

1Thessalonians 12-06-22b

We're in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 21. Test all things, hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil. Test all things, hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back soon, soon and very soon. You and I will stand at the judgment. Our life will be reviewed.

What we did today will be reviewed, will be examined, will be looked at, will be analyzed, will be judged for its worth or lack of worth. Tomorrow, Saturday, June the 23rd is going to be looked at. We can't do anything about what we've already written on the page of our life, in the record of our history up to this point.

But we have complete sovereignty over our behavior and our actions, our goals and priorities and values, the thoughts and intents of our hearts. We have control of that from this point forward. So, here's the question for you.

Pay attention, fill in your name here. How can I do the very best of my ability to be ready for that judgment? That judgment may be a lot sooner than we expect. It is startling to see the unexpected death that strikes.

You do not know what the apportioned length of life is. Countless young people perish every week, every day from unforeseen causes. You don't know which day is going to be your last.

You don't know when you tie your shoes in the morning if somebody else is going to be untying them at night. You don't know if this is your last day on earth. You don't know if this is the last opportunity you have.

We just don't know. And so, it is a good idea to look at each day as a gift, as a talent that has been handed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ with the request that we invest it and do something in his interest and for his benefit with it. We don't wrap it up in a sweat rag and stick it in our pocket.

We do something with it. Look, Lord, the five you gave me, I have made five more. Look, Lord, the three you gave me, I have made three more.

This is the point of our life. There is no other point. There's nothing you can acquire.

There's nothing you can obtain. There's nothing you can attain. There's nothing you can achieve that has any meaning once you're dead, except as it is an investment in the plan and purpose of God.

Nothing else counts. You can put together a nice house, lots of fine furniture, looks great, fresh paint, fresh shingles, everything in it is nice. When you die, that stuff is going to be parted out and distributed.

It'll end up all over the place. The financial portfolio you put together may perish while you're looking at it. You may not even get the chance to die to see that go away.

We have to try to maintain a long perspective. We have to think outside of the short-term, what am I going to do today box? Am I happy with myself today is not the right question to ask. Have I made an investment in eternity today? Have I invested every action? Have I taken every thought captive for Christ today or not? This has to be the measure.

We're wasting our life. We are wasting our time otherwise. Now, this in a nutshell is how to ensure that we don't come up short, that we don't fail the grace of God, that we don't lose this opportunity and fritter it away and let it run like sand through our fingers.

This set of exhortations right here is the insurance. This is the guide. This is the way.

Do you want to know how to make your life count? It's very simple. You've got to test everything. Now, the word test here is a word that means test.

It's often translated test for the purpose of approval. Find out if it is trustworthy. It was used by the Greeks.

They talked about a man that had been tested in battle, means he's been in battle and he's battle tested. You know, here's a utensil, it's kitchen tested. Here's a toy, it's child tested.

Here's a medication. It's laboratory tested. What do you mean when you say that? Tested and approved, right? We don't say, well, I've got a general here I'd like to recommend to you.

His name's Benedict Arnold and he's battle tested. He's Benedict Arnold. He failed the test.

He's a traitor. He sold out to the enemy. He's a rascal.

He's a ne'er-do-well. This is tested for the purpose of approval. Test this to be sure that it is good.

Docimazo, test everything. Panta, the Pantocrator is the ruler of all. Pantas is all.

Test, and this again is a present active imperative. Be testing. We're back on the positive side now.

Remember we had those three exhortations to rejoice, to pray, to give thanks. These things are the will of God concerning you. That lays the groundwork.

If you are a person of joy, this means you've got to be a glass half full person. Quit being a glass, a little bit empty person. If it's a little bit empty, I'm deeply unhappy.

Half empty, I'm way unhappy. Less than half full, I'm distraught. I'm shredded.

I'm unraveled. I'm going to make myself a source of torture to everyone around me because my glass doesn't have as much as I think it ought to have. It says rejoice.

Find the joy. Remember our memory verse, whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are of good report. Remember when we looked at the Greek behind that? To the extent that it is good, to the extent that there is loveliness, to the extent that there is truth, to the extent.

Nothing is going to be unvarnished, untainted, unadulterated perfection in this life. There will always be a fly in the room, if not in the ointment. There will always be a few burned beans in the bottom of the pot.

There's always going to be something that's not quite right. But find the extent to which it is good and think on these things. That is the source of joy.

How can you rejoice always? By concentrating on what's good. I dropped a hammer on my toe. Well, at least I didn't drop it on both feet.

