

Final Prayer & Requests
1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Introduction

This morning we come to the conclusion of 1 Thessalonians. Please turn to chapter 5:23 as we look at Paul's final prayer and requests. It has been a good study of this church that "*became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia*" (1 Thess. 1:7), and it is still a model for churches today. Though they were a church that was probably less than a year old at the time Paul writes this letter, they already demonstrated great maturity. As I have pointed out previously, there were three major factors in producing that maturity. The first was their reception of the word of God so that they responded to the gospel with genuine conversion turning "*to God from idols to serve the living and true God*" (1 Thess. 1:9; 2:13).

The second factor was that this church was born in the midst of tribulation, suffering and affliction (1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4). The scriptures are direct on this point that God uses the trials and tribulation we go through in life to mature us (Romans 5:3-8; James 1:2-4). Affliction forces you to consider foundational truths that give purpose and meaning to your existence and upon which you should be building your life. The two most foundational truths are these: Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*" and Romans 5:8, "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" God, our Creator, has provided a means by which we can be forgiven and reconciled to Him through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. His resurrection proved His claims and promises are true, and that gives meaning to life that transcends whatever the circumstances of the here and now might be. It gives purpose for life in the glory of our loving God, and that makes everything else secondary or even frivolous.

Solomon summed up life on this earth as vanity, an empty chasing after the wind, and concluded with the wise advice to remember your Creator, fear Him and keep His commandments for He is the judge (Ecclesiastes 12). Tribulation forces people to either mature, seek escape, or pursue futility. The mature embrace the challenges of life to make the most of their few years on this planet for the glory of God. Others seek a means to escape the pain of life. The most common means are drugs, alcohol, entertainment and hedonism. Others pursue the futility of materialism, power or fame, all of which are fleeting, and none of which you can take with you when you die.

The third factor was their hope in the return of Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:1-2 states,² "*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*"³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Peter points out the same truth in 2 Peter 3:14. After describing the Day of the Lord and the destruction of the present heavens and earth and the formation of new ones, he gives the command,¹⁴ "*Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.*" Throughout Thessalonians Paul points to the return of the Lord as a hope, comfort and encouragement to them (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23).

The Thessalonians are a good model to follow in turning from whatever idols you had in your life before you heard the Gospel to serve the true and living God. They are a good model for evangelism for the word of the Lord sounded forth from them to the neighboring territories and far beyond wherever their seamen went. They are a good model of maturity in walking with and pleasing God as well as loving one another though Paul exhorts them to "*excel still more*" in all three areas (1 Thess. 4:1,10). They are a good model for how to withstand and respond properly to affliction in faith and standing firm

in the Lord in hope of the return of Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 3:3-8, 2-13). It would do us all well to periodically read 1 Thessalonians and be reminded of what we can and should be as both a church and individuals within a church.

We now come to the final prayer and postscript requests that Paul makes to the Thessalonian believers on behalf of himself and his missionary companions. He gives a prayer in verses 23-24, a request for prayer in verse 25, two final commands in verses 26-27, and the final benediction in verse 28. There is a lot contained in these final verses and each one is important, so we will summarize and then examine each in greater detail.

Final Prayer - 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

This is Paul's concluding prayer for them which is connected to the previous series of commands by the conjunction δὲ / de translated here as "now." The prayer is for what God has done and will do that enables them to carry out the commands to: Appreciate and esteem those laboring diligently among them; Live in peace with one another; Admonish the unruly; Encourage the fainthearted; Help the weak; Be patient with everyone; Not repay others with evil for evil; Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people; Always rejoice; Pray without ceasing; In everything give thanks; Not quench the Spirit; Not despise prophetic utterances; Examine everything carefully; Hold fast to that which is good; and Abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).

