

1Thessalonians 12-06-22a

This is Friday the 22nd of June 2012. We're continuing and possibly concluding our study in the book of 1st Thessalonians tonight. We're in chapter 5 and we pick up in verse 19.

Take just a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin. Father, we're grateful as always for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word. We thank you for your many expressions of grace and faithfulness that have sustained us and brought us to this point.

We thank you for the opportunity to give and receive in the realm of spiritual blessings as we spend time in each other's company, focused on your word and on the truth that it conveys to our hearts. We ask that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and that each of us will find in this section of your word, truth that will be pertinent and meaningful and will equip us for every good work in the days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen. Let's take a look at this final section. You'll remember that we saw the necessity for one another sensitivity beginning in verse 12 last time.

We urge you, brethren, recognize the ones who are laboring and are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. This is that coaching, pointing out helpful things and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. It is the work, not the person that we focus on.

Be at peace among yourselves. This idea of Irene. This is where the girls name Irene as in good night.

Irene comes from Irene. It means peace. And that's a good person to talk about when you're saying good night, because you hope you're going to lay me down in peace and sleep without Lord only make us dwell in safety.

And this the reason I point that out is we're going to have this word again in our passage tonight. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly. Comfort the faint hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

We've seen the Greek behind these and the meaning of it. The encouragement of those who are not so much unruly as unemployed or underemployed. They're idle.

They're not. Let's find a way to engage people and incorporate them and encourage them specifically in the activities of the fellowship. You're making a salad.

See if somebody wants to chop carrots. You're working on recording. See if somebody wants to help catalog them.

Find a way to be involved. And this is not only advice for the encouragers and the exhorters, but

also for those of us who might not have really been looking for a way to contribute. Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to wait for somebody to come along and try to put a hand behind our shoulder and guide us in the right way? Look around for an opportunity.

Everybody is a part of the body of Christ. Everybody is a part of our local assembly here. There's always a way you can contribute.

You can just be a prayer warrior. You can be an encourager. Just your smiling countenance and your thoughtfulness and your suggestion of a song or a hymn or the conversation and just being a good listener during times of fellowship, all of these things are a contribution.

But don't come to church only to receive. If all you want to do is hear a Bible class, you can stay home and play a tape or play an MP3. Our fellowship is designed to be two-way, just as fellowship with the Father is two-way.

We don't just pester him with prayers, nor do we remain silent and just let him talk to us through his word. It's a dialogue. It's a conversation.

And these exhortations are designed to promote fellowship and activity, which provides occasion for fulfilling the one another commands. Love one another. Consider one another.

Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others. This is the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Let that same mind be in you.

So this is his encouragement. And as we do this, those whose soul has been crushed under a load of care, the small soul, the you're overwhelmed and under equipped to deal with it. This is where we bear one another's burdens.

We sympathize. We empathize. We pray.

We offer godly counsel if it is asked or if there's an opportune moment. Do that with some care. Be patient with all and all of us.

The great thing about these commands is that you can receive as well as give. When it says be patient with all, hopefully everyone else is being patient with me just as I'm striving to be patient with them. And it's reciprocal.

There is so much reciprocity in the small group fellowship of the church. It is encouraged. It is supported by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

More about that shortly. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone. This is our instinct.

This is our nature. This is our unregenerate knee jerk response. Somebody does bad to me, I'm going to do bad back.

I feel like I've been snubbed, I'm going to snub them right back. I feel like somebody was short with me, I'm going to be short with them. Somebody gave me the cold shoulder, I'm going to give them two cold shoulders.

Somebody didn't meet my expectations in some way, I'm going to find some way to make them aware of my unhappiness. And this is the biblical definition of judging. That's what judging is.

If you decide that you're going to inflict a penalty, you decide you are the judge, jury, and executioner. You decide that someone has malfunctioned. And maybe they have.

If it's me, I probably have. And you have a legitimate beef, legitimate gripe. However, if you say, I perceive that a wrong has been done, punishment is in order.

Let's see, how shall I punish? I will do the following. I will omit this, I will deny that, I will inflict this, I will drop that on him. Now, that's judging.

This is what the Bible proscribes, prohibits, commands against. Judge not. One of the consequences of judging is whatever judgment we render to others will be dropped right back on us.

The measure with which we measure to others, it will be measured out to us. On the other hand, if we measure out grace, if we measure out mercy, and forgiveness, and forbearance, and patience, that will be measured out to us. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

And by the way, the Lord God superintends that process. And as we treat others, we will be treated. Not only by them, but by the Lord God.