I didn't get everything done today. Well, at least I got some things done. I didn't get what I deserved.

Well, I'm not in jail. I'm not dead. I'm not sick.

We've got to look at the positive side. This is a biblical command. You can't do any of the rest of this if you don't start with this attitude.

I am going to find the positive. I am going to concentrate my mind. I am going to target the positive.

It's a command. Find the part that is good and dwell on that. It's a command.

We are told by the Lord God in heaven, do this. If your mind starts going toward the negative, pull it back. If you start dwelling and chewing on these old dead bones, pull it back.

It's a command. You can't do the rest of these things. You cannot stand at the judgment.

You cannot fulfill the plan and purpose of God. You cannot exercise the things of the Spirit when you're dwelling in the negative. Take it from one who knows.

All of us have had this experience, have we not? You put yourself in a negative frame of mind, you spread poison. You are poison and you spread it all around. You can't help it.

You are on the dark side. God transfers us out of darkness into light. We run right back into the darkness.

We love the darkness rather than light. It feels like home. And it is to our fallen nature.

We are not supposed to be fallen. We are not supposed to be operating as a psychic man, as a soulish man. We are spiritual people operating in the realm of the Spirit.

The carnal man cannot understand the things of the Spirit. They are spiritually discerned. They are pneuma discerned.

Got to get into the realm of the pneuma. And the pneuma is not negative. The pneuma is not downcast.

The pneuma does not have a spirit of fear. It is power and love and self-control. So, rejoice always, pray without ceasing.

Sometimes we have trouble with this. We say, well, you say rejoice all the time, you say keep your mind on the positive, but I can't help it. This stuff just overtakes me.

I wake up in the night and I'm surrounded by negativity. I stop to take a breath and the negativity just wells up. What's the antidote? Pray.

Take it to the Lord. Tell the Lord, Lord, I'm being swamped by this downcasting stuff. It's people, it's circumstances, it's me, oh Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

I'm praying for myself. And let me think of a couple of other people to pray for so that I can get my eyes outside of myself. I've got problems, but there's other people I know that have problems.

Let me think about them. Let me intercede for them. Go to the Lord in prayer.

How do you maintain joy? How do you maintain the positive? Go to God. Look at God. What's not to like? What's not to rejoice in salvation, in an eternal future? Someday this weary tread through life will be over, will be across Jordan in the promised land.

I stand on Jordan's stormy banks, but I am bound for a great, great place. This is temporary. There is always a light at the end of our tunnel.

So rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. You can't stay downcast if you're before God's throne.

You just can't. He is light. He is life.

He is love. He is strength. He is power.

He is righteousness, peace, sanctification. If you're in the presence of the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and God, the Holy Spirit, you can't stay negative. You can't stay down.

That power, light overwhelms the darkness, but you've got to move into the light. If we walk in the

light, as He is in the light, we maintain that fellowship. The blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

Not just the forensic effect, not just the punishment reducing effect, not just the penalty removing effect. The blood of Jesus Christ washes away the power of that sin, the strength of that sin, the presence of that sin, if we walk in the light. How do you walk in the light? Look for the joy.

Pray without ceasing. To the extent that something is good, noble, lovely, has these positive things, dwell on that. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God. Notice, verse 23, now may the God of what? Peace. It doesn't say the God of hope, doesn't say the God of salvation, doesn't say the God of power, doesn't say the Lord God of hosts, doesn't say God the Father, doesn't say God the Son, doesn't say God the Holy Spirit, doesn't say the God of patience, doesn't say the God of long-suffering, doesn't say the God of anything else but Irenae.

We talked about this in the first lesson. Peace. The God of peace will sanctify you, will cleanse you, will wash away the stuff that drags us down into the mud.

The God of peace. I will lay me down in peace and sleep, because thou, Lord, only, makest me dwell in safety. It's only God.

It's the presence and power of God. When we're in the presence of God, we're safe. Green pastures, still water.

He restores our soul, leads us in the paths of righteousness, reflecting the glory of His name. Shadow of death, presence of enemies, not a problem, right? Do not diminish, don't extinguish, don't abate, don't suppress, don't push aside things of the Spirit. Do not belittle, brush off, treat as unimportant prophecies, communication of truth.

