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March 21, 2021

1 Thessalonians 4

1Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

To give freely of what you have been given is the sentiment here from Paul. Paul and the other apostles paid their own way not being a burden on anyone; it was one of Paul's goals to live and preach that way. How far have we come from that today?

In the next several verses Paul is going to address fornication.

From Strong's Concordance Word Helps

4202 *porneía* (the root of the English terms "pornography, pornographic"; cf. [4205](#) /*pórnos*) which is derived from *pernaō*, "to sell off") – properly, a *selling off* (surrendering) of sexual purity; *promiscuity* of any (every) type.

Thessalonica like most towns outside of Israel was rampant with deity worship that often involved “fornication” or “prostitution” male and female, as a part of their worship process. We have read even in Israel and specifically Jerusalem where the Jewish

religion was tainted with temple prostitutes. It disgusted God among other things. When God had reached His fill of vile actions within the religion, He rejected them. He gave Israel a writ of divorce as His bride for the numerous breaches of the vows between them and God.

Now Christ has a Bride, the Church, the Body of Christ the True Believers and Worshipers of Christ. Has the Church gone the way of Jerusalem and Judaism? The man-made churches have indeed, but not the Body of Christ. Are there those of us in the Body of Christ that have committed fornication, without doubt. But how can that be? The answer is; we are a sinful people, and we are instructed to come out of that lifestyle, to repent and turn from our wickedness. If we cannot then Salvation was never ours to begin with, we are false Christians, charlatans, unable to control our own bodies; (vessels). It is a grave issue that all believes need to consider daily and that is how are we walking out our sanctification. God is a Holy God, and He demands that we walk in Holiness.

2For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 3For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

Paul is going to make some intense statements as well as introduce several new doctrines. These are not from him as a

man but from God through the Holy Spirit. Paul comments on “Commandments” that came from Christ to him. All Believers should abstain from fornication; it is described as lusting after one another or after “any-thing”. It draws us away from Christ, from His protection and places a quasi-Believer in grave danger of being found not to be a believer at all.

4That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

There are two main trains of thought from Bible Scholars. The first is that “his vessel” is referring to a believer’s wife. The second is that it is referring to a person’s own body. I think it has value in both senses. The idea behind this being the man’s wife is the reference to the “woman” or “wife” being the weaker “vessel”.

1 Peter 3:12 1Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

This direction from God to men and women is meant to foster pure love, not love from lust but love from Godly Love.

5Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

con•cu•pis•cence kŏn-kyoōpĭ-səns

- n. A strong desire, especially sexual desire; lust.
- n. Improper or illicit desire; sensual appetite; especially, lustful desire or feeling; sensuality; lust.
- n. Strong desire in general; appetite.  [More at Wordnik](#) from The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition.

There appears to be a connection between not knowing God and this lust or appetite for illicit things. Most of us have struggled with this problem as it is one of satan's most potent weapons against man and woman. It is predicated on the idea of separating men and women from God. When we allow the flesh to walk in lust we are walking alone and not with Christ. Jesus said He would never forsake us; but we can forsake Him.

The next verse does not seem to specifically state adultery but it is likely the same vein as the previous verses. When it speaks of "defraud his brother" it is speaking of adultery with another man's wife? God is extremely sensitive to this idea of covenant breaking due to being victimized by His own Bride Israel. God has no tolerance for this type of actions.

6That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

It is obvious that defrauding can take on many other aspects; it is generally the idea of taking something that is not yours to have. This idea is not only for Christians it is for the moral idea for the entire world; but is emphasized directly to Believers. Whether it be another man's wife or another woman's husband or anything

that belongs to someone else; we are not defraud our brothers and sisters in Christ. As a side note it does not give Christians license to defraud non-Christians, it is part of our moral compass granted by the Holy Spirit.

9But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

In the broadest sense, brotherly love is not constrained by whether or not another person is a believer, if that were so then we would have no desire to reach out to an unsaved man, woman or child. We would just let them die in their sin. We are commanded to take the Good News to the entire world; all flesh needs to hear the Good News. That is done from Love, God's Love flowing through us. This bond between Believers is a special bond and requires special attention that we not violate our trust with one another as the unsaved might do.

10And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

Paul is encouraging these believers in Thessalonica to expand their outreach to those in Macedonia and beyond.

Paul is apparently familiar with those who are "busy bodies". We have all seen folks like this, always sticking their noses into other

people's business and gossiping about them to other people. Paul has clear direction from God that this is a significant problem and sin. If we find ourselves caught up in this sin, we need to repent and ask God to cleanse us and operate in a quiet and contrite spirit.

11And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

As believers people watch everything we say and do. If we are allowing our nature to be ungodly toward others, then those whom we associate with will see our hypocrisy and reject the very thing we want them to see and that is God's Love. We are God's representative here on earth to our family, friends, neighbors and the world at large. If we let down our guard for a moment and speak ill of other believers or neighbors or family then we are operating outside of God's Will in our lives. Repent!

We are told here to study to be quiet, to mind your own business and to be a diligent worker for your own needs.

