

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

“Keep Walking”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 13 Cling To The Word Of God

III.) Vs. 14-16 Fellowship With The People Of God

IV.) Vs. 17-20 Long For The Presence Of God

I.) Intro.

In an autobiographical section Paul spoke of how Pastor’s and leaders must have a:

- **Servant’s life style**
- **Mother’s heart of caring**
- **Father’s touch in instructing**

Remember Paul only had three weeks with these Christians and although that had a great start their faith was beginning to be severely tested through persecution. What were they going to do now that Paul was gone? One of my Bible College teachers told me on the first day of class that these three things were keys to endurance in the Christian life:

- 1.) **Life is not fair**: We surprised when we go to get into the car and it won’t run. Life by its nature has twists and turns which we can’t anticipate. So instead of getting bummed out, remind yourself a head of time that “*life is not fair*”!
- 2.) **People are weird**: We all know weird people, we work with them; they drive on the same roads as we do, eat at the same restaurants. They may even pastor the church you go to. The truth is sometimes we act weird towards others! The next time someone does something weird towards you remember this simple truth, “*people are weird*”.
- 3.) **Love covers a multitude of sins**: This is the one thing that will enable you to have **perspective** when “*life’s not fair*” and “*people are weird*”. The question is not whether or not life is going to through you a curve ball or when some person is going to act weird. The question is: What are you going to do when “*life is not fair*” and “*people are weird*”? You can’t change the inevitable and you shouldn’t be so surprised about it. All you can do is respond in the Spirit & not in the flesh! Love covers your sins, as well as others!

Paul tells these new Christians how to maintain a walk worthy of God, even when life is not fair and people are weird!

II.) Vs. 13 Cling To The Word Of God

Vs. 13a Paul had already thanked God for the work of the Spirit of God in the Word of God for their salvation. *Now he is thanking God that the Spirit of God still works in the Word of God which will enable them to have a walk worthy of God.* Paul was always in praise towards God. This is one of those things that I think God would have us to be more like Jesus, a continual heart of praise. Paul phrases this thanksgiving about the “Word of God saying, “*..when you received the word of God..., you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*” It was not only their initial acceptance of the Word of God, but it’s continual “*effective work*” in those that believed.

Here is the first of three things to do when “life is not fair” and “people are weird”:

1.) **CLING TO THE WORD OF GOD:** The text says that there are three things that the church at Thessalonica did.

A.) **Accept it as from God:** Paul uses two different words for “**received**”, (in the N.K.J. the second word is rendered “*welcomed*”, in verse 13). The first one means to “**accept from another**” this involves the desire to listen. These guys valued the truth enough to check it out. They saw the Word of God as coming from God not man! The way that a Christian treats the Word of God in difficult times will show how he regards Jesus. The Bible says that:

- A.) John 1:1, 14 That Jesus is the living Word and according to Heb. 4:12 so is the Bible.
- B.) Matt. 4:4 and John 6:48 both are the bread of life.
- C.) In Ps. 119:105 and John 8:12 both are light.
- D.) In John 14:6 and 17:17 both are truth.

“The Bible should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It’s a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It’s given to you in life, will be opened at judgment, and be remembered forever.”

B.) **Took it to heart:** The second word here rendered “welcome” means to accept it as one’s own! This involves not just the hearing of the ear but the hearing of the heart. These guys did not just listen, they said *“This is truth that we need to make part of our lives.”* Think of it like eating, the first part of hearing with the ears is like chewing the food. You don’t spit it out, instead you swallow so that your body can digest it.

C.) **Apply it their life:** Paul says that the Word of God *“effectively works”*. The word here is where we get our word *“energy”* from and it means to have *“power in use”*. Paul’s point is that the Word of God doesn’t just change how you feel it changes your life! So this is how to cling to the Word of God in difficult times:

- **Value it with your mind.**
- **Understand it with your heart.**
- **Apply it in your life.**

III.) Vs. 14-16 Fellowship with The People Of God

Paul lets them know that they were not alone in what was happening to them. People who go through tough times can get a narrow view on life, thinking that they are the only ones going through trials. This can cause us to pull away from fellowship. So Paul let them know that they were not alone.

A.)Vs. 14 They were not taking the lead of going through tough times, in fact it was par for the course. The churches in Judea were being persecuted just as they were only for a longer period of time.

B.) Vs. 14b-15 Paul wants them to know that it was their stand in Christ that had brought about the persecution just like the church in Judea as was Jesus! Religion has always been the enemy of a relationship with Jesus.

Vs. 16 No need to worry about all of this as God will deal with those that oppose Jesus in the end. Paul is letting them in on a secret **when the world comes at you draw near to those who are going through the same thing.** Fellowship with those that love you! The great value of the church is that folks will stand with you, guide you correct you, pray with you. We need each other! Paul does not say, “*You deserve better!*” He comforts them with the fact that they are not alone. Then he tells them that they are part of a greater group of believers called the “*church*”.

IV.) Vs. 17-20 Long For The Presence Of God

Vs. 17-18 Paul explains why he has not come back to them personally to comfort them as he calls them, “Brethren”! That’s the way of a calling someone “*family*” He saw them more than just some people he met they were part of his family. To further illustrate this he says that he was “*taken*” from them and the word means to be an “*orphan*”. Paul felt as if his children had been taken from him. **Ah bit it was only in presence not in heart.** That reminds me of a story I heard of a father who was asked how many children he had. His response was startling as he said, “*I have three, two here in the land of the dead and one with me in my heart in the land of the living!*” **All that separation did for Paul was want all the more to be with them.** Does that describe your desire to be with the believers here at Calvary Chapel? I love to hang out with you and when I’ve traveled away from here I can’t wait to get back.

Vs. 18 Paul explains why he did not come, Satan hindered. The word here “*hindered*” means to “*break up the road by putting up obstacles.*” That’s all Satan can do, “*put up road blocks*” but the truth is that even this God uses!

Vs. 19-20 Paul realized that the greatest thing of all was being in the presence of God. No matter what you find yourself going through God is there with you. This church was going through heavy persecution and Paul gives them a heavenly perspective. He says, “*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*” Look at it this way:

Our hope is *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

Our joy is ... *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

Our crown of rejoicing is ... *you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.*

Our goal is not to be found in this life, it is to be found in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. There is a little saying that goes like this:

“If you come to find “happiness” seek it elsewhere. If you want it your own way, I have nothing to share. But if looking like Jesus is what you desire, the cross is waiting come feel it’s fire. It will free you from self! It will turn you from sin! It will fill you with Joy, please come venture in.”

Saints, if you are going through tough times “*keep walking*”!

- **Cling to the word of God.**
- **Fellowship with the people of God**
- **Long for the presence of God**

It’s the only way to get to where you want to go!