The God of Peace. Proper prayer begins by addressing the proper person. The NASB, NKJV and ESV all translate the first sentence as, *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely / completely.* However, the strong emphasis made in the Greek grammar is on the identity of the One to whom Paul is making his prayer request and may come out a little better with a more wooden literal translation like, *"now He Himself, the God of the peace, may He sanctify you to the entire end."* The ability to carry out the commands given previously will be dependent upon the work of the God that is characterized by peace and Who gives peace to those reconciled to Him through faith in Jesus Christ. This peace was part of Paul's salutation in 1:1, *"grace to you and peace."*

Paul uses these same terms to identify God five other times (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11 & Phil. 4:9) and the phrase "Lord of peace" in 2 Thess. 3:16. This arises from the Hebrew Scriptures identifying Him as the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). I have pointed out before (1 Thess. 1:1 & 5:13) that the word translated here as "peace" (εἰρήνη /eirānā) has a root idea of being in unity and harmony that brings tranquility. That is much, much more than the common idea that peace is the absence of conflict. God is the God of peace primarily because the triune God is in complete unity and harmony within Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is from this peace within the Godhead that He can offer peace to sinful man.

Jesus *"came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near"* (Eph. 2:17) and to reconcile those formerly alienated from Him and hostile in mind and engaged in evil deeds by making *"peace through the blood of His cross."* Jesus' sacrificial death paid the price of man's sin and is the basis for forgiveness and transformation of those who believe in Him into His own people who will be presented *"before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach"* (Col. 1:20-22). The gospel is a message of peace. As Paul put it in Rom. 5:1, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

God speaks to and blesses His people with peace (Psalm 29:11; 85:8). The Lord of peace can grant peace to His people in every circumstance (2 Thess. 3:16), and we have access to God to receive that peace as described in Philippians 4:6-7, ⁶ *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and*

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Sanctification to the End. This peace with God is the foundation for Paul’s prayer that God would sanctify them to the entire end. This is in the optative mood meaning it is an expression of a desire, a wish, that he cannot himself control which is why he is pleading with God for it to happen. To sanctify, ἁγιάζω / hagiázō, has the same root as the word holy. It is to set apart to God, to make someone holy, and to increase that holiness. Sanctification is past, present and future. It begins at salvation when you are initially set apart from the kingdom of darkness, the world, and set apart to the kingdom of light, God’s kingdom. That is why peace with God is the foundation for this prayer because the gospel is the message of the offer of salvation and peace with God and the starting point of sanctification. When you are saved from sin, you become a child of God set apart to Him, a holy one clothed with the righteousness of Christ, a saint. Saints are sanctified.

The process of sanctification continues throughout life as you continue to grow in the knowledge and grace of God to recognize your sinful actions, attitudes and desires and turn from them to more fully embrace a changed heart and mind resulting in living a life that is marked by increasing holiness. Paul pointed to this twice before in this letter. His prayer in 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 included his desire that God “*may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.*” In 1 Thessalonians 4:3 he is direct in telling them, “*this is the will of God, your sanctification*” and then continued on to contrast that with the sexual immorality that was part of Greek society. God will continue to sanctify believers throughout their lives for a purpose of salvation is to conform Christians into the image of His son (Romans 8:29). Frankly, that is even what the word Christian - little Christ - implies.

Sanctification will reach its ultimate fulfillment at the return of Jesus for His followers for then “*we shall be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is*” (1 John 3:2). We will be transformed and receive our glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). We will be completely sanctified and no longer have to struggle against sin.

Paul’s prayer wish here encompasses both of these last two aspects of sanctification. He wants God to continue to sanctify them in the present and bring them to complete sanctification at Jesus’ return. The word translated as completely or entirely here, ὁλοτελής / holotelās, is a compound word joining the word for “wholly and utterly” with the word for “end.” Paul wants God to sanctify them through and through to the very end of life and time.

Complete Blameless Preservation. The second element in Paul’s prayer wish is that God will keep or preserve them, but the verb does not occur until the end of the sentence, so English translations have to move the word order around for it to make sense to us. NASB translates this as “*and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Following the Greek grammar structure you would have something like this, “*and totality of you, the spirit and the soul and the body, without blame in the presences of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ, may it be kept.*” That is harder to follow in English, but it brings out the emphasis Paul makes a little better.

