

Be Joyful always

Introduction

Joke

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honour" thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Although it is fun it is sometimes hard to be a family

As the Thessolians experienced

Why

A congregation trying to be a Christian Community

Today: Verse of the Months: Be Joyful always

Part of P's 1st letter to Thessolians

In a hostile environment

Greek/Roman culture based on patronage and guilts

your allegiance to others ensured

Well being

Social status

Money

As Christians: only allegiance is Christ

Community had to rely on Christ

And each other

Selfishly

Purpose of Pauls letter

1 To encourage the congregation

2 To set an example of Christian behaviour

3 To provide moral teaching

e.g. Live to please God

brotherly love

4. Give hope to the 2nd coming of Christ (Advent)

Be alert

Passage

Healthy Communities balance strong and weak

△ 2 Thes 12-14

Strong – recognise and respect their contributions

△ v12-13

Those who do a lot of work

Those who are in leadership

Not necessary the same!

Weak – encourage and be patient

△ v14

Those who are idle?

Better those who are anti-social or are outside normal behaviour

Those who are timid or faint-hearted

Those who are weak

Keep the peace

Paul recognises that tensions may arise

Some are able to give a lot

Some not so much

Some are strong in leadership

Others find it difficult to accept leadership

Paul also realises that things go wrong

△ v15

And instead of paying wrongs back

Be kind to each other and everyone else

What should our attitude be?

△ 3 Short Imperatives and 1 Warning

Summary of the teaching and the example that Paul sets

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

△ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Imperatives

Be joyful always

△ Examples of Paul's .by and the Thes.'s .by

You became imitators of us and of the

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the **joy** given by the Holy Spirit.

^ 1 Thes 1:6

For what is our hope, our **joy**, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and **joy**.

^ 1 Thes 2:19-20

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return **for all the joy** we have in the presence of our God because of you?

^ 1 Thessalonians 3:9

Pray always

² We always thank God for all of you and **continually mention you in our prayers.** ³ **We remember before our God and Father your work** produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

^ 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

¹⁰ **Night and day we pray** most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

^ 1 Thessalonians 3:10

¹¹ **Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.** ¹² **May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for**

everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Give thanks always

² We always thank God for all of you

△ 1 Thessalonians 1:2

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it

△ 1 Thessalonians 2:13

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?

△ 1 Thessalonians 3:9

How can Paul urge them to be joyful, prayerful and thankful

They have nothing to be joyful and thankful about

But Paul can do this in the knowledge of what Christ will do –he will return

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another

with these words

△ 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Warning

- ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.
 - ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all;
 - hold on to what is good,
 - ²² reject every kind of evil.

v20-22 sub clauses of v 19

Take prophecies seriously

Not gullibly – test them

Paul know that not everything
prophecied is of God

Four tests of discernment?

Once tested – hold the good and discard
the bad (or evil)

(Prophecy that is not of God is evil?)

Application

This was right for the
Thessalonians in 30AD

But is it right for us in 21C
Canterbury?

I believe there are now more
similarities between us and them
then ever before

And it will get worse

Society is not Christian anymore
– not even nominally

**in order to be a committed
Christian today will need secular
sacrifices**

Socially, morally and monetary

Christ still calls us out of society

and then to be part of it in a counter
cultural way

and that is hard –and I think it will get
harder still

It almost feels that as Christians we
are in exile

But instead of us having been exiled

Society has moved away from us

So like the Thes we also find it
hard to be joyful, thankful and
prayerful

**But like them we can also take
comfort from Christ's 2nd coming**

**But Paul knows that being joyful,
thankful and prayerful does not
only come from ourselves**

It is a gift of the Holy Spirit

**Hence is warning not to quench
the Spirit**

As we cannot live as Christians
without him

Pray for the gift of Joy!