

*Second Epistle of Paul
To
The Thessalonians*



Bible Study Series

By

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The Thessalonians

Paul established the church in Thessalonica during his second missionary trip in about 51 A.D. Few months later, while in Corinth, he wrote two epistles to the Thessalonians few months apart. Some scholars believe that this second Epistle was written in Ephesus, but Paul's 18-month stay in Corinth (Acts 18:11) gave him ample time to write the two epistles.

As we recall, while Paul and his companions Silvanus (Silas), Timothy and Probably Luke (who wrote the book of Acts) were in Troas, a vision appeared to him in the night: A man of Macedonia, stood and pleaded with him, saying, "come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:9) And the Holy Scripture tells us, that he immediately sought to go to Macedonia.

So, he crossed the Aegean Sea and landed there. His first stop was in Philippi where he and Silas were jailed for one night and that was a blessing for the Jail-keeper, for through them he and his household believed and were baptized. Then he passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and arrived at Thessalonica.

Author of the Epistle:

Paul without any doubt, as he wrote his name in 1:1 & 3:17 while he was still in Corinth few months after the first epistle as mentioned before. Paul's authorship to this epistle as it was to the first epistle went undisputed for centuries, until recently when some radical critics disputed it, but their claim did not stand.

Time written:

51 – 52 A.D. as mentioned above.

This has been archeologically verified by an inscription in the temple of Apollos at Delphi (near Corinth), which dates Gallio's service as proconsul in Achaia to 51-52 A.D. (see Acts 18:12-17).

And since Paul's epistle to the Galatians was written between 49-51 A.D., (which is known to be his first canonical epistle), then this epistle would be considered his third one after Galatians and first Thessalonians.

Purpose of the epistle:

- 1- To strengthen their faith.
- 2- Assure them of Christ's return,

- 3- To encourage them to behave orderly and work to earn their living, and not to live as parasites on their fellow Christians.

Recipients of the epistle:

As mentioned in our study of the first epistle, Thessalonica became the capital of Macedonia in 168 B.C., and although it was part of the Roman Empire, yet it was a “free city” which means that it was ruled by its own citizen rulers (called Politarchs) (Acts 17:6, 8).

Its original name was “Therma” which means hot spring, and because of its natural beauty and weather and the hot spring, it was chosen by Cassander to be his residence, and he changed its name to Thessalonica after his wife Thessalonic who was a half sister of Alexander the Great.

And because of its geo-strategic location being on the great east-west highway (The Via Egnathia or The Egnathian Road), which connects Rome in the west to Constantinople in the east, Thessalonica became the center of both political and commercial activities of Macedonia and was known to be “The mother of all Macedonia”.

That is why Paul was so nervous about the success of his mission there, so much so that he specially sent Timothy to bring him back news about the church there, though he just left Thessalonica few weeks or months before. That also explains why his two Epistles were just few months apart, and also few months from his departure.

He knew that it is not just another city where he should preach the Gospel, but if his mission succeeds there, then the Gospel would spread as much east and west as the Via Egnathia reaches.

As we recall, he was chased out of the city by the zeal Jews who were upset and angry at his great success in such a short period of time (3weeks).

So, he left Thessalonica in a hurry, without actually establishing a solid church in its complete sense, meaning to ordain elders, deacons or disciples to carry on the work after him.

Its population in Paul’s days was about 200,000.

And it was 100 miles away from Philippi, a long trip which Paul may have made on foot, or least likely on a donkey, for the horses were used for chariots and high ranked soldiers like centurions, not even for the regular soldiers; and donkeys were the only transport means for commons.

The rest of events happening in this trip is all detailed in Acts 17.

Eventually, passing through Berea and Athens, Paul reached Corinth, where he was rejoined with Silas and Timothy. There, Timothy gave a good report about the church in Thessalonica, which triggered Paul to write this Epistle.

Background:

In spite of the encouraging news, which Timothy and others brought, there were still some problems in Thessalonica, of which Paul heard from people coming from Thessalonica, such as:

- 1- False preachers who confused the believers about the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- 2- As a result to this false teaching the believers thought that Christ's return is so near at hand that they saw no reason to work, but sit and wait.
- 3- Increased persecution discouraged the believers and they needed incentives to persevere.

So, Paul found it so necessary to write this epistle to address these issues.