One reason for Paul’s sentence structure is that there is a word play being made between the first and second elements of Paul’s prayer regarding the adjectives “entirely” and “complete” (or “completely” and “whole” in the NKJV & ESV). Both adjectives are compound words based on ὅλος / holos which means “wholly and utterly,” “a totality as a complete unit.” The first adjective joins this to τέλος / telos, which means end or finish resulting in a meaning of “the whole thing to the end.” The second adjective joins it with κληρος / klāros which refers to a lot or what is obtained by lot giving the combination (ὅλοκληρος / holoklāros) a meaning of “complete in all its parts.” Those parts are then listed as the spirit and the soul and the body. If you are using a verse that translates this as “whole spirit, and soul and

body,” (KJV, NKJV, ESV, NIV), make sure you understand that “whole” refers to all three and not just spirit. And though the verb does not occur until the end of the sentence, these are the parts that make up the whole that are to be kept blameless in the presences of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point most literature gets into a discussion about the nature of man and whether it is made up of two parts (dichotomos) or three parts (trichotomos). I will let the theologians spill ink over this as they debate each other. I personally find the issue to be non-productive. First, it is obvious that man has both a material (body, flesh) and non-material nature (soul, spirit, mind). Second, the terms spirit and soul are used interchangeably in describing the material and non-material nature of man (Matt. 10:28; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; James 2:26). Third, while passages that use both terms soul and spirit indicate at least a difference in meaning in those passages, what exactly that may be is very difficult because the words are used as synonyms so often with various shade of meaning, and the usage of both in Hebrews 4:12 shows a blending of them - *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”* Marrow and bone intertwine physically and how do you divide between thoughts and intentions of the heart since they have a dependence upon each other? The word of God can do what man cannot do.

Paul’s point here is that the whole unit of you is to be sanctified and each part that makes up that whole, spirit, soul and body, is to be preserved blameless. The word preserve or kept, τηρέω / tārēō, has a basic meaning of “to keep in view,” “to watch,” “to watch over” and from that developed the idea of “watch to guard protectively” and “preserve.” The word blameless, ἀμέμπτως / amemptōs, is to be without blame in the sense that there is no cause for censure. It is not perfection of being without defect, but rather of “a condition where no just cause for complaint can be raised.” Paul used this same word back in 3:13. Paul’s prayer here is that God would watch over every aspect of each believer to guard them against stumbling into a sin that would be a just cause for censure.

The timing and extent of this prayer is the same as it was earlier in 1 Thessalonians 3:13. It is *“in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ”* which is a reference to what Paul detailed in 4:13-17 when the Lord descends from heaven and both the dead in Christ and those who are alive and remain are caught up together to meet Him in the air and so always be with Him. Essentially Paul is praying that God will do this in them until Jesus is again present with them at which time they will be transformed and be made completely blameless in every part because they will be entirely sanctified.

The word translated as “coming” here, παρουσία / parousia, actually means “presence” or the appearing of someone who has been absent so that they are present. It is often translated as “coming” in reference to Jesus’ return because He is currently in heaven and will be coming back. Since other words are also translated as “coming” in reference to Jesus’ return, it gets confusing. I think it would be better to translate this in a consistent way that differentiates it such as “presence” (Young’s) or even “presence of His appearing” when referring to Jesus. I have marked by English Bible that way just so I don’t get confused.

