

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

1 Thessalonians 5:23-a; Philippians 4:9; Romans 15:33; Hebrews 13:20; Colossians 3:15

Observations, Questions, and Applications:

O: Paul begins his closing in this final section of his first letter to the Thessalonians with a very interesting phrase, “May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely.”

- **Q:** Who is this God Paul is praying to and how does Paul refer to him?

O: The word peace is “eirene”. It means just that, peace. But in a broader sense it means rest, security, safety, prosperity. It is where we get the name Irene. Kind of sad that this name has fallen out of popularity. Peace would be a great name, don’t you think?

- **Q:** Is it possible to know real peace, the kind of peace described here without a relationship with God? Why or why not? Would it have carried the same thought to have said, “the God Who is the author of peace...?” Is God not the author of peace? (See 1 Corinthians 14:33)
- **Q:** Do you have peace in your life at this moment? Are you troubled about many things? Can you put your finger on what’s troubling you and robbing your peace? Is God in control of those areas?

Applications: Read Philippians 4:6-9 out loud. Tell Jesus you are laying your concerns at His feet. Name them on by one as you give them to Him. End by thanking Him that He cares for you. (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7)

O: Notice that Paul is asking that “God Himself” give them peace and sanctify them. Remember, sanctification simply means cleaned and set apart for holy purposes.

- **Q:** If you were to get a gift or a letter from the person you think is the most important person in the world, would you be amazed? If you received a special bar of soap and fresh set of clothes from your favorite soap boutique, would you be delighted? Don’t you find it amazing that God Himself would personally give you peace and clean and equip you for His special purpose? Totally amazing don’t you think?
- **Q:** Have you ever thought that it might be a good idea to actually present yourself to God on a more regular basis, as in, “Here I am Lord. I want to be available for You today. I yield my will and opinions to your good counsel. Use me as you wish”?

Application: If you hadn’t thought seriously about the above question, try shaping that thought as a personal prayer now. Now be alert to how God might answer that act of surrender.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-b; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Luke 10:17

Observations, Questions, and Applications:

O: Paul mentions three aspects of your existence, spirit, mind and body. Some translations may use the word “soul” instead of “mind.” This concept is referred to as trichotomy. But here Paul seems to be more concerned with the whole of a person rather than the three distinct parts. He says “your whole” spirit, soul, and body. The idea is that he is wanting the whole of our existence to be sanctified and kept blameless until the Lord comes for us.

- **Q:** How hard is it for you to be spiritually minded in a world where the body seems to be exalted above our mind and spirit? It is hard enough without the external influence. Paul talks about this struggle in Galatians 5:17. How important to you is it to be in the word daily, spending time in prayer and fellowship with brothers and sisters? Are these keys to survival that allow you to exist as an alien in this world? They should be.
- **Q:** Is there anyway that we could be seen as “blameless” apart from the mercy and grace of God?

Application: Thank Jesus right now for His sacrifice for your sins. Confess any sin that you are aware. Think of God removing your sin for Jesus sake. Now praise God for seeing you blameless as a result of Jesus' blood that was shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

1 Thessalonians 5:24; Matthew 24:35; Numbers 23:19; 2 Timothy 2:13

Observations, Questions, and Applications:

O: Paul says He who calls us is faithful. He will make it happen. He will do what He promises. He will present us blameless before the father. Not for any good thing we have done but because of the precious blood of Jesus, we are made new. (Titus 3:5) Isn't that good to know?

- **Q:** What was your life like before you met Jesus. Has there been a great change? What is the most significant difference between then and now?

Application: List three of the most remarkable encounters you have had with God. Were they a result of prayer? Would you say God has been faithful to you? Why?

1 Thessalonians 5:25-28; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18-19; Romans 16:16; Colossians 4:15

Observations, Questions, and Applications:

O: Paul gives three brief commands before he closes this letter. 1) Pray for us. 2) Greet the brothers with a holy kiss. 3) Read this letter to all the brothers (and sisters).

- **Q:** Have you ever asked for prayer? What were the circumstances? Did you expect results to the prayers that were offered up? How encouraging was it to know that others were praying?
- **Q:** Has anyone asked you to pray for them. Did you do it right then and there or say I will and then forget? I like to pray when the person asks.

O: Perhaps you have had someone greet you with a kiss. When I was in Russia, often Christians would kiss me on both side of my cheeks. It was uncomfortable and I had to remind myself of this passage. As time went on I came to appreciate the gesture and was humbled by their display of Godly affection. It was indeed a holy kiss and there was no sloppy agapa or carnal kissing. Nothing sensual about their gesture at all. I wonder if Satan doesn't smile in this super charged over reactive current culture when it is difficult and at times impossible to show proper Godly affection without it being misunderstood or misinterpreted. Hmmm?

- **Q:** Way would Paul give this command? What would be the value of this expression and gesture? What would be the response of the recipient?
- **Q:** Have you ever read a letter or an email to someone that shared some important event or news?
- **Q:** Has what Paul has written in this letter been encouraging to you?

Application: Think of the Thessalonians receiving this letter from Paul and imagine the excitement and interest it created. List 4 things you remember from this letter that were encouraging to you.

Application: Think of a setting where Godly affection might be appropriate. Perhaps a family member, like a dad or mom. Determine to show one person your love and appreciation with Godly affection this week. It doesn't have to be a kiss, maybe just a side hug and an "I sure appreciate you." Take notice of the reaction.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen! <+><