our history of life is about *his story*.

Notes

Quench: to extinguish (a fire). Here it means to resist the Holy Spirit's work in our lives by being disobedient and rebellious to him.

Prophecy: a message from God through prophets / God's messengers. God used prophets in the Old Testament time. There were still prophets at the time of the apostles (Christ's special messengers). God used prophets and apostles to lay the foundation of his church and to complete the written word of God (the Bible).

Paul knew there were false prophets at his time and there will be more in the future. He warns God's people to **test everything**. We need to be careful of present-day Bible teachers who claim to be apostles or prophets.

Sanctify: to make us more holy and righteous in the image of Christ.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 8 – Living a Life Worthy of God's Calling

Opening Questions

1. Why are we angry when someone tries to hurt our loved ones, such as family members or good friends? How is anger good if it is about loving and protecting what is good?
2. How is anger bad if it is about loving and protecting what is bad, such as our mistakes, our selfishness, etc.?

Introduction

After Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonian Christians, he wrote a second letter to them. In his second letter, Paul explained more about the coming of Jesus Christ, the great rebellion of people against God before Christ's coming, the judgment of Christ, and the encouragement to be faithful to Christ. As the day of Christ's return is getting closer, our faithfulness to Christ will be increasingly tested. Opposition to God's people can come from family members, relatives, friends, people around us, and government authorities. A world-wide rebellion against God is happening and increasing. This includes anti-God concepts and movements. The truth of God and his will for our lives in his written Word (the Bible) is increasingly rejected and considered no longer fit for a changing modern world.



To think about:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
What does this text tell us about: (a) God, (b) what God does, and (c) his purpose?



From the Bible: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴ Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Discussion Questions

1. When does God become our Father and Jesus Christ become our Lord (v.1)?
Do calling God as your heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as your Lord have any significance to you personally? How does having one heavenly Father and one Lord unite us—all God's people from different countries and cultural backgrounds?
2. The triune God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) is one God in three distinct persons who are equal in power and glory. Is there a significance that grace and peace coming from both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ [God the Son] (v.2)?
3. How do we know if someone's faithfulness in Christ is growing abundantly? What should be the evidence of it (v.3)?
4. How did the Thessalonian Christians handle their persecution and afflictions (v.4)?
In what ways can Christians in America face persecution?
What about our brothers and sisters who live in other countries?



Notes

Grace: undeserved favor or blessing given by God with no consideration of our merit (quality of good or worth).

Steadfastness: faithfulness; firm in purpose and faith.

Affliction: pain and suffering.

Persecution: ill-treatment or oppression either physically, verbally, emotionally, or a combination of these. All Christians should expect persecution (see Matthew 10:22 and 2 Timothy 3:12). God allows some Christians to survive persecution and allows others to die because of persecution.

According to opendoors.org, the top ten countries where Christians face the most severe persecution are: (1) North Korea, (2) Somalia, (3) Yemen, (4) Eritrea, (5) Libya, (6) Nigeria, (7) Pakistan, (8) Iran, (9) Afghanistan, (10) Sudan.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

⁵This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— ⁶since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. ¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.



Discussion Questions

1. Why is suffering for Christ evidence that we are worthy of the kingdom of God (v.5)? When Saul (Paul's previous name) went out to persecute Christians, Jesus said to him from the sky, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). Why does Jesus consider persecution against his people a direct persecution against himself?
2. God's righteous judgment will be against all people and their sins, including their rejection and rebellion against him and their persecution to his people (v.6). God's wrath and judgment is described as flaming fire (v.8). What will happen to those who reject and rebel against God in their lives (v.9)?
3. When Jesus returns, all his people will experience relief (v.7). There will be no more persecution, as well as all sorts of suffering and struggles due to sin in this world. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). What will his return look like for his people (v.10)?
4. As God's children, God has called us out of darkness and to be with him forever in his kingdom. How are we supposed to live our lives worthy of God's calling (v.11, see also 1 Peter 2:9-12)? What is the purpose of living a life worthy of God's calling (v.12)?