By the way, why doesn't he just say the truth, or the word of truth, or the scripture, and we say, well, we know that they were getting a lot of their New Testament truth through prophecies, but why does he say prophecies? Why didn't he just say truth, or the word, or guidance from God? Prophecy is a specific kind of truth, isn't it? What kind is it? It's kind of like a new episode of a TV show, or a rerun that you haven't seen, new to you. Prophecy is new truth, right? Prophetic utterance is a specific category of truth, it's new. In the early days of the church, all of the church age truth was new, but the reason it says prophecies here, and the reason it continues to ring with meaning for us, is don't belittle the importance of learning new truth, refreshing our souls at the oasis of God's word, and advancing our understanding, pushing to get a better grip on it, to have it more fully.

That's what prophecy is. Prophecy is a revelation, it's something you hadn't thought of, hadn't

seen, hadn't dwelt on, hadn't grasped as completely and fully as you do now. It's a prophecy.

This is not just any old truth, it's not the Ten Commandments, it's not John 3.16. This is, don't diminish, don't despise or treat as unimportant the learning of new things. This is part of the excitement, it's part of the enthusiasm we have as a believer. Wow, look at that! This is part of the fire that the Holy Spirit puts into our spirit, right? We get excited, look at this.

This is one of the things that sustains human relationships, isn't it? You think you know somebody and you see a whole new side of them and you're impressed. You see them under pressure and you watch how they endure, you watch how they persevere, you watch how they maintain their joy, how they exercise their faith, how their spiritual life shines through, and you think, wow, that's something new. I have a fresh appreciation.

This is a side I hadn't seen or hadn't fully appreciated before. It invigorates, it renews, it puts strength and power into our walk with God when we learn new things. Do you think we've got it all figured out? Can we relax? Well, I'm saved, Jesus is coming back, He died on the cross, it's going to be kingdom and something after that, golden streets, lots of angels, white robes, manna, I think, it's all going to be great.

That's all I need to know. I've got to get on with my life now, I've got things to do and places to be. Are you kidding? There's an infinitude, there's an immeasurable amount of information available to us about what's going on now and what is going to happen in the future, and the more of this we learn, the stronger we become, the easier it is to rejoice, the easier it is to pray without ceasing, we've got a lot more to pray about.

Lord, I pray that I will learn the lessons that you have for me so that I will be thoroughly equipped for every good work, so that I will be qualified to serve, to reflect your glory, to walk with Christ in white, to have a name that is a title for a job function that does something useful in the future plans and purposes of God, to enter into, to have the ability to see and grow and learn and be a part of the fabric of God's plan and purpose. What's not to like about that? What's not to get excited about? Yes, we've got some difficulties here, but it's all preparation, it's all training, it all counts on 20, and it's going to be great when we finish off this episode here and get on with real life in the eternal future. So don't neglect, don't let fall, don't let your flame go out in the realm of the Spirit, don't dismiss the importance of learning new truth.

Test everything, look at it, and if you're going to do a thing, you're considering this thing to do it, to take it on, to enter into it, to participate, to spend your time on it or with it, to spend your money on it or with it, well, test it, test it and make sure that it's approved. We all want to be a workman approved unto God that needeth not to be ashamed, right? Well, these things that come into our life, opportunities, choices we have, test the thing out, be sure that it's solid, be sure that it meets the test, that when you stand before the judgment, God says, well, what did you do that for? Why did you spend your time this way? Here I gave you this Saturday, June the 23rd, why did you

invest your time in this thing here, this four-hour block right here? Why did you do that? What sort of a dokimazo test did you apply to that before you entered into it? Well, Lord, it was Saturday, I just woke up and put on my shorts, went off and just thought I would do that. Did you test it? Did you... and it's mundane things, we don't have to be holy and read scripture and sing hymns all the time, but what we do, we do in the light of this test.

Can I do this thing in a way that is pleasing to God as I associate with other people? Can I be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another? Can I be exhibiting and manifesting and applying the fruit of the Spirit? Can I be laying hold of righteousness as I carry out my Saturday chores and my task list and my schedule of events and my entertainments, my enjoyments, whatever it might be? Do I test it? The Bible doesn't say test the important things. It doesn't say test the strategic decisions about where will I go to school, who will I marry, where will I live, what job will I take? It says test everything, everything. Test everything.

Then we have two great Greek verbs here. One of them is kat-echo and the other is op-echo. You think, well, what's the difference? Echo, E-C-H-O, doesn't mean a reverberating, repeating sound.

It means to have and to hold, to take possession of a thing. Echo, very powerful word for grasping and laying hold of a thing. Now we've got prefixes.

