

First Thessalonians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

Letter	Date of Writing	Place of Writing
1st Thessalonians	54 A.D.	Corinth

We will complete the first letter to the Thessalonians today. The passage is like the grand finale at a fireworks show. Paul's final words explode with requests, exhortations, and encouragement. He gives them all he's got! His words will also encourage and build us up in the 21st century.

Verse 12–

Paul comforted the church in regards to the coming of the Lord. They don't need to worry. Even those who have died will be resurrected at the Rapture. He makes a request,

And we beseech you, brethren. Beseech is not necessarily a command, rather a request made with a strong desire it be followed (That sort of sounds the same, but I think one is more of an encouraging urging).

To know them with labour among you, and are over you in the Lord. The word **know** is a common word used over 600 times in the N.T. It just means "see." Here then it means to *recognize* who it is that **labour**. **Labour** means toil or work.

Over you in the Lord, the word **over** is **προΐστημι** *proistemi* in the Greek. It is the same word used in 1 Timothy 5:17 where the pastors that *rule* (*proistemi*) *will be counted worthy of double honor...* That is, the pastors who lead well are considered worthy to be paid something—those who labor in the *word and doctrine* are worthy of double value.

And admonish you, those who warn you. It seems fairly clear Paul is beseeching the Thessalonians to recognize their pastor (pastors multiple churches). In what way are they to do this?

Verse 13–

And to esteem them very highly. To think of them extremely, **in love** (*agapē*), **for their work's sake**. What is the work of the pastor? "They who labour in the word and doctrine." 2 Timothy 5:17.

Paul's point is the church should recognize the pastor, think of them in love, because they study and teach sound doctrine. It doesn't mean a pastor is to be put up on a pedestal and worshipped. But recognizing his work is what Paul strongly desires. This should be a guiding principle in churches. What if the pastor doesn't work hard at studying and teaching sound doctrine? Find another church (my opinion, not Paul's).

Verse 14–

Now we exhort you. This is Paul's third use of a verb in three verses; *beseech, esteem, and exhort*. **Exhort** is the Greek word **παρακαλέω** *parakaleō* which means to come alongside, and can mean to *ask earnestly*. The exhortation here is to **warn them that are unruly** (disorderly). Perhaps he means those who might have the tendency to stir up trouble within the church, or those who are not recognizing and esteeming their pastor? There shouldn't be war among the church members, rather, **be at peace among yourselves**, as we saw in verse 13.

Comfort the feeble-minded. This is the only place the word feeble-minded is used in the N.T. It's the word **ὀλιγόψυχος** *oligopsuchos*, *oligo*=little and *psuchos*=breath or spirit? Maybe, *short of breath* or, *those of little faith*? Those in the church who have trouble expressing themselves? Many translations use, *faint-hearted*.

Support the weak. *Strengthless*. In faith? In health?

Be patient toward all men. All types of people within the church, pastors, those who build up the pastor, peacemakers, unruly, feeble-minded, weak. We are to be patient toward them all!

Verse 15–

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None render evil-for-evil. Don't seek to get revenge if you are treated poorly. **Follow what is good, both among yourselves,** in the church, **and to all men.** Those outside of the church.

Verse 16–

Rejoice evermore. Philippians 4:4. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice!"

Verse 17–

Pray without ceasing. Don't take an intermission.

Verse 18–

In every thing give thanks: Thanks is a verb, present, active, imperative, second person, plural. That means the whole church is to do this and it is to take place, not as a suggestion, but a command.

This is the will of God in Christ concerning you. Simply put, this is what God wants for you, to be a thankful church!

Verse 19–

Quench not the Spirit. The word quench is usually used alongside the word *fire*. Don't put out the Spirit's fire. Don't discourage your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are excited about the Word of God.

Verse 20–

Despise not prophesyings. In 1st Corinthians 13:8, Paul states that prophecies, they shall fail. In other words a time will come when we will not need prophecies. The Thessalonians were in a transitional stage from the dispensation of the Law to that of grace. They had not ceased at this time.

Verse 21–

Prove all things. To prove is to examine closely, like one examines a twenty dollar, or one hundred dollar bill. We might say today, take it for a test drive. Likewise we are to do the same doctrinally. Then we hold on to the truth, **that which is good.**

Verse 22–

Abstain from all appearance of evil, literally *every form*.

Verse 23–

Paul's prayer.

God of peace. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Sanctify you wholly. It is God who sanctifies **ὅλοτελής holoteles**. He is referring to the entire church—God will keep them holy until the end.

Whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless. I think Paul is using this phrase in reference to the entire church body. God will keep the total body blameless. When we as the body of Christ support, warn, rejoice, pray, quench not, prove and hold fast, etc., He preserves us **until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Verse 24–

Faithful...callesth...who also will do it. What does God call believers to? To be blameless. God will give believers all they need to be blameless at his coming. Because we are sanctified!

Verses 25-28–

Brethren, pray for us. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians often (1:2), but he along with Timothy and Silas needed much prayer too.

Holy kiss. Paul gives this instruction in 1 Corinthians 16:16, 2 Corinthians 13:12, and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. Peter gives the instruction in 1 Peter 5:14. o

The kiss is φίλημα [philema], coming from philos, which is "friend." It is always an expression of friendship, never an expression of sexuality. It could be argued that philema is any expression of friendship.

Charge, an official instruction **by the Lord.**

Read. Make this letter known among all those in the church.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Paul ends his letter as he began it, with grace (1:1).