

1 Thessalonians: Contagious Christianity

2024-01-28

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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.

24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Coach Paul addressing **team** on **winning streak**. **Keep doing** what you're doing!

- **Contagious** Christianity is **attractive TO** world yet **distinct FROM** it. Thessaloniki **capital & largest city** in **Roman province** of **Macedonia**, with a population of 200,000.

- **Still thriving Greek city** of **Thessalo-niki**—also called **Salonika** (Salon-ik-a).

Paul **founded church** during **3-month** stay on **second mission** journey. Acts 17:1-10

- **Forced flee** to Berea, then Athens, then to **Corinth**, where he **wrote** few months after leaving.
 - **Possibly Paul's first New Testament epistle** around 50-51 AD. **Others** believe **Galatians** is the first.
 - **Sent Timothy** to largely **Gentile church** of **Greeks and women** to **encourage** and **ground** new Christians in **faith**. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 5 See outline and the end

Timothy returns with **good** report: **holding fast** to faith, **example** to others. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8, 4:1

- **Yet young** church **needed** further **instruction and exhortation** so 1 Thessalonians **call to action** in **time between conversion** and **death/home going**.
 - **Paul calls Christians** to **love & holiness** in **light of Jesus Christ** **Second Coming**.

Contagious Christianity is **attractive TO** world **when Christians love and strong work ethic**.

- **Thought Jesus coming soon** so some **stopped work and wait** for Jesus come and **take them away... Degenerated** into **freeloading**. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12
 - **Work** is a **way God provides** our own and others **legitimate needs**.
 - **Legitimate needs**: is **issue “not a living wage”** or **way of living?**
 - **Sometimes need hand up** from fellow Christians, **but goal** of lives **not to live off others** but be **responsible and faithful**. 2:9, Colossians 3:23, 4:5-6
 - **As long as mentally and physically able**, **work with excellence** in **reliance** on **Lord's power** for **His glory**.

- **Strong connection** between **way Christians work** and the **attitude of unbelievers toward gospel**.

Contagious Christians spread Gospel influence not only **through strong work ethic** but also by **being attractive to world through loving one another**. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, 5:11-15

- What **world first notices** about **Christians** is **how treat one another**.
 - **Loving one another critical** for **attractiveness of Gospel**

Contagious Christianity is attractive TO world yet distinct FROM it.

- **Holiness** is the **distinctive** that **separates Christians in and from the world**. 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7, 2 Timothy 1:9a, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:15-16
 - **One of God's purposes** in **calling you** was to **make you holy**.
 - **God uses the time** between **conversion** and **death/home going** to **transform, restore, grow, mature....sanctify!**
- Your **sanctification** as **sure** as your **election**, cause **founded in God's faithfulness**.
 - **If He call you then He WILL sanctify you**. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
 - **Blameless** without **fault, condemnation, guilt because of Jesus Christ**. **God does all!**

Coach Paul addressing **team on winning streak**. **Keep doing** what you're doing!

- Be **attractive TO world yet distinct FROM it**.
 - **Work hard, love one another, pursue holy living** by **power of the Holy Spirit....Lord is faithful, He will do it!**
- **Live joyfully and gratefully** in **promises of Gospel** and **hope of coming day of deliverance** when **Jesus returns** and all **wickedness end**. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

1 Thessalonians Outline

1:1-4	Introduction
1:5-3:13	Celebration of Faithfulness
1:6-10	Story of the Thessalonians' Conversion
2:1-12	Paul's Mission In Thessalonica
2:13-16	Their Common Persecution
2:17-3:10	Paul's Absence Explained
3:11-13	Prayer For Endurance
4:1-5:22	Challenge to grow
4:1-12	Walk In Sexual Purity, Love, Witness.
4:13-5:11	Faithfully Walk In Hope of Jesus Return
5:12-22	Instructions for Congregational Life
5:23-28	Concluding Remarks