The Faithful God. 1 Thessalonians 5:24. Paul concludes this prayer with a statement about God’s character which guarantees the prayer will be answered. *Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also bring it to pass.*” Since it is a present active participle that is used and I like the certitude of the older English “shall,” my own translation of this verse is *“Faithful is He who is calling you, who also shall perform it.”*

Faithful, πιστός / pistos, is a characteristic of God. He is faithful, trustworthy, believable, reliable. God always keeps His promises and is true to His own character. Even Balaam understood that proclaiming in his oracle in Numbers 23:19 in which he blessed Israel, *“God is not a man, that He would lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”*

Faithfulness arises from God's attributes of righteousness, justice, immutability and sovereignty which in turn is an extension of being omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 15:29, *"Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."* Paul was direct in Titus 1:2 in regards to the certainty of his message about *"the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ago."* God cannot lie because that would be contrary to His righteousness and justice. He fulfills His promises because He is immutable, he does not change, as stated in Hebrews 13:8, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* James 1:17 points out that there is not even a variation or shifting shadow in Him. That is a terror to the unrighteous, but a blessing to those He has chosen to receive His mercy and grace as pointed out in Malachi 3:6, *"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."* His ability to do what He says He will do is because He is sovereign. No entity can outsmart Him, overpower Him or go around Him. He can and will do all that He says. God said of Himself in Isaiah 46:10-11, ¹⁰ *"Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';* ¹¹ *Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it."* That is the basis for the security of all who have placed their hope in God, for as Romans 11:29 states, *"for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."* God's calling is effectual for salvation and sanctification.

Paul assures the Thessalonians that God will answer His prayers for them because God's character is faithful and He will perform all that He promises in keeping with His own attributes and character. He will sanctify them wholly to the end and preserve every part of them blameless.

What follows this prayer is a directive for them to return the favor.

Pray for Us - 1 Thessalonians 5:25

The command here is simple and direct, *"Brethren, you be praying for us,"* yet is quite significant. First, he once again addresses the Thessalonians as brethren. The relationship of Christians as members of the same spiritual family is motivation to pray for one another. It speaks not only of the bonds that belong in a family, but also the closeness and intimacy that is actually needed if we are to pray properly for each other.

The importance of this to Paul is seen in that he states this as a command, not a request, which lays this upon them as a duty. It is that important to Paul that they pray for him, Silas and Timothy. What were they to pray on their behalf? Certainly they could pray for them just as Paul and the missionaries were praying for the Thessalonians. That would include sanctification and preservation in being blameless as he had just talked about, but also increasing and abounding in love and having established hearts without blame in holiness as Paul had prayed for them in chapter 3:12-13. It would also include the normal things for which we should pray for one another as modeled in the various prayers recorded throughout the Scriptures. But Paul also has some specific prayer requests he mentions in his other letters. Here are some of those which give direction in praying for missionaries and ministers of every kind, which includes praying for one another since everyone in the church is at least a missionary to their own community, and all Christians are to use their spiritual gifts in ministry.

In Romans 15:31-32 he requests that they pray ³¹ *"that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;* ³² *so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company."*

In 2 Corinthians 1 Paul describes some of the hardships they had faced in ministry and then in verse 11 he mentions them *"joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many."* You join in the ministry of others by your prayers for them. That also enables you to join in giving thanks for what God does through those ministries.

In Ephesians 6, after describing necessity of and various elements of the spiritual armor of God, Paul instructs them on prayer and includes how to pray for him in verses 19-20. ¹⁹ *“and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”*

In Philippians 1:19-20 Paul cites that his *“deliverance would be through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Christ”* that he would not be put to shame in anything with all boldness he would exalt Christ with his body whether by life or by death. That was a reason he could rejoice though in prison at the time.

In Colossians 4:3-4 Paul asks them to pray *“that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”*

In 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3 Paul wants them *“to pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; ² and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”*

Common themes in these prayers include: *Rescue from perverse and evil people. *Open doors for the gospel. *Clarity and boldness in proclaiming the gospel and God’s word. *Have acceptable service to the saints. *Deliverance from anything that would cause shame. *Boldness to exalt Christ whether by life or by death. *Join in the ministry through prayer. Those are all extra elements to add to your prayers for those that minister to others.

