

*Paul's Letter to the  
Church at Thessalonica*



# I Thessalonians

W

N

E





# *Paul's Prayer Wish*

1 Thess. 3:11-13

# Paul's Prayer Wish

- Not a prayer, *per se*
  - Not addressed to God but directed toward God
  - Expression of desire



# 1 Thess. 3:11-13

1. Desire for Intervention (11)
2. Desire for Sanctification (12-13)



# Desire for Intervention

- Strange grammatical construction
  - Pronoun (*Himself*) and verb (*may direct*) are singular, but there are two Subjects
  - Better: “Now may He (that is, God our Father and Jesus our Lord) direct our way to you...”



# Desire for Intervention

- Strange grammatical construction
  - Emphasizes the unity of Father and Son
    - Unity in essence – both are God
    - Unity in purpose – both are directing
    - Unity in work – both are acting



# Desire for Intervention

- Direct our way to you
  - From *to make straight*
    - Used of a steersman on a ship
  - *May God guide us directly to you*
  - Because Satan had hindered (2:18)



# Desire for Sanctification

- And may the Lord...
  - Better: “but you, may the Lord...”
    - In other words: “Whether we see you or not, may the Lord...”
  - It is the Lord (Jesus) who is doing this
    - 4:9; 1 John 4:7-14 (*love is from God*)





# Desire for Sanctification

- Increase and abound
  - *To have excess and to pour over*
  - Sin/Grace – Rom. 5:20
  - Financial support – 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Phil. 4:10-20
    - *Imply attitude and discipline*



# Desire for Sanctification

- In love for one another
  - They needed each other!
    - Some Jews, many Greeks and leading women (Acts 17:4)
    - Different nationalities, socio-economic standings, genders (cf. Gal. 3:28)
    - Afflicted and ostracized



# Desire for Sanctification

- In love for one another
  - They needed mutual, selfless love
    - E.g. - Acts 2:43-47 (cf. 1 Cor. 11:20-22)
    - Leon Morris: “It is doubtful whether the infant church could have survived without it.”



# Desire for Sanctification

- In love for one another
  - They were doing it
    - Praise for labor produced by love (1:3)
    - Commendation (4:9-10)
    - Yet always room for more (4:10)
  - “Just as we also do for you” (modelling)



# Desire for Sanctification

- In love for all people
  - This may be where they needed to excel
    - Phil. 4:15-16
  - Love your neighbor (Matt. 22:39)
  - Love your enemies (Matt. 5:43-48)
    - *Retaliate with love* (Prov. 25:21-22)



# Desire for Sanctification

- So that...
  - Their love was not an end in itself, but was to bring about other results as well
  - *He (13) is the Lord (12), i.e. Jesus (11)*
    - Christ is causing them to increase in love to develop something in them



# Desire for Sanctification

- So that He may...
  - Establish your hearts
    - Establish: *strengthen (3:2); to shore up; buttress; set fast; fix firmly*
    - *Hearts*: whole inner man (see 2:4)
  - In holiness



# What do we mean by *Holy*?



## 1. Distinct

- God is in a different category; *other*

## 2. Dedicated (set apart / special)

- E.g. - *The Holy of Holies*, the altar, etc.

## 3. Disconnected (from sin /evil)

- God *is* holy; we are called to *holiness*



What do we mean by *Holy*?

**GOD**

**LOVE**

**WORLD**

A **LOVE**



# Desire for Sanctification

- So that He may...
  - Establish your hearts in holiness
    - Refers to the quality of character which exhibits itself in virtuous living
    - See also Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1
      - Jesus has it; we are to perfect it



# Desire for Sanctification

- Love and holiness?
- God's law expresses His holiness and love
  - "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." (Rom. 7:12)



# Desire for Sanctification

- Love and holiness?
- God's law expresses His holiness and love
  - "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Gal. 5:14)



# Desire for Sanctification

- Love and holiness?
- God's law expresses His holiness and love
  - "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law." (Rom. 13:8)



# Desire for Sanctification

- Love and holiness?
- God's law expresses His holiness and love
  - "If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well." (James 2:8)



# Desire for Sanctification

- Without blame
  - *Free from fault or defect*
  - The more we love, the more we live in line with the law and therefore *blameless*
  - The more we love, the more we are like God and therefore *holy*



# Desire for Sanctification

- Before our God and Father
- Believers will be judged by the law of love
  - “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:12)





# Desire for Sanctification

- This is the Lord's doing
  - We still play a part in the process: Phil. 1:9-11 (2:12-13)
    - Love ... abound ... blameless ... day of Christ



# So What?

- How can you love more?
  - Is God prompting changes in priorities, time, money, etc.?
- Is your love in line with God's character?
  - Is it promoting holiness in you and others?