The first one is kata. This is what is translated hold fast. Kata means according to in its root meaning, right? So you have dokimazo'd this thing.

You've tested it and looked at it and you said, you know, this is good. Well, if it's good, hold on to it. Hold it fast.

Hold to it in accordance with this judgment that you've made. If this is a good thing, then stick with it. If you've decided to go to school and get a degree, then stick with it.

Kat-echo. You dokimazo'd that and decided it was good. There's been no evidence to the contrary since then.

It might be tough. It might be difficult. It might have unforeseen obstacles in it, but you've already judged that it's good.

So kat-echo, hold it fast. Keep on that course. Things that are good aren't always pleasant.

Medicine can taste really bad. Workouts can be really painful. Therapy, rehabilitation can be painful.

Your body says bad, bad, bad. Your mind says good, good, good. Doctor says good, good, good.

So what? You push through. You hold fast to what is good. It has been judged to be good, so

stick with it.

Kat-echo. According to. It's not just any old stubborn sticking with a thing.

This isn't stubbornness. This is kat-echo. I hold fast to this because of a standard.

Now he says abstain. If you were going to try to compare kat-echo and op-echo in English, it would kind of be the difference between obtain and abstain. They've got the same ending.

Hold fast and hold away. Opa means from. Remember apostasia, apostasy, stand away.

That day will not come. The Antichrist won't be revealed unless there comes first the apostasy, the apostasis, the standing away from. Opa means from.

Get it out of here. It's away. It's separate.

Opa. So this is hold from. Op-echo.

Hold from. Abstain is kind of like being abstemious, being I'm going to draw in and this thing is going to be there and I'm just going to, it's sitting right there in front of me and I'm just going to keep myself from partaking or participating. This says in the same way that you hold something close and hold it fast and stubbornly pursue it when it's right, you hold this away.

You're actively pushing this away. This is hold it off, fend it off. This stiff arm, this thing.

It's going to try to come. You stop it. This is an active pushing away.

I don't just sit there with this big plate full of stuff I'm not supposed to eat and stare at it and say, well, I'm abstaining. I'm pushing that thing away. I'm pushing it off the table.

I'm pushing it out of the room. I'm pushing it out. Op-echo.

Abstain is so weak and anemic for a translation. Push away. Get it out of here would be a really great translation for op-echo.

Every form of evil, get it out of here. Push it out. If your computer is a source of evil, push it out.

If your TV is a source of evil, push it out. If some friendship or association is constantly dragging you into evil, conversations always go down a bad road, push it away. Some activity, it gets you into sin.

You're hooked on, you know, gamblingcasino.com or something, push it away. Don't just say, well, I'm going to see if I can not do that today. This is like having a carton of cigarettes in your house and saying, well, see how long I can go without smoking.

Op-echo, you take those things and discard them. They're nowhere near. The opportunity is no

longer there.

Jesus put this another way when he said, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. He doesn't just say, if your eye offends you, wink. If your hand offends you, put it behind your back.

Does he? Op-echo is get rid of it. Remove the opportunity. Separation is in view.

Appa has separation in mind. Separate from, push away actively every form of evil. Now, how do you know what's evil and what's good? You did your dokimazo thing.

How do you know what's evil and good when you're dokimazoing it? You have cultivated the spirit and you have cultivated the truth, new truth. You're learning. You're getting better at identifying evil.

You're getting better at identifying what is good. You see how these things all link together. One flows out of the other.

You're a person of joy. You're a person of prayer. You're a person that is thankful.

And because of this, you cultivate the things of the spirit. You cultivate knowledge of the truth and learning new truth, and you can then judge. What is this going to do to those around me? What effect is this going to have in the cause of Christ? Is this a positive thing? Is this an edifying thing? Does this build up? Does this contribute to the faith? Is this a part of pneuma, or is this a part of soma? Gratifies my body, gives me a thrill, gives me cheap kicks.

Well, that's a pretty easy dokimazo, isn't it? That's something to push away, to abstain from. Nothing wrong with having a good time. Nothing wrong with enjoying life in Christ, in the things of God, where it isn't detrimental to ourselves or others.

Finally, now, may the God of peace. These things lead to peace. One of the standards when we're dokimazoing, when we are judging and figuring out what's good and what's evil, does it lead to peace? God is a God of peace.

Jesus Christ has made peace between Jew and Gentile, between male and female, between slave and free, between the people that are in a church. There is peace. There should not be wars and divisions among you.

There is supposed to be peace. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. The God of peace himself cleanses you completely.