Two Requests - 1 Thessalonians 5:26-27

Paul makes his last requests in verses 26-27 before his concluding benediction in verse 28. The first is a common conclusion in Paul’s letter with some form of it also occurring in all of them except Galatians and Ephesians. *“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.”* Like the Hawaiian word *Aloha* and the Latin *salutare*, the word here translated greet, ἀσπάζομαι / haspazomai, was to be done when first meeting or when departing. A common form of such greeting in those societies was to kiss each other on the cheek as is still done in many countries. The addition that it was to be a holy kiss was to remove any salacious element in the greeting. It was usually men kissing men and women kissing women since they often sat separately in the early churches. In the centuries that followed, abuse and accusations reduced the practice in the western church to a liturgical form or replacement with what we might call here a holy handshake.

This is seventeenth time Paul refers to the Thessalonians as brethren, and adds that all of them are to be greeting properly. No one is to be left out including those he had to correct. This final reference to the being part of the same spiritual family adds to the importance of the greeting. While the practice varies a lot from culture to culture, greetings in whatever form they take - kiss, hug, handshake, bow, salute, tip of the hat, fist bump, etc. - upon meeting and departure are important and especially within families. They convey a sense of pleasure upon meeting and sadness upon departure often with a wish for their well being.

The final request is not given as a command, but it certainly has the strength of one. *“I adjure you by the Lord to read the letter to all the brethren.”* To adjure, ἐνορκίζω / enorkizō, has a root meaning of putting someone under oath. Here it is to authoritatively bind them to a solemn obligation, which in this case it to read the letter to all the brethren. It was important to Paul that everyone in the congregation hear the letter read since it was written to the whole church at Thessalonica. They only would have received the original letter and they did not have copy machines. The only way for the congregation to know what was in it was to read it out loud to them. Making hand copies would have taken a lot of time, and there would have been those in the church that could not read.

Interesting enough, the final word before Paul gives his benediction is brethren. A word that is repeated often is important, and Paul uses the term *brethren* eighteen times in this short letter. All true Christians are part of one spiritual family. There is no room for racism of any kind in any direction within the church. Those who evaluate either worth or oppression level based on melanin count or ethnic heritage are evil. We are one family regardless of skin hue. We are brothers and sisters who sacrificially love each other not classes of oppressors or those oppressed. Any Christian who has been “woke” to social justice, critical race theory or intersectionality, has turned away from God to follow the paths of wickedness. To be woke to the world is to become unconscious, asleep toward God. Such people need to repent.

Benediction - 1 Thessalonians 5:28

Paul closes his letter with a benediction, and he concludes just as he had started with a statement of God’s grace to be extended to them. “*The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you.*” The grammatical structure places an emphasis that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and it His grace that Paul seeks to be with the Thessalonians.

Divine grace is an extension of God’s love by which grants His favor on the undeserving. God’s mercy holds back the execution of His wrath on sinners. God’s grace replaces the deserved wrath with undeserved blessing because of the atonement and work of Jesus Christ. Grace is the source of our salvation, for it is by God’s grace we are saved (Eph. 2:8). Grace is the means by which we can live the Christian life for it is the Holy Spirit that enlightens, gifts and empowers us to walk with and serve Christ. It is grace that gives us hope in the return of our Lord to fulfill His promises to take us to be with Him forever in the place He has prepared for us in heaven with the Father.

Go in grace of God to live for His glory and proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to others that they may also become adopted brothers and sisters in our family whose future is certain because of Jesus’ promise to return for us.

Sermon Notes - March 7, 2021
Final Prayer & Requests - 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Introduction

Mature because of genuine _____ (1:9; 2:13)

Mature because of _____ (1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4 cf James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-8)

Tribulation forces people to either _____, seek escape, or pursue futility

Mature because their _____ was in the Lord's return (see 1 John 3:1-2)

A _____ of conversion, evangelism, maturity, proper response to adversity

Final Prayer - 1 Thessalonians 5:23

The prayer is for what God has done and will do that enables them to carry out the previous _____

The God of Peace

The God characterized by _____ and gives peace

Peace = _____ and harmony that brings tranquility - The Triune God has that within Himself