If we are merciful, we will receive mercy. Remember the Sermon on the Mount. So, these are all exercises within the body.

This is in the context of fellowship with other believers. It assumes that there is such fellowship. Pretty hard to perform these commands if we're not engaged in fellowship.

By some means. We are not islands. We are not isolated.

We are not in quarantine. We are not, you know, Paul Simon. I am a rock.

I have my books. I am hiding away. Nothing can touch me.

Love hurts, and all the rest of it. Nonsense. We are designed to be connected.

When there's an accident and somebody chops off the tip of their finger, you don't leave that tip of the finger separate from the body. What do you do? Pack it in ice, take it to the doctor, try to get it reattached. It's part of the body.

You don't want to be losing body parts. And all of us are parts of and belong to the body of Christ, and we need connection. The Bible assumes connection.

And we're going to see that again in our upcoming context. Do not render evil for evil to anyone. God is in His heaven.

If there's any judgment, any correction, any rebuke that needs to be done, any actual penalizing, let God do it. He's much better. He's got all the facts.

Things that look wrong to us may not look wrong to Him. Things that look perfectly right to us may be horrible in His sight. He's got perfect vision.

He's got perfect understanding of all of the causes and conditions and successions and relations that pertain to any action, any activity, thoughts and intents of the heart. He's got the whole picture. His justice is perfect justice.

Ours is almost always imperfect, short-sighted, blighted, benighted, and often does as much harm as it does good. Always pursue what is good, both for yourselves and for all. Both for yourselves.

Don't needlessly deny yourself. Don't become some kind of a hair shirt wearing, what do you call these people that are auto-flagellating themselves all the time? What do you call that? There's a name for it. People that hurt themselves.

Masochists. Masochists, but there's some other word also. Well, that too.

But, yeah, they're... Nuts? Well, yes, they are nuts. But there's a notion that self-denial and going through pain makes you spiritual. Ascetic.

Asceticism. Thank you, Matt. Yes, ascetic.

That's what I was going for. Not nuts? Well, all of the above. Good for both yourselves and for all.

Do what is good for yourself. Now, this is good in God's definition of good. I think it's good for myself to eat things that aren't healthy.

But if I'm going to last, if I'm going to be able to do my calling and fulfill my opportunities and exercise my gifts before the Lord, I have a responsibility to take care of myself. I shouldn't go to ball games and yell myself hoarse and then not be able to deliver a Bible class, something like that. I do what is good.

This is good by God's definition of good. Do what is good for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always.

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. We looked at these last time.

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. And that word this, just draw a line from this and circle all three of those things. You can almost say these.

These are the will of God. In Greek it's real clear. This refers to all three things.

Rejoicing, praying, and thanksgiving. These are all the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. And once again, in Christ Jesus, this is the sphere of fellowship.

This is the sphere of the body. This is your fellow believers, your family, your immediate environs in Christ Jesus. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

Everybody else that's in Christ is also a new creation. And we are brothers. We are sisters.

We are family of God. We are body and bride of Christ. And we are called to this higher standard.

You do not have the luxury of bearing a grudge against somebody else in the body of Christ. You don't have the luxury of engaging in a feud. You don't have the luxury of hostility and enemyship.

And saying, well, I'm going to heap coals of fire on this person's head. Heaping coals of fire is for somebody on the outside. And that's designed to acquaint them with the warmth of the love of God, ultimately.

So, we do not have the option or the luxury of animosity or negativity or sinful behavior toward one another. It is proscribed. It is forbidden.

And we will pay a heavy price. We are only hurting ourselves. And we are hurting the cause of Christ in this petty, selfish, myopic, subjective type of behavior.

This brings us to our verse for tonight. Verse 19, and this whole section. Do not quench the spirit.

Do not despise prophecies. Test all things. Hold fast what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil. The first thing we see in verse 19 is, Do not quench the spirit. You may have heard this translated, Do not put out the spirit's fire.

And that's not bad, but it doesn't cover it. Quench is the word *spenomy*. And that's S-B.

S-B-UH. Not a common consonant combination there. But this is a sigma followed by a beta.

So it's S-B-E-N-N-U-M-I. *Spenomy*. And it means to extinguish.

It means to cause to diminish. To put something into remission. To cause it to wane.

It was a common word in the ancient world. It even could mean to die in some cases. You know, your life force is extinguished.

Or your light goes out. It could mean it was used of the wind. Of the wind abating.

And so it has the idea of the force of a thing being diminished or caused to go away. And it's the force of a thing. If you use this verb with fire, obviously that would make the fire go away.

