

Life in the Word

Cornerstone Sermon-based Life Group Lesson



Sermon Series: **Hope Now and Forever**

Sermon Title: **The Quiet Side of Hope**

Scripture Passage: **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

1. Paul urges the believers to work with their hands so as not to be a burden on anyone. This most likely comes from his own example since he is noted to be in some sort of craft business arrangement with the Thessalonians (Tent maker). This also means that he stayed much longer than the three weeks recorded in Scripture (Acts 17:2). It is suggested that the three weeks in Thessalonica were the preaching and teaching time of Paul's stay, not so much the business building or work, though they are alluded to (this would be prior to the riots and running Paul out of town). The Philippian church sent Paul material several times throughout his stay, which also indicates longer tenure (Philippians 4:15-16). There seems to be evidence that Paul was downplaying any Jewish influence that was in the Thessalonian Church or on the believers there. Thessalonians is structured as a messianic-apocalyptic form (Apocalyptic texts were usually prophetic, though some in the NT are not. These writings give a moral urgency to the reader, giving the promise of future salvation as well as judgement. Apocalyptic eschatology rests in dualism...which means they contrast between present suffering and future glory.), though they never mention any of the Jewish scriptures. In 1 Thess. 1:9 and 2:14-16 Paul includes a strongly worded anti-Jewish polemic and emphasizes (perhaps too much) the pagan origin of the addressees. Since Thessalonians holds such a strong eschatological interest, it is no wonder that this would have shaped the culture of Thessalonica (since many would not have been happy staying in the status quo). Eschatology, the study of Last Things, (es-cha-ta) deals with events from Jesus's ministry onward. It can be broken up into individual eschatology (more OT than NT) and Inaugurated Eschatology (NT not OT).

Observation Discovering the context

2. Theodidaktoi (theo-didak-toi) is a unique term meaning “taught by God” which points to the new covenant (alluding back to the Isaiah 54:13 passage describing the messianic age). There will come a time where the lessons learned are not taught by men but by God, where we will know his law so intimately, we cannot disregard it. What comes to mind as you think about the coming of this day and why?
3. Paul stresses the importance of not being idle (he addresses it several times throughout Thessalonians) but working towards the kingdom of God. What sort of philosophies or activities might draw a believer away from doing the work of the kingdom?
4. In Paul’s day, many of the poor relied heavily on the wealthy to give them money for food and other necessities. However, exploiting the charity of wealthier Christians was considered a great offense. Why would poorer believers or others seek to exploit the generosity of the wealthier Christians? Do you see this today?

5. In 4:10 Paul encourages the believers to love “more and more”. They are already doing this...how can they do it more? How can we love more?

6. If we are to be “quiet and mind our own affairs” at what point are we to step in and assist a fellow brother or sister who is in spiritual, physical, or moral danger?

Interpretation Discovering the meaning

Read 4:12 again...how do you “walk properly before outsiders...”? In what areas do we not succeed in this?

Core Truths Discovering Biblical truth

In your own words, share at least one core truth God has shown you in this week's study and why it is timely or significant for you.

Practice Makes Progress Putting knowledge into practice

What action is the Lord prompting you to take this week as a result of being in His Word?

Worth Memorizing

Scripture: For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love
one another. 1 John 3:11

Prayer Time

How can your Life Group pray for you this week?

Praise Time

How has God blessed you and answered prayer this week?