

## Waiting in the meantime (1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & 2 Thes 3:1-18)

08-Sep-19

So, we're continuing our series on 2 Thessalonians which we began before I went away.

This is part 3 and the **final part** of the series.

There's the usual outline to take notes, if you wish.

Let me ask God for His help and understanding, before we begin

Let's pray

### Recap - 2 Thessalonians so far

So, let's quickly recap on where we got to with 2 Thessalonians

[PowerPoint 1a-Recap]

In chapter 1 we talked about the reality of 2 destinations when we die.

**Believers** in Jesus go to **Heaven** - and have **eternal life** - living with God forever

**Non-Believers** go to **Hell** - where there is **everlasting separation** from God

[PowerPoint 2a-Recap]

Then in chapter 2 we talked about the reality of Jesus' returning one day - we don't know when that day is - so the Apostle Paul told us how to prepare for Jesus' return

He said:

- Be prepared for Jesus to return at **anytime**
- Be prepared to wait a **long time** for Jesus to return - therefore pass on the baton to the next generation

- Be thankful for a past time - a **past time** - when God chose us before the creation of the world to be followers of Jesus
- And be occupied in the **meantime**

Which brings us to today's passage - chapter 3 of 2 Thessalonians

And Paul tells us what to do whilst we are **waiting in the meantime**

## Intro

Waiting in the meantime

[PowerPoint 2-Waiting - Mr. Bean]

We spend a lot of time **waiting** in our lives - don't we?

- Husbands waiting for their wives to get ready for Church
- Husbands waiting for their wives to finish shopping
- Wives waiting for their husbands to buy them flowers and be romantic
- Wives waiting for their husbands to stop watching sport and give them some attention
- Parents waiting for their children to tidy their room
- We wait at the Doctor's surgery - never quite understanding why they bother giving us an appointment time - when the doctor is always running 2 hours behind
- We wait on the phone - for Centrelink - Telstra - Optus - and so on

I don't know what you do when you're waiting - but I often play word games on my phone.

But the Apostle Paul has some much more important things we can do, whilst we are **waiting in the meantime** - for Jesus to return

Let's take a look

## 1. Pray for the Gospel to be a priority (vv1-5)

[PowerPoint 3-Heading]

First Paul says pray for the **Gospel to be a priority** - that's in verses 1 to 5

[PowerPoint 3a-Gospel Priority]

- a. See v1 - He prays that the **message of the Lord** - spreads rapidly and is honoured. The message of the Lord - is the Gospel - the Good News - that Jesus - God's Son - came to this Earth - showed us how to live a life pleasing to God - died on a cruel cross for our sins to be forgiven - and rose again 3 days later - so people have the opportunity to live in Heaven forever with God. Paul prays this message spreads rapidly and is honoured. That's his priority in ministry
- b. He also prays for deliverance from wicked and evil people - see v2. He's basically praying for protection from these evil people. He's not praying that there's no persecution - because persecution is expected for anyone who follows Jesus - but he is praying that we are protected from those evil people who persecute Christians or try to destroy Christians.
- c. In v3 - Paul says in our prayers - we can claim the **Lord's faithfulness** - He will strengthen and protect His people from evil. Remember Jesus promised in John 10:28 - **I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.** What a promise that is!

- d. In v4 - Paul prays that we would continue to follow the apostles' commands - which of course are Jesus' commands. Remember Jesus summarized the commandments down to loving God and loving others - and He said: **Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**" (John 13:34-35)
- e. And it's love that Paul finishes his pray with - in verse 5 - He prays that the Lord will direct our hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. What he is basically praying for is for us - to have the love of God in our hearts so that people see that love and are attracted to it - and that we have the patience and perseverance that Jesus had in His suffering. Paul's prayer is similar to what King David prayed for the people of Israel in our OT passage from 1 Chronicles 29 *[Context - David's son, Solomon, will build a temple for God. The whole assembly of God, came together to bring materials for the temple to be built. David praised God for His awesomeness, thanked God for His provision and the people's generosity and then prayed for the people to be loyal and obedient]* - In v18 David prayed- **LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.** King David could see the priority in loving God and being obedient...

Application - applying this to our lives today?

Is the Gospel - the Good News of Jesus - a priority in our lives?

Are we praying for those who minister the Gospel?

Are we praying for more people to come to know Jesus as their Saviour?

Are we praying for protection from evil - [Convicted of that this week]

Are we praying for the love of Jesus in our hearts to shine out to our community?

Are we praying for patience and perseverance in persecution [China, Hong Kong]?

