

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul rejoiced and gave thanks for the spiritual growth of the Thessalonians: “Your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 1:2–3 NIV). I praise you today as the God who is able to build me up in the faith! You help me to stand firm in the face of persecution, and you empower me to live a holy and blameless life. Hallelujah for your all-sustaining grace!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me Paul’s first letter to the church in Thessalonica. The congregation consisted of some Jews, many devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women of the city. Paul had been forced to leave the city after three Sabbath days, and he sent Timothy back to establish the new converts in the faith and encourage them in their affliction. Timothy brought back a good report, and Paul sent this letter to express his joy at hearing of their perseverance in spite of persecution. He also refuted the false accusations of the jealous Jews (1 Thess 2:3–6) and exhorted the Thessalonians to walk worthy of their high calling. Indeed, the letter reads like a textbook on how to grow in grace. First, Paul praised them for imitating his behavior and the behavior of the churches in Judea which had suffered for the sake of the gospel (1 Thess 1:6–7, 14). This teaches me how important it is to find godly role models and imitate their example of righteousness and holiness. Second, Paul reminded them that as disciples of Jesus, they were destined for affliction and persecution (1 Thess 3:3). This teaches me that I can expect to suffer for the cause of Christ. It shouldn’t come as a surprise when the world hates me! Third, Paul commanded them to abstain from sexual immorality. This teaches me to avoid fostering desires in my relationships which should only be satisfied within the bounds of marriage. Instead, I should control my body in holiness and honor. Fourth, Paul reminded those who had lost loved ones that we do not grieve as others who have no hope. Rather, we have confidence that Jesus will raise them to everlasting life and we who are alive to hear the Lord’s command will be caught up (raptured) with them in the air. This teaches me that you have not destined me for the outpouring of your wrath on the wicked during the Tribulation, but to obtain salvation through my Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:9). Finally, Paul exhorted them to continue in all the ways of love and grace which they had received from him. They should admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with all (1 Thess 5:14). This teaches me that loving others sometimes means admonishing them. It is not enough to simply encourage and help. I must also be willing to confront.

Reflection

Paul prayed, “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23). Have I asked you to sanctify me completely? Have I dedicated myself to you and determined to live a blameless life?

Request

Father, keep me from quenching the fiery, sanctifying presence of your Spirit in my life. Help me to abstain from every form of evil and hold fast to what is good!

Thanksgiving

I choose today to rejoice always and give thanks to you in all circumstances (1 Thess 5:16, 18)!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Thanks to God](#)” – August L. Storm.

Meditation Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:8.