Closing Points

1. God is loving, holy, and just. Because he is loving, Jesus Christ has sacrificed himself for us to be our substitute. He loves us more than we can ever love him. Because God is holy and just, he cannot tolerate evil. He must punish all sins. For his people, Christ has taken the punishment of all our sins on the cross. For those who continue to reject him, his wrath will come upon them when he returns to end all evils and to bring judgment. They will suffer eternal punishment, away from his presence and glory. He will take all his goodness (common grace) away from them and put them in hell. Since, they do not want him in their lives, he will make their wish comes true.
2. For Christ's people, we will experience glory when Christ returns. We will be glorified with a new heavenly body, and Christ will be glorified and honored in us, as we will be in him. For us, his return is a glorious and joyful day. "To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling." Let us always remember that our Lord and King is going to return to bring a glorious day for us. For now, he watches over our lives from heaven. His Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, guides our lives. He wants us to "go and make disciples of all nations." Joining him to bring the gospel to people from all nations is our greatest calling and joy. May we love what he loves.

Notes

Affliction: pain and suffering.

Vengeance: punishment for a wrongdoing.

Saints: holy people (God's people).

Marvel: to be filled with wonder.

Glorified: to be honored in a magnificent way.

God's common grace: God's goodness given to all people, such as rain, the sun and its light, the air, nature and its beauty, etc.

Hell: a place for eternal destruction (death).

Jesus' Great Commission to all his people: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 9 – Being Watchful against Deceptions and Lies

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been deceived or persuaded to believe in something that is not true?
2. What is one example of something that was not accepted in the past but is accepted in present-day society?

Introduction

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible (God's written word), God introduces the devil (Satan) as a tempter and a liar. The devil tempted Eve and lied to her. He mixed truth and lie and used it to deceive Eve. Truth that is mixed with lie often sounds sweet and attractive to us. It can even be irresistible when it is done well. From Genesis to Revelation (the last book of the Bible), God keeps warning us of the devil's deceptions and lies. God wants us to take his warning seriously and to always be careful.



To think about:

Jesus says about the devil, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). The devil has the super skillful art of lying. He is smarter than us.

Without God's help, do you think we can win against the devil's crafty lies?



From the Bible: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.



Discussion Questions

1. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian Christians, he explained about the return of Christ and the gathering of Christ's people from all nations. Apparently, there were false teachers spreading the false teaching that Christ had returned. These false teachers claimed that (1) a spirit had revealed this to them, (2) they received special revelation from God, or (3) they received a letter from Paul. However, Paul explained that neither of these was true (v.1-3). These false teachers caused some of the Thessalonian Christians to be troubled in mind. Paul explained to the Thessalonian Christians that there would be certain events before Christ's return. What will happen before Christ's return (v.3)?
2. People's rebellion against God occurs every day. The rebellion here refers to a great apostasy (a world-wide rebellion and rejection of God). This great rebellion will be led by *the man of lawlessness*—a man who is against God and his law. He will lead people in a total rebellion against God. He is *the son of destruction* because his own destruction is certain. Christ will completely destroy him when he returns. The Bible tells us that there are many false teachers and antichrists in this world. This particular *man of lawlessness* is a great antichrist. Unlike other antichrists, he will cause the greatest rebellion against God. What will he do (v.4)?

Notes

Alarmed: to be frightened.

The day of the Lord: the day of Christ's return.

Lawlessness: rebellion against God's law. The holy Bible is the word of God and contains God's law.

Every so-called god: false gods of all man-made religions as opposed to the true God of the Bible, the Creator of the Universe.

He takes his seat in the temple of God: the same meaning as **proclaiming himself to be God**. Whether or not *the temple of God* refers to a physical building is not yet known to us.

