

**“Forward Through Fellowship!”**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:25-28**

**Introduction:**

1. Have You Ever Named A Tree?
  - Name Children / Pets / Cars – Tree? Don’t Seem All That Important!
  - Probably Only A Handful Of Trees Are Notable & Worthy Enough To Have A Personal Name!
    - “Methuselah” Is One Of Those Trees!
  - “Methuselah” Is A Bristlecone Pine Tree Found In The White Mountains Of California!
    - It Is The World’s Oldest Tree, With A Confirmed Age Of 4,770 Years, And Can Be Found In The Guinness Book Of World Records!
  - How Long It Has Grown Is Remarkable! But It Is Even More Remarkable, When You Consider **Where** It Has Grown!
    - The Altitude Is Just 2,000 Feet From Timberline, The Point Where Trees Cannot Grow!
    - The Climate Is Cold All Year Round, With Only About 6 Weeks Of Warm Enough Weather To Grow In!
    - The Soil Is Mostly Limestone, With Very Few Nutrients!
    - It Receives Less Than 12" Of Rain Each Year!
    - Scientist: “One Of The Most Flora-Unfriendly Environments On The Planet!”
  - And Yet, It Is **Here** Where You Will Find “Methuselah!”
    - Even With Everything Against It!
    - Yet, For 4,770 Years, This Tree Has Stood Firm!
2. This Is Why Paul Wrote This Letter To The Thessalonians!
  - He Wanted Them To Be Like “Methuselah!”
    - His Desire Was: “That no man should be moved by these afflictions!” (3:3)
    - Even Though It Seemed Like Everything Was Against This Young Church!
  - So, Just How Can They Persevere? How Can They Remain Faithful, In One Of The Most “Church-Unfriendly Environments On The Planet?”
    - Paul Wraps Up This Letter With Some Significant And Important Final Words!
    - Final Words Are Important!
      - How Many Remember The Last Words Of A Loved One To Them!
      - I Remember My Dad’s! “Goodbye Son!”
  - Through His Final Words In 5:25-28, He Teaches Them How To Persevere & Remain Faithful – In Spite Of What They Face!
3. **Fellowship Is The Fuel For Faithfulness** And Perseverance!
  - Fellowship Is What Will Keep Them / You Moving Forward!
    - When You Have No Gas In Your Car, You Cannot Move Forward! You Need Fuel! Fellowship Is The Fuel For Faithfulness! Fellowship Is How You Become A “Methuselah” For Christ, In The Worst Possible Environment!
  - 3 Primary Areas Of Fellowship:
    1. **Fellowship In Prayer! With God!**
      - 5:25 - “Brethren, pray for us!”
        - One Of The Reasons “Methuseleh” Became The World’s Oldest Tree, Is Because Of It’s **Roots!**
          - “Can Liberally Spread Their Roots . . . Maximizing Intake Of These Scant Resources!”
          - Roots Are Many & Deep! So Must Our Prayer!
      - Prayer Is Essential! (Like Roots!)
        - Without It, We Cannot Grow! Paul Knew This, So He Prayed For Them! (1:2; 3:10) He Commanded Them To Pray! (5:17) And He Asks For Prayer! (Here!)
      - Prayer Is Edifying! (Like Roots!) – Builds Up!
        - Paul Recognized That He Needed (Along With Timothy & Silas) Their Prayer, As Much As They Needed His Prayer!
          - And For The Same Reasons! Afflictions! Growth! Relationships! Opportunities!
        - The More People Praying, The Stronger These Spiritual Roots Become! Why Missionaries Want / Need Prayer Partners Even More Than Financial Support!

- Prayer Is Effective! (Like Roots!)
  - When You Fellowship In Prayer – With God & With God’s People – You Are Not Just Praying For Them!
    - You Are Partnering With Them!
    - You Are Participating With Them!
    - 2 Corinthians 1:11 - “Ye also helping together by prayer for us!”
  - Only Effective Because Jesus Christ Has Opened The Way For You To Pray! Romans 8:34 - “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!”
- Because Fellowship In Prayer Is The Fuel For Faithfulness!
  - We Need A “Network Of Prayer” – A “Root-System Of Prayer!” Prayer For Others! Prayer For Ourselves!

