

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 3:6-13

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 - For what is our **hope** or **joy** or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? **Is it not you?** 20 For **you are our glory and joy.**

- The setting here is when Jesus returns
- In the end, when our life is over
- Paul is saying that when Jesus returns, the **Thessalonians** will be the source of Paul's **joy, hope, and glory**
- There's a problem with this statement
- Shouldn't Jesus or God be the source of the Thessalonians joy, hope, and glory?

Romans 5:1-2 – Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we **rejoice** in **hope** of the **glory of God**.

- **Joy, hope, glory** here is found in God

Philippians 3:1; 4:4– Finally, my brothers, **rejoice** in the Lord...4 **Rejoice in the Lord** always; again I will say, **Rejoice**.

- Central to what Paul teaches is that God or Jesus is our joy, hope, and glory
- How can we reconcile that Paul is finding his joy, hope, and glory in people rather than in God?

Hebrews 12:2 – looking to Jesus, the **founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the **joy** that was set before **him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- **Founder and perfecter of our faith** – notice that Jesus gives us our faith, then after we have faith, He perfects that faith in us over time
- What was the **joy** that was **set before Jesus that made him endure the cross?**
- We might tend to think it was the reward of being seated at the right hand of the throne of God, but He really already had that position before time ever began
- So what was it?

Ephesians 5:25-27 – ... Christ also loved the **church** and **gave Himself up for her**, 26 **so that He might sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. (NASB)**

- Christ loved the church and **“endured the cross”** so that He might sanctify her
- What does that mean?
- Jesus wants a beautiful bride
- He wants the church (believers) to be purified of our sinful nature so that when He returns we can be presented spotless, holy, and blameless before Him
- Christ has to create the kind of bride He wants by shedding His own blood to achieve it, because we are sinful and unholy
- He suffered so that we may be clean
- That’s the joy set before Him that allows Him to endure the cross

2 Corinthians 3:18 – And we all, with unveiled faces **reflecting the glory of the Lord**, are being **transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another,... (NET)

- Christ enduring the cross allows us to be transformed to the glory of the Lord
- How?

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - And **you became imitators of us and of the Lord when you received the message** with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit,...

- We start to imitate the Lord/reflect His glory after we receive the gospel message and are saved
- A fully purified church has the same image as the Lord
- So when Paul is rejoicing in the people of Christ (at Jesus's return), there is no conflict
- Paul will be rejoicing in a perfectly reflected image of Jesus Himself
- A transformation that Jesus died to achieve

2 Corinthians 11:2 – For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy, because **I promised you in marriage** to one husband, to **present you as a pure virgin to Christ.** (NET)

- Jesus uses a process of sanctification to purify you so that you will be without spot and blameless, like a pure virgin
- Paul's role is to be the human who establishes and exhorts believers to mature them in that process of purification
- Paul's role (the reason he exists) is to have the Thessalonians ready, so that when Jesus returns, he can **“present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”**

Colossians 1:22; 28-29 – but now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him... **(God's role)**

28 We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ. 29 Toward this goal I also labor, struggling according to his power that powerfully works in me. **(Our role)**

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 - For what is our **hope** or **joy** or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? **Is it not you?** 20 For **you are our glory and joy.**

- Paul wanted to see the Thessalonians so bad because he did not know if they were going to be saved or not
- He knew that Satan was going to hinder/tempt them to try to keep the seed of the gospel from penetrating
- He knew that God was going to test them to see if they truly loved Him or not
- If they were true believers, Paul trusted they would make it to glorification

Romans 8:30 - And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 - But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your **faith and love** and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— 7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your **faith**.

- Why did Paul use those specific words?

2 Peter 1:4-7 - ...so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your **faith** with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with **love**.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-9 – ...9 For how can we thank God enough for you, for all the **joy** we feel because of you before our God? (*NET*)

1 Thessalonians 3:10 - We pray earnestly night and day to see you in person and make up what may be lacking in your faith.

- Prayer is not one and done!
- Satan hindered Paul from reaching them and God allowed it
- There may be a season of prayer that isn't answered immediately
- Just because you may have progressed through the stages of sanctification quickly, you still have things you lack in your faith
- Remember, the gospel is easy enough for a child to understand to be able to attain faith, but we spend the rest of our lives building on top of that faith
- I know people who have been in church for decades and they don't seem to progress at all
- Our job is to purify ourselves so we're ready when Jesus returns

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 – Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you **increase and abound in love for one another** and **for all**, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

- After telling them that he prays for them constantly, Paul begins to pray
- His prayer is that the Thessalonians continue in the process of sanctification
- Purifying yourself is done when you **“increase and abound in love for one another and for all,”**
- Paul’s desire is to present the Thessalonians as a pure virgin to Christ when He returns

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 - Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

- Paul then starts to address the specific problems the Thessalonians need to work on in Chapters 4 and 5

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 – **For this is the will of God, your sanctification;** that is, that you abstain from **sexual immorality;** 4 that each of you know **how to possess his own vessel in sanctification** and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother **in the matter** because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

- The will of God is that you go through the process of purification
- One area the Thessalonians struggled is with sexual immorality (same as today)
- God's will is that you possess your own vessel in sanctification (purely) and that's contrasted with the way the unbelievers possess their vessel
- Paul also specifically states for them not to possess your vessel in a way that would transgress or defraud other believers
- Transgress – “to sin against”
- Defraud – “to selfishly take something for personal gain at someone else's expense”
- So what is a vessel?

1 Thessalonians 4:4; 6 – that each of you know how to possess his own **vessel** in sanctification and **honor**,...6 and that no man **transgress and defraud his brother** in the matter

- 2 prevailing thoughts on what vessel means:

1.) Vessel means your personal body (control your desires)

2.) Vessel means your wife

1 Peter 3:7 – Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing **honor** to the woman as the weaker **vessel**,...

- The thought is, that a believer honors his wife (vessel) and does not go after another believers wife (vessel)

1 Thessalonians 4:4; 6 – that each of you know how to **possess his own vessel in sanctification** and honor,...6 and that no man **transgress and defraud his brother** in the matter

- My personal belief is it's a little of both
- I think it has to do with controlling your own desires, especially men desiring women
- I also think it has future implications for when you do get married
- Paul just got done explaining to us that Jesus endured the cross to purify his bride from the sin she has, to make her a pure virgin
- He continues with that thought process and encourages the Thessalonians to live in such a way that they possess their vessel in a pure way
- Before marriage a believing man and woman does not defile their bodies with sexual immorality together. Why?
- So that when that man and that women eventually do marry, they are pure
- And if they marry someone else, you have not “sinned against” or “selfishly taken her for personal gain” and stolen that honor from the future brother who marries her

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 – For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8
Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

- Remember it's not just Paul that has come along side (exhorted) them to help establish the Thessalonians to bring them from impurity to holiness
- The Holy Spirit is in each believer
- So to go against what Paul is teaching them is not just going against Paul, but God Himself

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 – Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to **love one another**, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11 and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 **so that you may walk properly before outsiders** and be dependent on no one

- Continue the process of sanctification
- Continue **loving other believers** by transforming from impurity to holiness
- Live in such a way that you set an example **to unbelievers** and they will see the love you have for them also
- Do you have the same desire Paul had?
- Are you just comfortable knowing that your family attends church?
- Or do you truly have a desire to see the lost people around you believe?
- Do you exist, like Paul did, to say “For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord?”