Challenging issues:

- 1- The eternal rewards mentioned in 1:5-12 need more details.
- 2- The day of the Lord mentioned in 2:2.
- 3- The restrainer mentioned in 2:6, 7.
- 4- The Lawless one mentioned in 2:3, 4, 8-10.

All these will be dealt with as they come through the study.

Outline of the Epistle:

- 1) Paul's greeting (1:1, 2).**
- 2) Paul's comfort for afflictions (1:3-12).**
 - a- By way of encouragement (1:3,4)
 - b- By way of exhortation (1:5-12).
- 3) Paul's correction for prophetic error (2:1-17).**
 - a- Prophetic crisis (2:1, 2).
 - b- Prophetic correction (2:3-12).
 - c- Pastoral comfort (2:13-17).
- 4) Paul's concern for the church (3:1-15).**
 - a- Regarding prayer (3:1-5).
 - b- Regarding undisciplined living (3:6-15).
- 5) Paul's Benediction (3:16-18).**

1) Paul's Greeting (1:1, 2)

1:1, 2 "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ."

As he always did and as was the custom of writing the letters at that time, Paul starts by indicating from whom is the epistle sent, then he mentions the recipients who in this epistle are the believers in Thessalonica.

Out of courtesy, he mentions Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy, not as co-writers of the epistle but as companions and co-workers.

Then he mentions "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" twice. The first is preceded by the word "in" and the second is preceded by the word "from".

Of course he does not mean repetition, but in the first, he simply tells them that he writes to them in the name of the Father and the Son, and in the second he sends them the greetings and the blessings from the Father and the Son.

Now let us study these greetings:

- 1- Grace: This is originally a Greek greeting. The Greeks used to greet each other by this beautiful word when they meet in the street; exactly as we greet each other now when we say "Hi" or "good morning".
- 2- Peace: This is a Hebrew greeting which means "May God give you peace, and bless your life in every respect whether be at work or in trade, or in children, or family, or health, or wealth and so on....".

Then he says "our father", and here he reminds them that we all are the children of God, and that he is not any different from them because he is an apostle. Not only that but he reminds them also of God's love for the Holy Scripture says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God". (1st John 3:1).

2) Paul's comfort for afflictions (1:3-12)

a- By way of encouragement (1:3, 4)

1:3, 4 "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure".

Paul starts here by saying "we". This does not mean that there were other authors writing this epistle with him, as some commentators feel (W. Hendriksen and S. Kistemaker). When Paul uses the word "we", means that he is adding his voice to the others in his company such as Silas and Timothy in this particular case. It does not mean that Silas and Timothy co-authored the epistle with him.

When any one writes a letter and says that we hope you are well and in good health, it means that he and whoever is with him hopes the same, and it does not mean at all that whoever was in his household co-authored the letter with him.

Let us go back to the verse. He says that we are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, and in other translations it says we are obliged to thank God always for you, brethren. The way I see it, is that Paul wants to say we have nothing to say but to thank God for you, brethren.

Then he says “as it is fitting”, which some commentators interpret it as being hesitant because not all of them were behaving orderly as we shall see later in 3:6-15; but this does not mean that they are less in faith than the others, for he continues saying that your faith grows exceedingly and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other. Yes there were some who did not behave orderly as we shall see later in chapter 3, but they did that because they misunderstood or they were misinformed, not because they were less in faith or love toward each other.

So, we see that Paul thanks God for their faith which grows beyond measure and for love toward each other which is well known all over the churches of God, and here he reminds them that the churches belong to God or in other word, they are the people of God. He also says that he has pride in them and that they are the subject of his boasting among other churches for they are steadfast in faith and love in spite of the persecutions and tribulations they suffer from.

Such praise would certainly boost, and lift them up even in times such as what they are passing through.

6- By way of exhortation (1:5-12)

1:5-12 “Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”.

Such steadfastness and fortitude in suffering and tribulations is a perfect proof of God’s righteousness, for He stands by His children in time of need in this life and also rewards them in the Day of Judgment, to be counted worthy for His Kingdom. For He not only rewards His children but also afflicts those who cause

suffering and affliction to them, for it is written “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord (Rom. 12:19 & Heb. 10:30). And Paul associates this reward with rest which God will give to the Thessalonians and all those who believed in Him. But we ask: rest from what? Yes, rest from all our sufferings and afflictions, our problems and illnesses, and above all freedom from the heavy bondage of sin which slaved and crippled us all our life, for which Paul cried earnestly in the past saying: “*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*” (Rom. 7:24). Then he says “*When the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven*”. The word revelation literally means uncovering or the removal of the veil, and Paul often uses it in the sense of a disclosure of a Divine truth (Rom. 2:5; 16:25; 1st Cor. 14:6, 26; 2nd Cor. 12:1, 7; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3); however in this text, He refers to the glorious manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming surrounded by His mighty angels in flaming fire a manifestation of His Holy judgment, for as we know that His first coming was for redemption, but His second coming will be for judgment (see also Is. 66:15, 16).

