

Life Group Notes 6/2/2024
Pastor Mark Warren 2 Thessalonians Week 1

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/2. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Paul's traveling companions.](#)
2. [On Karma, some new age principles and Christianity.](#)
3. [On hell, God's presence and being kept away from it.](#)
4. [On the division that has been prophesied.](#)
5. [On Biblical hope.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Pastor Mark began by talking about "current topics." (Scribe's note: Proceed with extreme caution.)

1. Should he in a message? What should a pastor speak about? What should he never speak about?
2. Who decides?
3. Is your opinion valid? Does God always agree with your opinion? Why or why not?
4. How are you feeling in light of today's news? Take a moment and pray for peace.
5. Why *does* talking about the days' events create discomfort? Does it make you uncomfortable? Always?
6. Jesus said, "Because [in the last days] iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold." What have you seen?
7. Do an inventory again: How is your own love doing?
8. Does the Bible speak to current events? How? To what extent?

Pastor underlines this principle: "The more that I walk with Jesus, the more I realize that this is what the world needs of us. The World needs to understand what it means to live in the Kingdom of God. They need to grasp that we are citizens of the Kingdom first, and

what that implies. Now, I know that we are citizens of a country, and I know that we have concerns due to the degradation of our culture, to the breaking down of family, to the attack on our Constitution...because it was built on biblical principles and foundations. But I don't think I serve you well spending a lot of time on those concerns. I believe I serve you better by opening up the scripture and by helping you understand how to become more like Jesus, to provide the means to live in this Kingdom of God by which God has called us to permeate culture. His Kingdom is the number one thing He wants us to show. AND, that kingdom is demonstrated and is most prone to permeate culture by the love we show for one another."

1. What do you see?
2. How did Mark do?
3. How important is the contrast of the church/Kingdom in the context of the state in which it operates?
4. Who gains by greater contrast?
5. What is required?
6. Review Micah 6: [8He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?](#) Why is this so applicable to today's culture? Describe the contrast.
7. Given the turbulence caused by this week's conviction of a former president, where have you seen peace and love increase? Do you have a testimony?
8. Among us, whose love and concern for their neighbor has increased?
9. If love and concern for one's neighbor does increase, what does this prove? Is this natural?

Pastor says that when this darkness increases, it's important to remember that "...this is just the beginning of turbulent times."

1. How do we know this is true? What is the source for pastor's claim?
2. What is the greatest danger to the Christian?
3. How does one prepare?

He continues, "We must see two things. I do not suggest that you completely disengage. We are going to have to engage ourselves as Christians in a remarkable way. We are going to ensure that we do that by ensuring that our words are '*...full of grace [and seasoned with salt. Col. 4:6]*,' that we continue to foster unity and not division. That despite our own differences of opinion, we are determined not to allow those differences to divide us. That we will focus on Jesus and His Word, and on our love for each other. That is what is going to keep us unified. It will prevent division in our midst. Look up Romans 16: [17Now I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Turn away from them.](#) [18For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.](#)

1. What do you see?
2. How vital to today are Pastor's words?
3. What was the church in Rome facing?
4. Look up 1 Corinthians 1: [10Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.](#) How important was unity to the early church?

5. Why? What did a pagan, unschooled world see in a unified Body of Christ?
6. Why is that supernatural? What did they see in a divided Body of Christ?
7. What does the world see today?
8. What is our task? Pastor says, "This will keep our hearts in a place of peace in these turbulent times." Why is that important?

Look at 2 Thessalonians 1: [1](#) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
[2](#) Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3](#) We are obligated to thank God for you all the time, brothers, as is fitting, because your faith is growing more and more, and your love for one another is increasing. [4](#) That is why we boast among God's churches about your perseverance and faith in the face of all the persecution and affliction you are enduring.

