

1 Thessalonians: Standing Firm

Lesson 7 “Testing Prophecy”

I. Review and Introduction - This church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey after he left Philippi. Paul taught in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths and was then run out of town by unbelieving Jews. Paul then travelled to Berea and began to minister there, but the Jews from Thessalonica traveled there and ran him out of town there also.

A. Paul wrote *1 Thessalonians* about six months after he planted the church in Thessalonica to strengthen, comfort, and ground this church in truth.

B. Most recently we have studied *chapters 4-5*, which focus heavily on the return of the Lord.

1. I spent one session helping you understand what the greatest tribulation has already occurred in the year 70 A.D. That was a teaching on *Matthew 24* and the Olivet Discourse.
2. I spent the next session unpacking different views of the return of the Lord and their strengths and weaknesses. It’s not as important as we know when and how Jesus is returning as much as we know that He is returning and that we are called to occupy until He comes and be ready for His return. If we can agree on that we can have unity. That’s the main thing.
3. The last point about the return of the Lord is it is an encouragement when we go through hardship in this life.

C. Tonight we are going to focus on the next part of Paul’s letter and various exhortations and practical instructions he gives this church. Our theme is going to be on learning to not quench the spirit and how to test prophecy.

II. Testing Prophecy

A. **1 Thessalonians 5:12-15** - In the first 4 verses after talking about the return of the Lord, Paul begins to give this church practical instruction for how to do life until Jesus returns. We are to illustrate and demonstrate God’s kingdom until Jesus returns.

1. **Verses 12-13** We are to know those who labor among us (pastors, other ministry gifts) who labor among us and are over us in the Lord and esteem them for the work they do.
 - a. The word know doesn’t mean to be the pastor’s best friend. That’s not possible. In the Greek we are to know a pastor by observation (what they teach and the way they do life).
 - b. Ministry leaders are over us in the Lord which means we are to submit. **Hebrews 13:7** isn’t real popular in the American church. This verse

doesn't mean a pastor needs to tell you what car to buy or who to marry like the shepherding movement taught, but it does mean there is an honor for a pastor and we follow their teachings if they are from the Bible.

2. **Verses 14-15** Paul tells this church to correct those who are unruly (military term for disorder). A big part of a pastor's job is to bring correction so we can be conformed to the image of Christ. Paul also reminds us to comfort the fainthearted and to not pay evil for evil, but to turn the other cheek (Sermon on the Mount). **This is practical wisdom that keeps unity in the church and helps it flourish and multiply.**

B. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-21

1. **Verses 16-20** all focus on the theme of not quenching the spirit. What's the difference between grieving the Holy Spirit and quenching the Holy Spirit? Sin grieves the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30-31**). We quench the Holy Spirit when stifle Him in something He is leading us to do something such as operate in the gifts of the spirit/miraculous. **It's no less unholy than grieving the Holy Spirit.**
 - a. Rejoicing is a manifestation of the spirit - **Ephesians 5:17-20.**
 - b. Prayer is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit - **Zechariah 12:10** - By the way, prayer isn't just us telling God what we want, it is about communion with God where we listen and also make requests.
 - c. Thanksgiving is a manifestation of the spirit - **Ephesians 5:17-20.**
 - d. Don't despise prophecies which are a manifestation of the spirit.
2. Why does Paul say to not despise prophecies?
 - a. Because when people endeavor to flow with the spirit it is easy to become jaded and despise the prophetic. Example of 2020.
 - b. Another reason is there are "prophetic people" who try to come into churches and prophecy over everyone, want to get the mic and take the stage without establishing credibility, etc. They make people not feel safe and many pastors avoid the gifts because many of these people aren't submissive. ex: Me and January 2021 when someone wanted to give a word that contradicted what I taught the previous week. I wouldn't give him the mic and he quit the church. His word turned out to be wrong.
3. As problematic as the prophetic can be, it is still a gift from God. We are called to test prophetic words that come forth and hold fast to that which is good.
1 Corinthians 14:29-31. How do we test prophecies?
 - a. Does the prophecy line up with scripture? Example of person saying God was going to kill their wife so they could marry someone else - didn't line up, not from God. **By the way this is why we must be diligent to study and really learn scripture. This person misquoted scripture to justify their agenda.**

b. By the spirit - Internal witness - usually accompanied by peace, strong desire, light about a situation, dreams, and temporary pains for words of knowledge.

c. Have mature Christians help you judge a word. Example of gatekeepers at Charis. Here you can run something past Craig, Paige, or me on Sundays and if we feel like it is God we will release it. **Sometimes a word can be from God, but the timing isn't right to release it.**

d. We know prophetic people by their fruits - **Matthew 7:15-17**. Occasionally a person with bad fruit can have a right prophetic word (ex: Balaam), but we shouldn't give a person with bad fruit a lot of influence in our lives.

e. Some prophecies are conditional. Ex: King Josiah.

III. Conclusion - We are going to conclude by taking a few moments to practice and see if God gives anyone anything. If He does awesome, we'll give it out. You may get it right or you may get it wrong, but this is how we learn.

A. Offering - **1 Timothy 6:17**

B. Pray Closing Prayer and End Service