Then he says that He empowers his angels to inflict vengeance (see also Deut. 32:35; Is. 59:17; Ezek. 25:14).

As for the phrase “Those who do not know God” could imply the Pagans, while the phrase “Those who do not obey the gospel” mainly means the Jews who chose to reject the good news and its author Jesus Christ our Lord, and it may also include the Pagans as well.

And in verse 9, there is an interesting combination: “everlasting destruction”, which means that this destruction is not to complete vanishing as we may understand from the word destruction because it will be going on through eternity. Then the phrase “From the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” means that whatever happens to them will not be in the presence of the Lord for that will be a reward for the believers to enjoy and rejoice for.

Then verse 10 is difficult to understand and needs some explanation. It says that in His second coming, He will be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe. It is true that when we are saved our life style completely changes because we become a new creation, and this is one of the great manifestations of salvation, but the greatest of all is when we find ourselves actually in the presence of God the thing which we did not completely comprehend in our earthly life, but we believed in it and now in His second coming we find that it actually happened, so we cannot help but glorifying God and admiring His work. Not only that, but the father is also glorified in his righteous children, and all believers are His children, for He said “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God.*” (John 1:12).

That is what this verse means.

This certainly is a beautiful and assuring comfort for the congregation especially for those who were worried about the fate of their loved ones who departed before the second coming (see 1st Thess. 4:14-18).

As for verses 11 and 12, I consider them as a benediction for here he continually pray to God that they may not slip away at any time so that they will be counted worthy for the glory of that day, and the calling of His good pleasure, so that His name will be glorified forever according to His extended grace to us

3) *Paul's correction for prophetic error (2:1-17)*

a- Prophetic crisis (2:1, 2)

2:1,2 "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come."

As you recall, when we were studying Paul's first epistle to them, that he said that "the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (1st Thess. 5:2); and he also said: "Therefore let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (1st Thess. 5:6). Apparently this message was misinterpreted by some of them, and it became the only subject occupying their minds and the center of their discussion day and night, and the prophesy became a crisis to the extent that some felt that if the second coming is so imminent, which may be at any moment (which is true in a way), then they should not bother about working, or their daily normal activities in life. This resulted in the fact that they lived as parasites on their fellow countrymen. This disturbed Paul very much and he became very firm with them as we shall see in 3:10 where he tells them "If any one will not work, neither he shall eat". This incidence may have become more ascertained by some who claim that that is what Paul means, or we heard him personally saying this when he was here before, or some even may go to the extent to say that they have got revelation about this, or some may claim that Paul sent them personal letters ascertaining that. This could be implied from what Paul said at the end of his letter: "The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write" (3:17).

So, Paul knowing that the subject is so touchy, he addresses them affectionately as brothers, and that they should not be so easily shaken and alarmed.

b- Prophetic correction (2:3-12)

2:3-12 "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusions that they should believe the lie that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness".

As we have seen in verses 1 and 2, there was a doctrinal crisis, and there was false teaching; and here in verses 3 and 4, Paul tells the Thessalonians that they should not allow themselves to be deceived by that teaching or any other teaching, for they have been told that the day of the Lord had already come, but he assures them that that day will not come unless there will be the falling away (Apostasy) first. Now let us not ourselves be deceived, because those who will fall are not the true believers, but the ones whose faith is superficial.

Do you remember the Parable of the sower which the Lord Himself talked about (Mat. 13:3-23; Mark4:3-9; & Luke 8:4-15)?

Do you remember that He mentioned four types of soil, but there was only one good soil which produced good fruits 30, 60, and 100 folds according to the talents given them? So as you see there were 3 out of 4 who did not produce fruits, and these are the ones who will fall away. And John talked about that in his 1st epistle 2:19 ***“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”*** But that is not all, for the Lord Himself said: ***“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved”*** (Mat. 24:10-13).