Notice in this verse, there are two words that talk about completeness. Verse 23, sanctify you entirely. Not sanctify most of you, but your feet are still dirty.

Not sanctify most of you, but your hands are still dirty. Not sanctify 90% of the food on the plate, but 10% of it is still infected. Well, most of my food is safe to eat, but not all.

Sanctify entirely. It's all good. Now, when he says, may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, what does this depend on? This is one of the points that Ken brought up on the break.

When Jesus was traveling around and said he could do no great work in one town or another, why was that? Did Jesus lose his power? It is conditioned on response. It's conditioned on human choice. God limits himself.

God is powerful enough to limit himself. God can say, where there is no positive response, where there is no faith, I am not going to act. I am not going to heal.

I am not going to bless. I am not going to invigorate and renew and regenerate and restore where there is no faith. God chooses when and where he will operate, and where there is no faith, Jesus could do no great work.

So, when it says, may the God of peace sanctify you completely, what is that going to depend on? It isn't that God, well, unless he is really having a good day, he can't sanctify completely. Why would God not be able to sanctify completely? Because we are not completely searching for it and seeking it and putting ourselves in the position for it. Does 1 John 1.9 say, Behold, God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Is that what 1 John 1.9 says? Behold, if we confess, he will forgive and cleanse. It is conditional, and it is conditioned on us. May God sanctify.

This is really another exhortation. Paul is really saying, may you allow yourself to be completely sanctified by God. It is up to us.

The Lord's arm is not shortened that he cannot save. His ear isn't heavy that he cannot hear. It is our iniquities that separate us.

It is our shortcomings. Our lack of commitment. Our lack of dedication.

Our lack of interest. Sounds good in Bible class. What is going to happen tomorrow? How to set an alarm for like 9.30 in the morning.

You say, what is this alarm for? Oh, Sam said, what am I going to be doing at 9.30 in the morning tomorrow Is it just good in Bible class or is it good as we are living our life? Sanctify completely. Sanctify minute by minute. Hour by hour.

Task by task. Thought by thought. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body.

This makes sense to us now, doesn't it? Spirit, everything to do with our relationship with God. Psyche, our soul, everything to do with our thoughts and our intents and our personality and our

individuality. Our character.

Our ethics. Our activities that are sourced in us. And Soma, body.

This is everything we do that is visible to the outside world. This is our walk. Let not your good be spoken of as evil.

Be at peace with all men. To the extent that it is up to you, be at peace with all men. Be a light that shines in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

This is our walk. This is our behavior. Are we engaging in overt sins? Are we violent? Are we people of anger? Are we manifestly lacking in self-control? Are we slovenly? Are we apathetic? Are we indifferent? Are we untrustworthy? Can we not be counted on? This is our body.

This is what's visible. This is our activity in the world. We should be on time.

We should be where we say we will be. We should do what we say we will do. We should be trustworthy.

Can you imagine if God wasn't trustworthy? Well, you know, I said I was going to write your name in the book of life, but you know, the angels were talking, and I kind of got busy, and I just left you out. Be ye holy, for I am holy. Be ye trustworthy, for I am trustworthy.

Be ye faithful, for I am faithful. We are to be Christ-like. That's our body.

So, sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless. No finding of fault in our spiritual life before God, in our learning, in our praying, in our dedication to the Spirit and the truth. Blameless.

No fault. We're consistent. We're dedicated.

We pay attention to it. We prioritize it. Our soul, we tend to our thoughts.

We tend to our motivations. We judge ourselves, lest we be judged. And our bodies.

This is our behavior. This is our walk before others. Spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Why do we talk about the judgment seat? Why do I encourage that we picture ourselves standing before the Lord at any moment? Because this is the standard. This is the reminder. How real is the judgment seat to us? When you're taking a class in school and the professor says, the teacher says, there's a test on Thursday.

Well, you know that test is coming and every previous day of the week is conditioned on that test. You're studying. You're working problems.

You're getting ready. You're trying to make sure you know it. It's a real thing.

Well, this is our upcoming judgment. Blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful.

He who calls you is faithful who also will do it. Now, on what condition will He do it? We say, well, if He's faithful and He's going to do it, I can just relax. God is at work in you, willing to do His good pleasure, right? Just kick back.

Oh, God. I heard a guy earlier this week who reminded me of this passage because I was working on it. He said as he was getting ready to preach, he said, oh, God, fill my body.