(pause)

## 2. Imitate the Apostles as they imitate Christ (vv6-10)

The second point Paul makes is to **imitate the Apostles as they imitate Christ** - that's in verses 6 to 10

### [PowerPoint 3b-Imitate]

- a. Twice in verse 7 and verse 9 - Paul says he and the other missionaries, Timothy and Silas - were examples to follow. In verse 7 he says the Thessalonians ought to follow the apostles' **example** and in verse 9 he says the apostles were a **model** for the Thessalonians to imitate
- b. We shouldn't think that Paul has tickets on himself - and that he wants them to model his behaviour - because remember Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1 - follow my example as I follow the example of Christ
- c. So, what is this example - he wants us to follow?
- d. Specially here - v6 - he is targeting people who were not like the apostles - they were idle or lazy and disruptive and unruly - and they didn't follow the Apostles' teaching. The problem with such people - is they are not being Christ-like and they have the propensity to cause problems in the church family - and cause disunity and disharmony -

and if they're idle and lazy - they can become an unnecessary burden on the church family

- e. On the contrary - the Apostles were not idle or lazy - they paid their way - even though as ministers of the word they were entitled to be fed
- f. However - they didn't want to be a burden to the Thessalonians - nor encourage others to be a burden - so the apostles worked day and night - in v8 - so that they weren't a burden
- g. They had a simple rule in v10 - no work - no food!

Application - Obviously some today can't physically work due to ill health - Paul's not talking about them. He's referring to those sponging off others - when they don't need to be. So, it's worth each one of us - asking ourselves whether we are an unnecessary burden on people?

Application - Also, as we think about imitating the Apostles as they imitate Christ. Young people or new Christians in our church family should be looking for mature Christians to imitate.

And mature Christians in our church family should be looking for young people or new Christians to disciple and pass the baton on to  
(pause)

### **3. Be busy doing good - not a busybody (vv11-15)**

The third point, Paul makes is to be busy doing good - not busy being a busybody - that's in verses 11 to 15

## [PowerPoint 3c-Busy]

In v11 - Paul makes a play on words - he says some in the Thessalonian church - are not busy - they are busybodies. Because they are idle and lazy and disruptive - they've got plenty of time - to stick their nose in everyone else's business. This leads to gossip. And gossip leads to people being hurt and it can lead to people leaving our church family. And it causes great trouble in a church.

Paul urges such people in v12 - to settle down and work and earn their food instead of being lazy and disruptive

Rather than being busybodies - in v13 - Paul says never tire from **doing what is good**.

Being a busybody never achieves any good - only harm

Paul says it's much better to be busy doing kind things - and working for the Lord and the Lord's people

He goes as far as saying in v14 - that people who are idle, disruptive, busybodies and not following the Lord's commandments such be disciplined and removed from fellowship in the church

Not so that they are outcasts forever - but so they feel ashamed of their behaviour - in v15. And, so that they have time to think about this bad behaviour, and repent - and come back to fellowship with the church family.

Application - applying this to our lives.

It's worth all of us - doing some self-examination of our behaviour.

Are we idle?

Are we disruptive?

Are we interfering in other people's business?

Are we gossiping?

Are there things we need to repent from?

(pause)

Are there good things we could be doing for the Lord and the Lord's people?

Maybe spend some time writing down some good things you could be doing for the Lord and His people...

(pause)

#### 4. Embrace the Lord of Peace (v16)

The fourth and final point Paul makes is to embrace the Lord of Peace - it's in v16

[PowerPoint 4d-Peace]

And note it is peace - at ALL times and in EVERY WAY

So, what is this peace from our Lord Jesus?

It takes many forms - but it's not peace - in the sense of the opposite of war.

We get peace from the Lord

- Through the Cross of Jesus - because His death made peace between humankind and God - and reconciled us to God
- We get this peace through the Holy Spirit living inside us as Christians - the Spirit encourages and comforts and strengthens us
- We get this peace through our prayer times and quiet times with God
- We get this peace through communion with God's people - who get beside us - and love us and care for us and encourage us as needed
- We get this peace through God's Word - when we are reminded of God's love, God's faithfulness and God's promises

- We even get this peace through our sufferings, or trials or persecutions
  - knowing that in Jesus we have someone who also suffered and understands our suffering - and knowing that God is always with us - knowing God is our refuge and strength and ever present help in times of trouble - knowing that Jesus promised in Matthew 28:20 - **I am with you always, to the very end of the age**

Application - are we embracing that peace that only the Lord gives at all times and in every way? That peace that surpasses all understanding? It's an incredible peace available to us? And far better than being anxious and worrying - far better than being a busybody?

(pause)

And, are we offering that peace to others who don't believe in Jesus or don't have that peace of the Lord in their lives?

(pause)

## Conclusion

So, there we have it - 4 things Paul tells us we can do whilst we are waiting in the meantime - for Jesus to return

### Waiting in the Meantime...

1. Pray for the Gospel to be a priority (vv1-5)
2. Imitate the Apostles as they imitate Christ (vv6-10)
3. Be busy doing good – not a busybody (vv11-15)
4. Embrace the Lord of Peace (vv16)

Next time you find yourself waiting

You could be active in these 4 things.

Let's pray...