

*Paul's Letter to the  
Church at Thessalonica*



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*Pursuing Holiness to the End*

1 Thess. 5:16-28

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1. Attitude Toward Circumstances
2. Attitude of Discernment
3. Closing



# *Attitude Toward Circumstances*



- Always rejoice!
  - Be glad at all times
    - *Even when my internet isn't working?*
    - *When Bojangles' gets my order wrong?*
- Historical context: Paul in Philippi (Acts 16:22-29)

# *Attitude Toward Circumstances*

- Always rejoice!
  - Be glad at all times
    - When sinned against? – 5:15
    - In affliction???
    - In persecution???
    - Horrible life???



# *Attitude Toward Circumstances*



- Always rejoice!
  - How? Why?
    - God is working! (love & holiness - 3:13)
      - For your good (Rom. 8:28-30)
  - You have a fixed and certain future (4:17-18; cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

## *Attitude Toward Circumstances*



- Unceasingly pray!
  - NOT: Become a monk! (see 4:9-12)
  - Constant attitude toward interaction and awareness of dependence (Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2)
  - Part of *the fear of the Lord* (Ps. 34:9-10)

## *Attitude Toward Circumstances*

- In everything give thanks!
  - Even the stuff I don't like?!!
  - Why?!
    - Perspective: the sovereign Creator of the universe thinks it's good for you
    - Rom. 5:3-5; cf. James 1:2-4





# *Attitude Toward Circumstances*

## **IN CHRIST**

- Always rejoice!
- Unceasingly pray!
- In everything give thanks!



God's will  
for you

## *Attitude Toward Circumstances*



- For this is God's will for you
  - *One aspect* of God's will (see 4:3)
  - To recognize and appreciate God's hand in *everything* that happens to you
    - Salvation-> sanctification-> glorification
    - Respond with thanks / gratitude (Heb. 12:28-29; cf. Rom. 1:21)

## *Attitude of Discernment*



- The Spirit do not quench!
  - *To extinguish* (Mark 9:48)
  - Generally, or ecstatic manifestations?
    - Eph. 4:30; Acts 19:1-7 [cf. 1 Cor. 12-14]
- How might we?
  - Sin, selfishness, unbelief, ignoring Him

## *Attitude of Discernment*

- Prophecies do not despise!
  - Gift/office or special occurrence?
    - 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11; Acts 19:6
    - For edification/exhortation of the whole body (1 Cor. 14:3 [also 12:7])
    - Helped lay the foundation (Eph. 2:20)

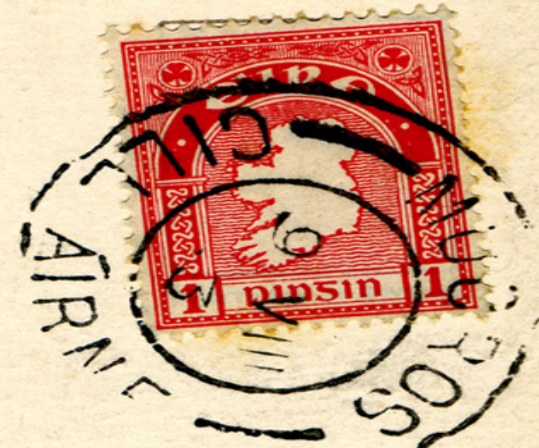


## *Attitude of Discernment*

- Prophecies do not despise!
  - Despise: *to set down as of no account; to treat with contempt*
  - Abuse of some kind (possibly relating to the Lord's coming - see 2 Thess. 2:2)
  - Where God works, Satan works against



## *Attitude of Discernment*



- But all things test
  - Balance: don't throw it all out, but don't accept just anything, either
  - Just because it is *spiritual* does not mean it's from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:2-3)
  - Satan lies (John 8:44), deceives (1 Tim. 2:14), teaches false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1)

# *Attitude of Discernment*

- But all things test
  - *Examine, prove, discern, distinguish*
  - God commends faith, not gullibility
  - God expects knowledge, not ignorance
  - Test how? Paul doesn't say (here)



## *Some Tests to Examine Everything*

- Recognize Jesus? (1 Cor. 12:2-3)
- Agree with the gospel? (Gal. 1:6-9)
- Agree with sound doctrine? (1 Tim. 6:3-10)
- Agree with Scripture? (Isa. 8:19-20; Acts 17:11; 2 Pet. 3:14-18)
  - *Agree with vs. not contradict*





## *Some Tests to Examine Everything*

- Come true? (Deut. 18:15-22)
- Is it sensual/fleshly? (2 Peter 2)
- Is it worldly? (1 John 4:5-6)
- Peace or disorder? (James 3:13-18)
- Spiritual or fleshly results? (Gal. 5:19-23)
- Truth or our own desires? (2 Tim. 4:1-5)



# *Attitude of Discernment*

- The good hold fast
  - Good: *intrinsically excellent or pleasing*
  - Hold fast: not just recognize what is good but embrace it wholeheartedly
    - *Glue yourself to what is good (Rom. 12:9)*



## *Attitude of Discernment*

- From every form of evil abstain
  - Evil: *destructive, malignant, wicked*
  - Abstain: *hold off from*
  - Avoid whatever *looks like* evil?
  - Avoid evil in whatever form it may present itself -- *it may not look like evil*



## *Closing Benediction*

- May the God of peace
  - The God who makes peace with His enemies (Rom. 5:1, 8-9)
- Himself sanctify you entirely
  - God is working to make us holy (cf. 3:13)
  - Entirely: *wholly to its intended end, or no part left out*



## *Closing Benediction*

- And = *that is, or in other words*
- Whole being: spirit, soul, and body
  - Preserved: kept in safety
  - Without blame (see 3:13)
  - At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
    - Focus: *holy living in light of His return*



## *Closing Benediction*

- God calls you to it
  - We participate in the process (2:11-12)
- And He will do it!
  - But it doesn't depend on us
  - Pray for us (25)
- Greeting, reading, and grace!



# So What?

- How are you responding?
  - Joy and thanks? Whining? Anger?
  - (Whining in disguise?)
  - Humble yourself (see James 4:1-10)
  - Look for what God is doing on the *inside*
  - Do you want holiness or *your way*?



# So What?

- How discerning are you?
  - Are you aware of the enemy's schemes?
  - How well do you know the truth?
  - Are you making an effort to grow in knowledge?
  - Hold fast only to what is truly good