Speak with my voice. Look with my eyes. Hear with my ears.

He was basically saying, just let me be an empty shell, oh, God. Fill me and operate through me. And it's a commendable idea, but it's not scriptural.

Scripture says we are responsible. We've got to walk with our own legs. We've got to work with our own hands.

We've got to talk with our own voice. We hear with our ears. We see with our eyes.

You can't empty yourself and say, let go and let God. I give up, oh, God. I'm just a marionette.

Pull the strings. Walk me through the paces. That's antithetical to the scriptural exhortation that we have here.

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. What is the condition on which He will do it? If we let Him. If we confess our sins, He will forgive and cleanse.

If we are faithful, He will bless. He will use. He will enable us.

It depends on what we choose, and we've got to actively make this choice. If you don't think about it, it isn't going to happen. He who aims at nothing hits it every time.

Right? There's a target here. You're not going to hit it if you don't aim for it. Brethren, pray for us.

Isn't this a great exhortation? Get outside yourself a little bit. We've been talking about what you need to do on your own, but have a balance here. You're tending to yourself.

You're looking at your body, soul, and spirit. You're trying to get ready for the day of Christ. You're trying to grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior.

But remember, you're part of a body. Pray for some other people. Get your eyes off yourself sometimes.

Look around at others. It's a wonderful exercise in humility. Look at others.

Pray for others. Think what would be a good prayer to pray for them. Be acquainted enough to be able to pray intelligently.

When he says pray for us, pray what? Oh God, please help Paul. That's a terrible prayer. Be informed.

Be aware. Pray specifically. Aim at a target.

Oh Lord, please lift him up. Sustain his physical strength. He's under a lot of pressure from people.

Lord, put a muzzle on those people. Don't let their talk diminish the light of the Gospel. Give Paul clarity of thought.

Give him the right words to say at the right moment. The people that are interested and are susceptible to the Gospel and to the truth of God's Word, put them in the right place at the right time. There's all kinds of things you can pray.

When it says pray for us, and you know what this does? Every moment that you're spending thinking about, analyzing, trying to put together the clues so that you can pray intelligently, you're not being subjective. You're not being self-centered. You're not wallowing in self-pity.

You're not being weak. You're not being neutralized. Pray for us.

Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. This is metaphorical. You don't have to literally run around and try.

Well, what's a holy kiss versus an unholy kiss? This is a metaphor. There doesn't have to be any physical contact involved in this. A holy kiss means greet them with holy affection.

And this is affection in the Lord. Greet them as a fellow member of the body of Christ. You don't even have to like each other or have anything in common, but you recognize and value one another for who we are in Christ.

This is the holy affection. And greet one another. Get outside yourself.

Talk to somebody. You can't greet people by just a little upward nod of the head. This is what you do when you're running.

So you pass another runner huffing and puffing, can't talk. That's not a greeting. Greet one another means let's have some conversation.

Ask after someone. Get outside yourself. Pray for us.

Greet each other. Think about something beside yourself. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

Get this truth out. Don't despise it. Don't diminish it.

Don't read it and say, well, I'm sure glad he wrote me a letter. We're going to put this in a holy box and worship it as a relic. It needs to be read.

It needs to be communicated. It needs to be shared. It needs to be talked about.

Hey, did you hear we got a letter from Paul? Come over. We'll read it. Let's read it together.

Let's talk about it. Can help me understand some of these things I didn't quite catch. Share the truth with one another.

That's what this means. Speak the truth to one another in love. I charge you by the Lord.

Speak the truth to one another in love. Share this epistle. Discuss this truth.

Great thing to do in families. Great things to have discussion about these things with one another. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And that is a given if we enter into the things that he has given us by way of exhortation and encouragement. The grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ will be with us. Amen.

So be it. Let it happen. That concludes our study of 1 Thessalonians.

I apologize. I ran a little bit over, but there's a lot to cover here. It's a wonderful exhortation.

It's a wonderful message and I hope that it will stay with all of us in the days ahead. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for its rebuke and its correction and its instruction in righteousness. Thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit and the fact that you do perform these things within us. It is all by your grace and in your power.

That faith works. That we are able to lay hold of righteousness. That we are able to cling to what is good.

We are able to abstain from evil. All of these things are done in the strength that comes to us from you through the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that as we meditate on these things, as we pray, as we examine ourselves and judge all things, that these truths will return to our minds and illuminate our paths so that we can live in a way that is pleasing in your sight.

We pray it in Jesus' name.