## 2. ***Fellowship With People! The People Of God!***

- 5:26 - “Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss!”
  - Another Reason “Methuseleh” Became The World’s Oldest Tree, Is Because Of It’s **Crown!** It’s Canopy!
    - They May Not Grow Very High – Like The Redwoods & Sequoias Not Too Far Away From Them – But They Grow Wide!
    - Spreading Their Leaves To Soak Up Every Last Possible Ray Of Summer Sun! (6 Weeks)
  - Only Through Dense & Wide Crown Of Fellowship With God’s People – The Church – Can We Remain Faithful Through Strongest Storms!
    - We Need One Another! We Need To Be With One Another! Hospitality!
    - 1 Corinthians 11:33 - “Tarry One For Another!”
- Fellowship That Is Affectionate!
  - The “Greeting” Was An Expression Of Honor, Respect & Affection!
    - It **Is** An Honor When You Recognize & Identify Someone – Showing That They Are Important To You! It Will Take Time, Closeness & Interest!
  - Early Church Used This “Greeting” In Their Services!
    - We Do The Same Here, Just In A Different Manner! But It Should Only Be A Start!
  - The “Kiss” Was A Physical Gesture Of Affection & Honor!
    - An Application Of 1 John 3:18 - “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth!”
- Fellowship That Is Comprehensive!
  - “All The Brethren!”
  - Not To Leave Anyone Out – For Everyone Is Important!
    - Stressing The “Inter-Dependence” Of The Church!
    - We Are “One Body!” (Romans / 1 Corinthians / Ephesians / Colossians)
- Fellowship That Is Appropriate!
  - “Holy Kiss!”
    - Not Just Any Kind Of Kiss! Special, Distinctive, Holy!
  - In The Practice Of It!
    - Sincere / Genuine! Can Be As Fake As Judas’!
  - In The Purpose For It!
    - For Others, Not Self! Ultimately For God’s Glory!
- Because Fellowship With God’s People Is The Fuel For Faithfulness!

## 3. ***Fellowship Through Proclamation! Of God’s Word!***

- 5:27 - “I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren!”
  - Another Reason “Methuseleh” Is A World Record Holder, Is Because Of The Nutrients It Does Receive! It Reaches Out As Far & Wide & Deep As It Possibly Can!
  - Only Through The Nutrients You Receive Through The Proclamation / Preaching Of God’s Word Can You Grow!
    - Personal Devotions Are Important – So Is Public Proclamation! This Is What 5:27 Is

Talking About! You Need To Be Present For The Preaching Of God's Word!

- The Proclamation Of The Word Is Powerful!
  - Paul Knew This – This Is Why He “Charged” Them With This! To Literally Put Them Under Oath Before The Lord To Do This! (Maybe We Need To Do This Ourselves!)
  - Paul Realized This Was No Ordinary Letter – Epistle!
    - Even In 2:13, Paul Commended The Thessalonians Because They Received It “Not As The Word Of Men, But As It Is In Truth, The Word Of God, Which Effectually Worketh Also In You That Believe!”
  - This Is God's Word! That's What Makes It Powerful!
    - And If You Fellowship With His Word, It Will Change & Strengthen Your Life!
- The Proclamation Of The Word Is Profitable!
  - Paul Knew This – This Is Why It Was To “Be Read Unto All The Holy Brethren!” – Profitable For All & In Every Way!
    - 2 Timothy 3:16 - “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness!”
- Because Fellowship Through Proclamation Is The Fuel For Faithfulness!
  - Many Are Not Here! We Need To Get It To Them!

**Conclusion:**

1. Back To “Methuselah” – What Is The Real Reason For It Living As Long As It Has! God Allowed It & Strengthened It To Do So!
  - Job 39:25-27 - “Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; / To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; / To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?” (God To Job)
2. So It Is With Every Christian & Every Church!
  - It Is Only By God's Grace That You Can Persevere & Remain Faithful!
    - We Need God's Grace! Constantly!
  - This Is Why Paul Started His Letter With God's Grace:
    - 1:1 - “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!”
  - This Is Why Paul Ends His Letter With God's Grace:
    - 5:28 - “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen!”
  - Vivid Illustration! Only 2 Places! **IE:** A Sandwich Of Grace! Without 2 Pieces Of Bread, You Don't Have A Sandwich! 1 Piece = A Pizza! No Pieces = A Salad! Without God's Grace, You Cannot Persevere / Be Faithful! The Storms Will Blow You Over! From Start To Finish, They Needed & We Need God's Grace To Sustain Us Through The Harsh Environment Of This World!
    - Without God's Grace, Nothing Found In 1 Thessalonians Could Be Accomplished!
  - God's Grace Is What Makes The Difference Between Development & Decay!
3. And Through God's Grace, He Provides Opportunity To Fellowship:
  - In Prayer! With People! Through Proclamation!
  - And Through This Fellowship, You Can Remain Faithful!
  - You Can Be A “Methuselah” – You Can Be “Like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper!” (Psalm 1:3) & “As a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit!” (Jeremiah 17:8)

**Grace Baptist Church**  
**Stephen Elmer, Pastor**  
4245 North 200 West  
Greenfield, IN 46140  
317-326-2362  
[pastor-elmer@hotmail.com](mailto:pastor-elmer@hotmail.com)  
[www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace](http://www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace)  
[www.growatgrace.org](http://www.growatgrace.org)