The gospel proclaims peace through Jesus who makes peace through His own _____ bringing forgiveness

The Lord of peace grants peace to His people (2 Thess 3:16), and we access it through _____ (Phil. 4:6-7)

Sanctification to the End

To sanctify is to make holy, _____. It is past (salvation), present (Christian life), & future (glorification)

His prayer is for God to _____ to sanctify them and bring them to complete sanctification at Jesus' return

Complete Blameless Preservation

We are to become sanctified as a whole entity and be blameless in _____ of that makes up that whole

Man is both material and _____, with the soul & spirit overlapping and usually indistinguishable

The _____ of you is to be sanctified with each part that makes up that whole preserved blameless

Preserved, τηρέω / tāreō, "to keep in view," "watch over," "_____"

Blameless, ἀμέπτως / amemptōs, without cause for censure, no _____ for complaint

Paul is praying for God to do this until Jesus _____, at which time they will be transformed / glorified

"coming" is παρουσία / parousia, which means "_____", "presence at his appearing"

The Faithful God. 1 Thessalonians 5:24

God is characterized by being _____ / trustworthy / reliable which arises out of His attributes

1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2 - God cannot lie for He is _____ and just

God fulfills His promises because He is _____ (Heb. 13:8; James 1:17; Malachi 3:6)

God can do what He says because He is omniscient, omnipotent, _____ (Isaiah 46:10-11; Rom 11:29)

Pray for Us - 1 Thessalonians 5:25

This is a command, a _____, because it was important that they pray for them - it's part of being in the family

Specific prayer requests: Rom 15:31-32; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph 6:19-20; Phil 1:19-20; Col. 4:3-4; 2 Thess 3:1-3

Two Requests - 1 Thessalonians 5:26-27

“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss” a common form of _____ used at meeting or departure
_____ - within the family of God - to be done whatever cultural form of greeting is used

“I adjure you by the Lord to read the letter to all the brethren.” Adjure = authoritatively _____

Brethren, used _____ times and the last word used before the benediction. True Christians are _____ family

To be “woke” to the world is to be unconscious, _____ toward God. Such people need to _____

Benediction - 1 Thessalonians 5:28

“The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you.” The emphasis is that Jesus Christ is our _____

Divine grace is an extension of God's love by which grants His _____ on the undeserving

God's _____ saves us, sustains us, and is the source of our hope for the future

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many “brethren” Holy Spirit. Talk with your parents about the importance Christians being part of one spiritual family and what that means.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. The Thessalonians were a model church. What factors enabled them to mature so quickly? In what ways are they a model for church to follow now? What is the relationship of Paul's final prayer in 5:23-24 and the previous commands? What is peace and why is that a characteristic of God? How does God extend peace to man? How can a Christian access God's peace? What is sanctification? How is it something that past, present and future? Explain. What does the Greek word (ὁλοτελής / holotelās) translated complete / entire mean? What does the Greek word (ὁλόκληρος / holoklēros) translated entire / whole mean? What is the relationship between the two words? Man is by nature both material and immaterial. Why is it difficult to distinguish between soul and spirit? What differences are in view when both are used together? How does God watch / guard a person to keep them blameless? What is the meaning of παρουσία / parousia? Why then is it so commonly translated as “coming”? What does it mean to be faithful? How is this characteristic demonstrated in God and what is its relationship to His other attributes? Why does Paul command them to “pray for us”? In what ways are we to specifically told to pray for one another? What are some of the specific ways Paul wanted others to pray for him as a missionary? What does it mean to greet someone and why is that important? What is the importance that this greeting is between brethren? Why did actually greeting each other with a holy kiss diminish or stop in the western churches? What are some of the ways we greet each other? Why was it important to Paul that his letter be read to all the brethren in Thessalonica? What is the significance Paul using “brethren” 18 times in this letter? Are “woke” people being Biblical? Explain. What is the relationship of God's grace to salvation; present life; hope for the future? How can you live in God's grace and extend it to others?