It would mean to extinguish. But it was used of a lot of things besides fire. And it doesn't implicitly include the idea of fire.

Its root meaning is to diminish something. To cause it to go away. To lose its force.

To lose its effect. To lose its power. So it could mean for someone, in the intransitive sense, if you said somebody was going to spenumy, well they might just lie down.

They might stop operating. They would quit functioning. Stop moving around.

They would lie down. Or stop. In the transitive sense, it means to suppress a thing.

To cause it to die out. To make it disappear. Here's a man who had a very powerful personality.

But he's died. And now his influence has spenumied. Over time, he becomes more and more forgotten.

And the force of his presence inevitably fades away. You think about George Washington. I can't help but think about him.

I've heard 33 CDs of his life story over the last couple of months. It's a very powerful biography. But in the American mind, other than seeing him on the dollar bill, it has greatly diminished.

He's just a figurehead. He's sort of an idealized father of the country. He did something in the Revolutionary War.

He was the first president. Great. You have no idea of how pivotal and how essential he was.

We would not have a constitution. We would not have a government. We would not have an executive branch.

We wouldn't have the judiciary that we have. We wouldn't have so many things that were a result of his innovation. But in the American mind and in our modern culture, he has faded to just a shadowy, iconic status.

Well, that's what this word means. And it's very important to understand what the word means. Because of the object.

Let me give you just a couple of other uses in the New Testament. A couple of other places where this is used. In the literal use, remember when Jesus said that when he talked about their

worm does not die and the fire is not quenched? There's your word.

And that's a quote, of course, from the Isaiah 66 passage. Torments of the afterlife and so on. In Matthew 25, 8, the wise and foolish virgins that had the lamps and the oil.

When the foolish virgins awake out of sleep, they suddenly find that they are short of oil and their lamps are benunantai or spenuntai. They are waning. Their lamps are waning.

Now think about it. The lamps are waning. This is sort of a metonymy.

It's the light from the lamps that is waning. The lamps are not shrinking or diminishing or getting small-souled or anything. The lamp is fine.

It's the light. By the way, the light, not the flame directly. So it's the effect that it has.

Now, figurative uses. This is where we get to our passage. And again, bear with me.

This will make sense, the reason I'm belaboring this. In Matthew 12, 18, there's a quote of Isaiah 42 talking about the servant of the Lord. A bruised reed he will not break and a smoking flax he will not quench.

And both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, you have our word used. Now, this is just a smoking flax, right? So there's not a flame that's going to be put out, but the smoking flax is not going to be made to go away. And the point of this is not the action, but the effect.

If you need this flax, if you need this thing to remain, then you don't want it to go away. So it isn't so much don't perform this action as don't do this action. Don't quench or suppress or cause to go away this thing because of the lasting after effect.

If it's gone, think of your lamp. It doesn't say don't put out a lamp because putting out lamps is bad. Lack of light is bad.

You see what I mean? Nothing intrinsically wrong with extinguishing a flame. Sometimes your yard's on fire. This happened once when we had a wood-burning stove and had the stovepipe going out the window at our house because that's how it was installed.

And creosote and oil had built up in the stovepipe and the fire was hot and the flame went up the smokestack, so there were flaming drops of oil dripping outside our house onto the yard. It was winter time. The grass, of course, this dead Bermuda grass and stuff out there.

Well, it instantly created a conflagration and we're all in there trying to get warm. Look out the window. Hey, the yard's on fire.

Look at the smoke run out there. It's just spreading. It's just dry as tinder out there.

And so we're all out there trying to spinoomy the yard and the flames that are going out there. But why would we do that? Why would you extinguish a flame? Flames are good when they're in the stove. Flames are good when they're providing light or benefit, but when they're doing the wrong thing... So my point is, in all of this, it is the effect.

You are doing this action or prohibited from doing this action because of the after effect. What is the effect of quenching this thing? What is the effect of putting it out? Don't throw your baseball toward my house. Nothing wrong with throwing baseballs, but if it hits the picture window and breaks it, this after effect is bad.

You've got to distinguish the action and the effect that we're trying to prevent. It's the effect we're looking at. Well, there is an association.

The lamp is associated with the light. The flame is associated with the light. No man puts his lamp under a bushel or under the bed.

Remember? Why? Well, it doesn't have anything to do with the location of the lamp. It's the flame on the lamp. It's the light that comes from the lamp.