Then he talks about the man of sin (Lawlessness in other translations). Let us pause here a little while. Lawlessness or sin has been present in all ages since Adam's fall; so why the Holy Scripture states here that the man of sin or lawlessness is revealed then just before the Lord's second coming? Of course; he is not talking about the sin or lawlessness itself, but about the man of lawlessness or sin. He is talking about a person, and that person he calls the son of perdition which means that he has been already condemned for destruction or destined to be destroyed. Is he Satan, or may be the beast mentioned in revelation, I sincerely do not know, this subject is beyond my comprehension. But what I know according to what is mentioned next, is that he opposes God, and exalts himself above all that is called God, and he even sits himself in the Temple of God showing himself as God. Does this mean that all this will affect the believers? No, for we know that we are the temple of God and His Spirit dwells in us (1st Cor. 3:16, 17 & 6:19). So God lives in our temples, therefore there will be no place for him to crown himself as God. Then what is that temple where he will sit in. You will find the answer in verse 10 as the Holy Scripture says ***“among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved.”*** So indeed he will find not only one temple but numerous temples of those who are already condemned because they did not receive the free grace of God.

There are different views between the theologians as to who is that man of sin or lawlessness, some say it is Satan, some believe it is the beast mentioned in the books of Daniel and revelation, and each group supports his views by different verses from the Holy Scripture. As for me, I believe that the father of sin is Satan who according to verse 8 will reveal himself as a person (some call it incarnation, but I do not like this term since I believe that the only incarnated is God in Flesh the Lord Jesus Christ); for up to that time Satan was in the world as a deceiving and lying spiritual power, and not in the flesh as a man; listen to what the Holy

Scripture says: *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Eph. 6:12). He is the adversary of God, His laws and His people. He arrogates to himself authority over God’s true people who of course will not yield to him. But before the Day of His second coming, the veil which now hides him from view will be torn off and he will be revealed.

All this, the Thessalonians should have known, because in verse 5, Paul tells them what means that if you had only listened to what I repeatedly told you while I was with you, you would not have been so confused.

Verses 6 and 7 are very difficult to understand. So in order to comprehend what they mean, let us go to the epistle to the Romans where Paul states that sin was present in the world all the time, but it was not counted as sin till the law came *“But sin is not imputed when there is no law”* (Rom. 5:13); for even in our present time where the civil law prevails, no one can condemn a thief unless there is a law that says do not steal for if you steal you will be condemned. This means that Sin is restrained by the law; and the power of the law is in the governing authorities.

At the second coming, all authorities and principalities will cease, and so there will be no restraining powers, and the man of sin will reveal himself.

This is the most logic and feasible explanation; however I still cannot give a reasonable account on why the word “He” is written in capital letter. This means that the restrainer is God, and in this case we can say that it is God’s will to keep him unrevealed till the day of consumption by the breath of His mouth as is stated in verse 8, and the confrontation will be immediately settled. However, this cannot explain why “He” is taken out of the way as stated in verse 7b unless Paul means that God will be removed or taken away from the hearts of those who willfully and freely accept Satan as their master. And those are described in verse 10 as those who will perish because they did not receive the love of truth, but believed the unrighteous deception of Satan.

In the preceding verses, Paul may be conveying the picture of Armageddon mentioned in revelation 16:16.

c- Pastoral Comfort (2:13-17)

2:13-17 “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work”.

Then in verse 13, Paul starts by thanking God for He had called the Thessalonians from the beginning for salvation. This indicates that the initiative is always with God. He is always the one who looks for us. We should remember the parable of the good shepherd who leaves the 99 safe sheep and goes looking for the lost one till He finds it. Then our response will be one of two:

1- As for the sons of perdition, they will reject the call of truth and obey the delusions and lies of Satan.

2- The others will accept the call and believe the truth, which is the essence of His good news the gospel of salvation, by which we are granted the glory of His Son. Therefore we should stand fast holding the word which we were taught. Then in verses 16 and 17, Paul give a word of benediction praying to God Who is the Father of mercy and every comfort, who also has given us everlasting consolation and good hope by His grace, comfort our hearts and establish us in every good word and work.

4) Paul's concern for the church (3:1-15)

a- Regarding Prayer (3:1-5)

3:1-5 "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

Now the letter is coming to an end, and Paul is requesting the Thessalonians to pray for him as he usually does in many of his epistles such as in Romans 15:30, 1st Thess.5:25, and in Philemon 22. This makes one wonder; how could it be that such a huge figure in Christianity ask weak people who have already drifted away from the truth believing false teaching and doctrines to pray for him? How could it be that the teacher asks his disciples to intercede for him? He must have had an immense and unbreakable bond of love towards them. But actually one should not wonder for he and also all believers have and must learn that from the Master of all our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us (Mat. 5:44 & Luke 6:27, 35).