The Return of the Lord

13But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
sleep, fall asleep, die*

From [keimai](#); to put to sleep, i.e. (passively or reflexively) to slumber; figuratively, to decease -- (be a-, fall a-, fall on) sleep, be dead.

see GREEK [keimai](#)

We have several hints here that this word “asleep” can mean just taking a nap. But in this context, it is specifically speaking of “dying” or of the “dead”. The first hint of context is in vs 13 where it says, “that ye sorrow not”. Nobody is sorrowful for someone who is sleeping, this sorrow is for those who have died. The next hint is in the next verse.

14For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

We find this “sleep” as the same word from vs 13 which in this context is directly referred to as “died”. The obvious subject being addressed to the those in Thessalonica is that they should not grieve or sorrow for those who have died. This is in direct response to a question they had sent to Paul with Timothy. Paul is presenting a new doctrine for new believers. It is based on

specifically what Paul was told by God to write and also based on Paul's personal contact with Jesus the Messiah on Paul's trip to Damascus.

This is the crux of the question from Thessalonica, will those who die and believe in Jesus live again. The precise answer from God through Paul uses Jesus as the example that we as believers can all hold onto as a Biblical doctrine and truth.

We will find in a following verse how Christ will come from heaven to just above the earth "in the clouds" with a shout. In verse 14 God declares that Jesus will bring with Him those believers who have already died. Meaning their spirits that had left their body at death and gone to be with Christ awaiting this moment or reunion with the body buried in the earth.

15For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

God through Paul establishes an order of conversion from earthly or fleshly to resurrected bodies. It begins with those in the grave and is given in a reverse order. In vs 15 this doctrine establishes that those that are alive at this moment in time called "the coming of the Lord" shall not "prevent".

The Greek word for "prevent" is:

5348 *phthánō* – properly, precede, arrive ahead of time, i.e. before something which indicates priority in importance or sequence.

The meaning is that those alive will not come before those which are dead from coming to life first in a new resurrected body. We will learn from other Doctrines that the fleshly body that was laid in the ground will be reunited with the Spirit that previously resided in that body; but at death had gone to be with Christ; the Spirit and the body will then be resurrected by the Power of God to eternal life. When the Spirit and resurrected body reunite it will likely have some fascinating abilities, far beyond what we can imagine.

The following verses now present the first element of the resurrection and in fact will be the beginning of the Rapture.

16For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“the Lord Himself” Jesus will descend from “heaven”

Transliteration: ouranos

Phonetic Spelling: (oo-ran-os')

Definition: heaven

Usage: heaven, (a) the visible heavens: the atmosphere, the sky, the starry heavens, (b) the spiritual heavens.

We often think of heaven as God's abode, but we are not told where it is. The heaven referred to here is the word "Ouranos" meaning the visible heavens or stary skies above us. Due to no clear indication of where "heaven" is it might be just another dimension that is unseen and really quite close to us. In any case Jesus makes His approach to earth from the sky; ostensibly so all can see Him.

There is a shout that accompanies or precedes His descent toward the earth but He does not touch the earth at this time.

Along with this shout is the voice of Michael the Archangel and the "Trump" or Trumpet of God. Archangel means "chief" angel and he is also God's military Angle commanding the forces of Heaven at God's direction.

4536 *sálpigks* – "properly, a war-trumpet" (WS, 797) that boldly announces God's victory (the vanquishing of His enemies).

In the OT, trumpets were used to called God's people to war, and to announce victory wrought by Him. That is, a military clarion that proclaimed the Lord inspired and empowered the victory on behalf of His people.

["The trumpet was the signal employed to call the hosts of Israel to march as to war, and is common in prophetic imagery (Is 27:13). Cf. The seventh angel (Rev 11:15)" (WP, 1, 193).

Trumpets in the OT summoned God's saints for His righteous wars (Nu 10:9; Jer 4:19; Joel 2:1). See also Lev 23:24,25; Nu 10:2-10; Ps 81:3.]

So why the military angels for this event? We are not told specifically but it likely represents a show of force on Jesus' part to let the inhabitants of earth know that play time is over. From this moment on, God's wrath begins to be poured out on mankind and the earth as never before and will never be again. The Church not churches plural made by man, but THE CHURCH that Jesus built the one made up of only believers; no Baptist, no Pentecostals, no Catholics, no Hindus, no Muslims, certainly no Methodists, but only BELIEVERS in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

17Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The priority of those who were in the grave seems fitting as they have waited with Christ knowing this day would come that they would receive a body like His, as well as reuniting with those they had left behind. Those that are alive will be caught up receiving their resurrected bodies instantly at that moment. It is fitting that the dead should be first to receive their resurrected bodies so when they see their loved ones, they are both in a condition of eternal bodies. This declaration by Christ that we will be with Him

in that condition for ever more is quite beyond comprehension for the mortal body but is welcomed as an eternal body and will come with a good deal more understanding.

18Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Any of you that receive Mike Wigton's "Comfort one another" blog will recognize that this is where he got his blog title from. These are words of comfort we are to share with one another and to cling to as a promise from God. We will all be changed (believers) that is in a twinkling of an eye. Rapture happens in an instant, no time to pack a bag or ask Christ into your heart, you either already have or you will be left behind to endure the wrath of God on this earth.

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