Antichrist: a person who is anti (against) Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-12

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



Discussion Questions

1. This great antichrist is currently being restrained. However, his work of lawlessness is already at work in people's lives (v.6-7). The work of lawlessness, or rebellion against God's law, is mysterious because it is not clear in the beginning—secret or hidden deceptions and lies—until it becomes fruit. Perhaps, one example is the legalization of homosexual marriage in many countries. God instituted marriage between one man and one woman only. There are many things that were not acceptable in the past but are now acceptable and even celebrated in modern culture. How has God warned us against rebellious movements toward his law (see Romans 1:18-32)?
2. It is not clear to us who the person who restrains the antichrist is and how he restrains him. The person can be a very powerful angel or God himself—the Holy Spirit, whose work is often behind the scenes. He will be *out of the way* and step aside, letting the antichrist be revealed and appear publicly to do his final evil works for a period of time before Christ returns (v.7-8). What will Jesus do to the antichrist when he returns (v.8)?
3. How is the great antichrist (the man of lawlessness) related to Satan (v.9)? Who will join and follow the work of the antichrist against God (v.10)?
4. Why will God send *a strong delusion* to those who reject him (v.11-12)? What are some of the things that people currently think are good but wrong according to God's law?
5. Jesus himself has told us a few signs—things that will happen—before his return, such as deceptions including false Bible teachings by false teachers, wars, earthquakes, famine, lawlessness, and severe persecution for his people (see Matthew 24:3-14). What is the purpose of Jesus and Paul giving us this warning?

Closing Points

1. A great rebellion against God and his law led by a great antichrist will come before Christ's return. The great antichrist seems to be a world leader, whose influence will spread to many nations and whose work will be appreciated by many people. His deceptions will lead people to follow Satan and to be against the God of the Bible. Faithful Christians will be his enemy. This means that through his influence, many people will hate faithful Christians and will find ways to destroy them. God's people will be tested and will greatly suffer during this time. The persecution will show who are truly God's people and who are not (false Christians).
2. *The day of the Lord* is a joyful day for the Lord's people. Those who are alive at that time will suffer no more. Revelation 21:4-5 tells us that "He [Jesus Christ] will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'" Jesus has said to us, "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Notes

Restrain: to prevent someone from doing something.

Perish: to die.

Delusion: a false belief.

Condemn: to pronounce someone guilty.

Unrighteousness: not being morally right with God.

Persecution: ill-treatment or oppression either physically, verbally, emotionally, or a combination of these. All Christians should expect persecution (see Matthew 10:22 and 2 Timothy 3:12). God allows some Christians to survive persecution and allows others to die because of persecution.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 10 – Citizens of God's Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. Why is having a passport important? When do we use our passports?
2. Why do we often care more about what people think about us than what God think about us?

Introduction

Our passports show our nationalities, that we are citizens of the countries that issued our passports. However, the Bible tells us that as God's people, our true citizenship is in heaven. We are sojourners (temporary residents) in this world (1 Peter 2:11). God's word is like our *spiritual passport*. God says who we are—permanent residents of his kingdom. He wants us to remember that our true home is in heaven with him and is not in this world. He wants us to live our lives with this perspective.



To think about:

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Philippians 3:20-21). What will Christ do for us when he returns? What does it look like to live our lives not from temporal but eternal perspective?



From the Bible: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.



Discussion Questions

1. Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians of their new life and identity in Jesus Christ (v.13). (a) Paul called them *brothers*. (b) They are *beloved by the Lord* (Christ). (c) *God chose them to be saved* from the penalty of their sins. (d) As God's children, they are being *sanctified by the Holy Spirit*. They *believe in the truth* of God as they hear and learn, proving their new life and identity in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and minds. This new life and identity are for all God's people.
(a) What is the significance that we are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ? How should we love one another?
(b) What is the significance that each of us is *beloved by the Lord*?
(c) What is the significance that God chose us first and not that we chose him?
(d) The Holy Spirit faithfully sanctifies us as God's children by his word (the Bible). He patiently nourishes and teaches us the truth of God's word and helps us to mature. How often should we read and study the Bible?
2. “To this—God's saving us from our sins and giving us a new life and identity in our union with Christ—he called you” (v.14). We will be glorified by Christ at his return and will share in his glory. We will be made in complete holiness. For now, God wants us to practice a holy lifestyle. “...as he [God] who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15). What does a holy lifestyle in all our conduct look like?
3. Why is standing firm and holding to the traditions or teachings of the Bible important in our constantly changing culture (v.15)?

