

THE BELIEVERS BEHAVIOR IN LIGHT OF THE LORD'S RETURN (1)

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

In light of the Lord's coming, it is wise for each of us as saints of God to guard our lives, conduct and character. For the Father makes it clear that there will come a time in which our lives are judged.

As Paul is addressing the saints of God in Thessalonica, he is giving them both sober and serious words regarding their behavior and their lives in light of the Lord's coming.

It is a major issue to the Father how we live our lives before Him. It will be of eternal consequence what we have done with our lives.

Paul in another passage of Scripture to the church at Corinth, declared, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

It was very much on the heart of Paul regarding the behavior of the saints of God, and it must be on our minds our behavior toward a lost and dying world. When believers live in such a way loving the people of the world, and showing the love of Christ to them, they draw a lost world to Jesus Christ.

1. THE BELIEVERS BEHAVIOR TOWARD LEADERS (vv. 12-13).

First...it is the call of God among the saints of God, that there be a serious respect for those whom God has chosen to place in positions in His church.

It is the Father that has called men to preach the gospel, and men to serve in positions of servanthood as deacons in His church. It was the directive of Paul under the leadership of God, to encourage all believers to "honor" those in the church that worked hard among them. It is the calling of God that His ministers not be lazy but rather serve, laboring in His church. If a minister is doing what is pleasing to the Lord, he is "laboring" to the point of working hard to preach and proclaim the gospel of Christ. Paul set an example before other church leaders as an example. In the life of Paul there was not an ounce of laziness in him, but a willingness to serve where the Lord directed.

The minister is called by God, selected by God, chosen from the masses of the world for God's work, and it ought to be his life to serve diligently the kingdom of God. His mind, body, soul, and energies are to be about the Father's business.

Since the minister is called by God to work hard, others are to acknowledge and show appreciation and respect for the leader of God. When the body of Christ esteems the minister of God, they are esteeming the very anointed of the Lord. For no minister of God is a minister called of himself, but rather called by a Holy God, for a holy purpose, for the entirety of his life.

Not only are believers to honor the minister, but all that diligently teach and proclaim the truth of God through the many avenues of the Lord's church. A godly teacher often works long days, prepares to teach a Sunday School class or small group for the glory of God. It is therefore the calling of God that the body of Christ is to respect those who are faithfully teaching and uplifting the very Word of God.

When we "think highly" of those who serve, it will not be an easy thing to speak against them or to be quarrelsome with others.

Second... believers are to highly esteem their leaders. A number of things are meant here.

- 1) Leaders are to live a life worthy of esteem, therefore they watch carefully their life and actions.
- 2) Leaders are to be esteemed because they are given the very "Word of God" to relay to the people who will hear and respond.
- 3) Genuine leaders are servants of the Most High God and they serve Christ in all they do and say.
- 4) Leaders declare the very truth of Holy God, therefore the message they declare is holy by nature.

Third... it is the call of God that believers and leaders are to live at peace with one another.

Leaders are to live a life not grumbling about believers, and believers are to live a life not criticizing murmuring or complaining about leadership. While each one differs from one another, the call of God is that the not grumble. Leaders, also are not to live “lording” it over believers, as though they were “God” to the people. Leaders have been selected by God, called by God, therefore they have nothing to boast about...it is God that has done the choosing, not man.

2. THE BELIEVER HAS A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD FELLOW BELIEVERS. (14-15).

Paul gives a list of exhortations to all believers in these two verses, reminding them how they are to respond toward one another. Every believer has a responsibility toward other believers that the Lord will call him into account at some day.

First....warn those that are lazy. To those who are walking faithfully devoted to the Lord God, they have a responsibility to speak loving truth to those who have gone AWOL in the Christian faith. The word used for “unruly” is a military term that means “to break rank” The sobering reality is that all too many saints are not where they ought to be, yet they have no one to speak words of loving candid truth to them. The call of God has not changed in 2000 years. The call of God is to “warn” the lazy. It will be a sobering and saddening day for the lazy saint. His life will be evaluated by the Lord God for his or her years of laziness.

Second...comfort the feebleminded. The call of God is for His saints to give comfort to those who are timid, reserved, discouraged, and live cowardly in this world. There are a host of individuals who live in this world with discouragement and disappointment. Countless numbers are reserved to serve the Lord. Yet, true spiritual Christians are not to discourage them, but rather lift them up in the bond of peace.

Third...care for the weak. Paul is not talking about the physically weak here, but rather the spiritually weak. Those who are easily swayed by the trials and temptations of life. It is the call of God that spiritual Christians lift up to the Lord, those that have a more readily tendency to fall in time of temptations. Scripture declares in Acts, “I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

Fourth...be patient toward all. The word used here for patience carries with it the meaning of “consistent patience”. The call of God to every saint is to “forebear” one another. Sometime the reality of life involves the calling to “put up with” and that is the essence of forbear. The degree of patience or lack of patience determines a great deal our personal walk with the Lord.

Fifth...look after every believer. In the Living Bible v. 15 reads, “See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to everyone else.” Paul declares in this one verse that others will do you evil. Yet, having evil done to us, never gives a right under God to ever repay with evil. It is a wise Christian that is reminded that “he reaps what he sows”. If we sow with evil...then evil will return to our lives. If we sow good when evil is sent to our lives, God will bless in His divine way. The call of God is that we are to “look after each other”. We are not to treat others with any form of evil. Not only are we to treat believers wisely, but we are to treat the world with love and compassion...revealing the love of Christ. We must be reminded that when we mistreat a person, we have hurt ourselves and have affected our character in a negative way. *Jesus declared, “But I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (Mt. 5:39)*