But what does Paul request prayer for? For two main reasons:

- 1) That the work of the Lord may run swiftly, and He will be glorified in them.
- 2) That Paul and his companions may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men who of course are after destroying the word of God by harming His loyal and obedient servants whether be Paul or any other believer including the Thessalonians themselves and this is clear from verse 4. Why is that? Paul says that not all have faith. It is true, faith is the work of God in the heart, but the son of perdition hardens his heart towards everything that is godly.

Then in verse 4 he says that he has confidence in the Lord that the Thessalonians will do what they are commanded to do. This is to prepare them for what he is going to say later in verses 6-15 as we shall see in the next passage.

And verse 5 is considered a short benediction praying to God that He may direct their hearts into His love and patience. So what is actually meant by this love and patience?

I believe it is assurance to the Thessalonians in particular and all believers in general that the love of God is not only in caring for our eternity that He gave His only begotten Son as a redemption and ransom for our sins, but also that he cares for our daily needs in our present life, and in His outstretching and protecting everlasting arms, and that the patience of our Lord in all His sufferings may be a certain cause for our comfort.

6- Regarding undisciplined Living (3:6-15)

3:6-15 "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you, nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you we commanded you this; if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"

Now in this passage, Paul is dealing with the main problem, for which he wrote this epistle, and I mean by that the situation that was produced by the wrong interpretation of what he may have said before, or most likely caused by those who were trying to undermine his work in Thessalonica, and they were mainly Judaizers.

The problem was about the eminent second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul may have advised them to be aware that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and that was interpreted whether on purpose or not on purpose- God only knows- that it is coming in any moment. That may be good in a way to encourage them to keep working hard and watching so that they may be praised by the Lord when he comes. But on the other hand it was bad because some advocated that since it is coming at any moment, then, they should not work and better still watch for its coming. This created a state of idleness and chaos, for those who did not earn their living, lived as parasites on their fellow believers which brought a great burden on the church.

So Paul did not like that and he reproaches them bitterly and in a sarcastic way; and the Greek word he used is “**Ataktos**” which exactly means to reproach sarcastically or bitterly. And he uses himself as an example telling them that he worked with his own hands to earn his living. The Holy Scripture says: “*The laborer is worthy of his wages*” (Mat. 10:10; Luke 10:7 & 1st Tim. 5:18); yet Paul did not use this privilege but he worked by his own hands to be an example for all believers in all the ages. The Jews glorified work, and believed in dignity of honest labor. They said in the past “He who does not teach his son a trade, he is actually teaching him to steal”. Paul was trained to be a Rabbi, and each Rabbi has to work a trade, so that he would not take any pay for his teaching. Then he reminds them that when he was with them, he told them that if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. Of course he does not mean that the sick or handicap should work, for there is always a place for help to those who are in need. And why should we go far while we have Jesus Himself as a good example who worked as a carpenter all his life till he started His mission. There is a legend that says that Jesus made the best ox-yokes in all Palestine, that people came from all over the country to buy them. This should be a valuable example for all of us to be more conscientious in our jobs than anybody else. Now there is another drawback for not working, since those who sit doing nothing all the day would be inclined to sit and gossip. There may be some sins more serious than gossip like murder for example, but there is no sin more harmful and damaging than gossip especially in the church. On the other hand, those who work hard have no time for gossip.

And in verses 14 and 15, Paul commands that those who disregard his instructions must be dealt with by the community, not to keep company with them that they may be ashamed. But they are not to be dealt with as enemies but as brothers and sisters. Looking down at others even if they are in the wrong, and rebuking them to hurt results in resentment and leaves bad scars deep in the heart, and we may lose our brother or sister for whom Jesus Christ has died. So if there is any need for reproach we must do it in love and care for the others.

5) Paul's Benediction (3:16-18)

3:16-18 “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Now at the end of his letter, Paul commends the Thessalonians to the grace of Jesus Christ, saying that this salutation is by his own hand which is a sign in every epistle he writes, as if he is telling them not to accept any letter or writing not authenticated by his own hand to avoid further confusion in any doctrine they receive.

May God bless you all

References:

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