Notes

Firstfruits: first group of people who became Christians in their region.

Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians, making them more and more holy and righteous in the image of Christ.

To be sanctified is to be set apart for God's glory alone.

A holy lifestyle is a life with only one purpose which is to bring honor and glory to God.

Gospel: the *good news* about God's salvation for us through Jesus Christ.

Traditions: teachings.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

¹ Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, ² and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. ³ But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. ⁵ May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.



Discussion Questions

1. Why are God's love, comfort, and grace important in the lives of God's people (v.16)?
2. How does God *establish us in every good work and word*? What does *work and word* mean (v.17)?
3. Paul wanted *the word of the Lord—the gospel*—to spread quickly and be received by many people. Not all people will honor and believe in the gospel. Some people will even persecute or try to harm those who teach the Bible (v.1-2). Many Christians are in prison in many countries because they tried to teach the word of God to others. What does *the Lord [Christ] is faithful* mean? How is he faithful to us (v.3)? How and in what ways does the evil one (the devil) attack God's people?
4. Paul had confidence that the Thessalonian Christians would be faithful to Christ. However, Paul's confidence was in Christ, and not in the Thessalonian Christians (v.4). They would make mistakes, but Christ would continue to guide and guard them. Christ is our covenant Lord and Shepherd. He is always faithful to us regardless of our actions. Even our faithfulness to Christ is his grace for us. We cannot be faithful to him, unless he helps us to be so. Why is *directing our hearts to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ* important? Who can help us with this (v.5)?

Closing Points

1. As follower of Christ, our identity rests in Christ alone—in our union with him. If we try to get recognition, status, or happiness from this world, our hearts will not be restful. This world tells us to pursue popularity, wealth, and power and to be attached to this world, but the Bible tells us to serve others out of love for God, to be humble and honest, to remember that we are sojourners in this world, to live as ambassadors of Christ in this world, and to live in the light of his return.
2. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17). This world and everything in it will pass away, but God's kingdom is eternal, and we are citizens of God's kingdom. Remember who we are and let us live our lives in the light of what is eternal and not what is temporal.
3. We are beloved children of God. We are loved by the Father who graciously chose to save us from the penalty of our sins instead of punishing us. We are loved by Christ who willingly sacrificed himself and died on the cross, bearing the punishment of all our sins as our substitute. We are loved by the Holy Spirit who patiently teaches us to grow and mature in God's word and who faithfully sanctifies us as God's children.

Notes

Grace: undeserved favor or blessing given by God with no consideration of our merit (quality of good or worth).

Speed ahead: to spread quickly.

Establish: to make firm.

Steadfastness: faithfulness; firm in purpose and faith.

The gospel: the *good news* about God's salvation for us through Jesus Christ.

Covenant: a binding agreement with promise of faithfulness.

Once we trust our lives to Christ, we enter into a covenant relationship with him, in which he is always faithful to us as our Lord and Shepherd regardless of our actions.

Study of 1-2 Thessalonians: Living as God's Children

Lesson 11 – Faithful to the End

Opening Questions

1. What is wisdom? How do we grow in wisdom?
2. Have you ever tried to help a good friend change one of his/her wrong actions? Was it difficult for you at the beginning; were you satisfied with the end result?

Introduction

Parenting is hard work. Perhaps one of the most challenging parts in raising children is disciplining them wisely and lovingly. Love and wisdom are much needed for parenting and shepherding work. A local church is a big family of God's children. Church leaders are God's shepherds who are responsible for shepherding and nurturing each of God's children wisely and lovingly. Disciplining disobedient church members is one of their most challenging responsibilities. However, God will guide and strengthen faithful church leaders. He is the perfect heavenly Father and Shepherd for all his people.