It's the effect of the lamp that is diminished if you stick it under the bed or under a basket, right? Well, so light is associated with the lamp, and we say no man puts a lamp under his bed. What you're really talking about is the effect of the light, but you say lamp. This is important.

You say lamp, you mean light. Metonymy of the adjunct. Metonymy of the source.

This is a figure of speech kind of a thing. We say, I'm driving my car to Fort Worth. Well, I'm not trying to get my car to Fort Worth.

I'm trying to get me to Fort Worth, but I say I'm driving my car to Fort Worth. I could say I'm driving myself to Fort Worth. We associate ideas.

We know what we mean when we say I'm driving the car to Fort Worth. Well, I'm taking myself. I'm going to Fort Worth, but I'm talking about the car.

I really mean me and how I'm going to get there the car is a means of getting me to the to the destination This is important in verse 19 because it says Do not quench the spirit by the way. This is present tense with the negative may which in many cases means stop quenching and the the Idea here is that there is some suppression Going on now, what kind of suppression is it? Well, it is of ta numa Here we have a problem or at least a puzzle to solve is This capital s or small s Look in your New King James and it's capital s do not quench the Holy Spirit of God, right? But it doesn't say numa hoggy you it doesn't say Numa that ooh It doesn't say numa career Doesn't say Spirit of the Lord Spirit of God Spirit of Christ Holy Spirit. It just says ta numa.

So the question becomes How do we know in situations where it doesn't have any of these

modifiers whether it's talking about the human spirit or the Holy Spirit? Well, we can sort of say it's both. You know how many times have I asked you this question, is it that human spirit or the Holy Spirit? Yes. Why? because in the tripartite model of the believer which by the way, you will see if you look down at verse 23 and 24. May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole what? Spirit, soul and body. Same word *numa* right here in our context: your spirit, your soul, your *suki* and your body. You're *soma*. You got *soma*, *suki* and *numa* here reverse order so what are these? Well, I thought about delaying the end of our study by a whole nother week and doing a big study on you know, how many parts do we have are we? Two parts and three parts are we? body, soul and spirit are we just soul and spirit as the soul and spirit same thing. It's it's not that it's not that hard in a nutshell and just I'm not going to even document this. I'm just going to tell you you can look up the passages. The body is the body this is what is visible to others. This is how we operate in the physical realm.

That's pretty straightforward. Our body is controlled by our actual self, which is invisible and immaterial. This is our *suki*. This is our life force. This is our individual self, our *id*, our psyche, our personality, our character, our norms and standards, everything that goes to make you who you are as just a human being, a human being on planet earth. Everybody's got a *suki*.

Everybody's got a soul. Not everybody and this is a little bit of an artificiality. I would not argue that these things have some sort of tangible substance in another dimension. It's a way of describing function. Your body describes how you operate in three dimensions and you can get Platonic and Socratic and Aristotelian and get into all kinds of physics, you know. Is it the thing or is it the idea of the thing? What is reality? You know, are my eyes giving me reality? No, this is an interpretation of realities, reflection of light. It's three dimensions. It's you know, actually protons and neutrons. Forget all that.

We have a body. We're operating in the physical realm. Everybody knows what a body is, your psyche, your soul. That's your personality.

That's who you are. Regenerate, unregenerate, you still have your personality, your memories, your thoughts, your priorities, goals, values, everything that makes you uniquely you, so the spirit. If there is such a thing for an unbeliever, it is dormant. It is non-functional because *pneuma* when it is applied to a human being. This is our interface with *pneuma*, capital P, with spirit, capital S, with God, capital G, everything that allows us to transcend the material and the mundane and the physical and communicate with Holy God is *pneuma*. This is why Paul says the spirit, capital S, bears witness with our spirit, small s, that we are children of God. Spirit bears witness with our spirit. This is our new radio receiver. This is the component of it's more than a receiver, but it is the component of us. That comes at salvation, regeneration and it is our connecting point. It's our interface, it's our projection into the unseen eternity of God, *pneuma*, and when you talk about capital S and small s spirit, God the Holy Spirit in our spirit. Well, they're very difficult to separate because everything we know about God comes to us through the Holy Spirit, capital S, ministering it to our spirit, small s. Everything you know about God, every understanding you have

of Holy Scripture prayer exits us our personality through our spirit Through the Holy Spirit to the throne room of God God ministers his word back to us the spirit capital s leads us into all truth by ministering it to our spirit small s the Christian component of our life the Christ God the Father God the Holy Spirit sensitivities and Fellowship that we have is all pneuma, so When this verse says do not suppress Do not extinguish do not Minimize and cause to die and abate and go away the spirit Is it big s spirit or small s spirit? Yes, it is our entire realm of spiritual function Which is always enabled by God's Holy Spirit.