To think about:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!" (Psalm 111:10).
What does "the fear of the Lord" mean? How do we practice it?



From the Bible: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.



Discussion Questions

1. Apparently, there were lazy Christians in the Thessalonian church. They simply depended on other Christians to give them food. They abused the idea that Christians were to love and support one another. They became a burden for other Christians and a problem in the church. Paul commanded the Thessalonian Christians in the name of Christ to discipline their lazy brothers by keeping or staying away from them (v.6).
Why is discipline or punishment necessary to teach disobedient and stubborn people?
2. There are three purposes of church discipline: (1) the glory of God, (2) the purity of the church, and (3) the repentance and restoration of the disobedient sinners (church members who sin or disobey God). Church leaders need to shepherd God's people with love, wisdom, humility, and courage. It is a difficult responsibility to take care of God's people with all their different characters and weaknesses. How does the Apostle Peter instruct church leaders (elders) to shepherd God's people (see 1 Peter 5:1-5)?
3. How did the Apostle Paul himself give an example of working hard (v.7-9)?
4. What does Paul mean when he said the lazy Thessalonian Christians were not "busy at work, but busybodies" (v.11)? What was Paul's command to them (v.12)?

Notes:

Idle: lazy.

Idleness: laziness.

Tradition: teaching.

Busybody: a talker or chatterer.

Repent: to regret of our wrongdoing and to turn to God.

Repentance: turning our hearts away from sin and turning to God.

Apostle: a messenger of God. There were twelve apostles, who were special disciples of Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-18

¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. ¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.



Discussion Questions

1. Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians not to be weary in doing good—to keep loving and serving others out of love for Christ (v.13).
In what situations can we grow weary in loving and serving others out of love for Christ?
What has encouraged or strengthened you to keep doing that?
2. Paul also encouraged the Christians in the city of Corinth, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).
What does “in the Lord your labor is not in vain” mean?
3. Staying away from a stubborn and disobedient Christian brother as a warning to make him feel ashamed is good for him and for the church as a family (v.14-15). What is the difference between *regarding him as an enemy* and *warning him as a brother* (v.15)?
4. Paul ended his letter with a benediction (an expression of a blessing) to the Thessalonian Christians as a church. He wrote some important truths for them to understand (v.16-18). (1) Jesus Christ is the Lord of peace. (2) He gives peace at all times in every way. (3) He is with his people. (4) His grace is with his people.
Consider the lives of the Thessalonian Christians: dealing with others in the community who don’t like them turning away from worshipping the Greek gods to worshipping the God of the Bible, facing persecution yet serving the community out of love, dealing with false teachers, dealing with and helping lazy brothers in the church, etc.
Why is understanding these truths *in head and heart* important for them (and for us)?

Closing Points

1. Leading a church family is not an easy job because each member of the church has his/her own character and weaknesses. Disciplining a disobedient Christian brother is challenging and usually brings stress. Things will get even more difficult if the person continues to be disobedient and refuses to repent. Therefore, praying regularly for our church leaders is important—asking God to give them extra patience and wisdom.
2. Paul praised the Thessalonian Christians for their faithfulness to God—for their *work of faith* and *labor of love* to their community (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Paul encouraged them to keep doing it and not be weary. As the lights of Christ in this world, God’s people in many places love their communities. They not only help their Christian brothers and sisters but everyone in their communities who are in need. This act of love for others is what brings many people to believe in Jesus Christ. As Jesus has said in John 12:32, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”
3. To be Christ’s ambassadors and to be his light in this world is the most prestigious role and the most blessed opportunity we can ever receive. To join him in bringing his gospel to people in all nations and to show his love to other people around us is the most joyful experience we can ever have. To be part of other people’s journey to a loving and eternal relationship with Christ is the most self-sacrificial love (agape) we can ever demonstrate as children of the heavenly King.

Notes

Weary: become tired.

Gospel: the *good news* about God’s salvation for us through Jesus Christ.

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