We are sealed. We are filled. We are indwelt.

We are gifted We are regenerated by God's Holy Spirit and without the Holy Spirit. Our spirit is non-existent It is a piece of the Holy Spirit our human spirit pneuma is Inextricably linked to God himself It is God with us. It is God in us and to the extent that our spirit is healthy and grows This is the presence of Christ.

This is the presence of God. This is Christ formed in you the hope of glory This is the filling of the spirit. This is the indwelling of the spirit.

This is the gifting of the spirit It's inextricably linked. It's all part of the same thing You cannot tease them apart. I think part of this, you know tripartite Duality and are we bifurcated or trifurcated is is an attempt to try to separate things that are not separable So what is the command? Do not be suppressing spiritual function the spirit the presence of the Spirit of God as He is manifest in our spirit our spirit as it partakes of and exercises and exploits the potentials that God gives us Anything to do with spiritual life the spiritual realm spiritual power the application of the Word of God entering into eternal things faith hope and love Don't water it down.

Don't suppress it. Don't extinguish it. Don't take away.

It's Hear me now effect its effect Listen you cannot quench the Holy Spirit of God God the Holy Spirit is not quenchable. It's it's absurd To put a capital S on this now be careful don't here's the Holy Spirit of God and he's a flame But if you pour water on him, he'll go out. It's just absurd You can't quench the Holy Spirit of God.

What we can do is suppress and diminish and drive away the effect of his presence You don't demolish a lamp by putting it under a bed, but you do suppress its effect, right? It is the effect of the spirit it is the effect of spiritual growth it is the effect of edification That's what we are told not to diminish. So this requires sensitivity of perception on our part, doesn't it? Where is? Spiritual life where is edification? Where are the things of God? Growing and in evidence, they may not be perfect. They may be imperfectly expressed and perfectly understood Imperfectly applied because we're imperfect people but don't suppress the expression and the exercise and the exploitation of spiritual things in the group in fellow believers in our fellowship much less in

ourselves do not suppress the exercise and action of spirit Everything that pertains to life and godliness everything that pertains to being in Christ don't Do anything to Weaken it That's the meaning of this Injunction this exhortation notice we had three positive exhortations in 16 and 17 rejoice always pray without ceasing and in 18 in everything give thanks positive Exhortations now we've got these negative ones do not be suppressing things of the spirit small s and large s they're interchangeable Do not despise prophecies Why would he say this very simple in the day that this letter was written? Prophecy was a legitimate New Testament Communication of the Word of God how much New Testament did the Thessalonians have? They have Matthew Mark Luke and John.

No, did they have a book of Acts? No, did they have Romans first Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians? No, did they have first and second Peter first and second Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James first and second, you know, third John Jude revelation. No What was their New Testament Scripture? It's what God supplied them in that interim time through prophetic utterance it was spoken in the assembly by people that God the Holy Spirit came and witnessed to their spirit small s and they Prophesied they taught they brought out Church Age truth They remembered things that Paul had preached that they that they had learned from the Apostles and these things were brought to mind and taught They were prophesied. So this is basically enjoining them to not And despise by the way Doesn't just mean to despise it means to treat lightly or to treat as unimportant to belittle to brush aside as insignificant Do not treat as insignificant the Word of God Church Age truth so you can see how these go together, right? don't Mitigate the things of the Spirit and don't mitigate the Word of God.

This is the engine of our power as believers, is it not the Word in the Spirit the the resin in the hardener like the two parts of the epoxy the two things that go together to make something far stronger than anything we Can put together ourselves? infinitely stronger It's the Spirit and the Word it is the function of our spirit in the Holy Spirit It is our understanding and faith in the Word of God, which is alive and powerful because it's from God And just as you cannot separate the power that comes from faith the laying hold of righteousness by faith Which is a function of God himself and his presence and his power and his authority is inspiration of his word you cannot separate God from his word and That words effect and faiths effect in our life Similarly you cannot separate God the Holy Spirit and the things of the Spirit from our human spirit there. It's it's contiguous. It's It's interwoven.

It's not Separable in either of these cases So these are the two things to not do don't do anything to diminish the realm of the Spirit Don't do anything to diminish the realm of truth Because these this is the source of God's power in our lives We'll pause here and take our break when we come back we're gonna look at verse 21 test all things. How do you do that? That's what we'll see when we come back