1. What do you see?
2. Why Paul, Silvanus and Timothy? (See the footnote.) Do you think they were the only companions assembled at the time Paul wrote the letter?
3. What is the difference between the impact of a form letter, i.e. spam, and the impact of a personal letter from good friends? What does the letter from good friends evoke? What emotions does spam evoke? What is your response to either?
4. What is increasing faith evidence of?
5. What does increasing love prove?
6. Review how Paul prays for the Philippians in Philippians 1: [9](#) *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, [10](#) so that you may be able to test and prove what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11](#) filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.* How important is increasing love?
7. What accompanies love? What makes knowledge and depth of insight so important?
8. In practical terms, what is the real evidence that faith and love are increasing? Do you have a testimony?
9. Review John 17: [13](#) *But now I am coming to You; and I am saying these things while I am in the world, so that they may have My joy fulfilled within them. [14](#) I have given them Your word and the world has hated them; for they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [15](#) I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. [16](#) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17](#) Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.* What does an answer to this prayer look like?
10. What does it mean to be "in the world." What does it mean to be "not of the world?"
11. What did Jesus do while He was in the world? Who is supposed to do that today?
12. Pastor wants us to keep reaching the lost, that is "...sharing our lives with others to give them hope in these turbulent times...the hope that we share in Jesus Christ." Explain.
13. He wants us to keep caring for the least, that is "...doing what is exemplified by 'Family Promise,' taking in those who are in great need, and providing for those needs." Explain.

14. He wants us to keep training the found so that we "...grow together into the Image of Jesus Himself." What does the world see, when we succeed? Why is that supernatural?

⁵All this is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment. And so you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

1. Review verse 4 above? Why is the Thessalonians' response to persecution and suffering clear evidence? What is the proof? (Is it the persecution? Or the growth in faith and love?) Explain?
2. How was Jesus' own response to persecution proof of His love? How was it proof of His faith?
3. What makes real Christians so different from the counterfeit?
4. Look at what John says in 1 John 2: ¹⁰*Whoever loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him. ¹¹But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness. He does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.* What is the criterion whereby one can distinguish true Christians from counterfeits?
5. What light does this shed on the division we see in the Church?

Pastor says, "We learn to say, 'I need to become like Jesus so that my life will change the environment around me.'"

1. How does this become the answer to Jesus' prayer above from John 17 quoted above?
2. What does it look like? Do you have a testimony?

⁶After all, it is only right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to grant relief to you who are oppressed and to us as well. This will take place when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels ⁸in blazing fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

1. Look up Galatians 6: ⁷*Do not be deceived: God is not to be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return. ⁸The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* How does this fit here?
2. Who repays? Look up Deuteronomy 32: ³⁴*"Have I not stored up these things, sealed up within My vaults? ³⁵Vengeance is Mine; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; for their day of disaster is near, and their doom is coming quickly."* ³⁶*For the LORD will vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees that their strength is gone and no one remains, slave or free."* Why does Jesus command us to "...turn the other cheek?"
3. Who repays? Looking at verse 6 and 7 above and Deuteronomy 32, when does He repay?
4. Who inflicts the judgment?
5. What does that judgment look like?
6. Why is it best not to wish this on your neighbor?

⁹They will suffer the penalty of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might, ¹⁰on the day He comes to be glorified in His saints and regarded with wonder by all who have believed, including you who have believed our testimony.

[11](#)To this end, we always pray for you, that our God will count you worthy of His calling, and that He will powerfully fulfill your every good desire and work of faith, [12](#)so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. How is separation from the presence (πρόσωπον/"*prosopon*" literally: face/countenance) of God worse than death itself?
2. How is God glorified "in His saints?" Who is working in us?
3. What happens to Jesus' personal reputation, when Christians act according to His commandment?
4. What happens when the church behaves in an unseemly manner? What have you observed in your lifetime? In history?
5. If you "...do everything for the glory of Christ..." whose reputation is enhanced?
6. How do you "...do everything for the glory of Christ?" Where is your focus?

Pastor began to prophecy that we have not seen anything yet. He said, "It is going to get really nasty. It will become extremely polarized, and it will get choppy and rocky. Society is going to want you to take a side. It's going to try to pull you into a vortex. And you have to choose today where you are going to put your attention and your allegiance, not to a political party and not to a person, but to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom."

1. What do you see? What have you seen?
2. Does this prophecy have biblical backing? Look up Luke 12: [52](#)From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. [53](#)They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. How is this seen in today's time? Are you surprised? How bad will it get? How bad has it gotten? See the [footnote 4](#) on Micah's prophecy, quoted by Jesus here
3. Look at Matthew 10: [34](#)**Do not assume that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. [35](#)For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. [36](#)A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.**" What do you see? Why does this prophecy surprise?
4. Explain how Jesus brings the division?
5. What is He dividing us from? Why? What is the end of those who persecute the innocent?
6. Look at verse 12 above: How is the "name of the Lord glorified in [us]?" What are we to do? What were the Thessalonians doing that we can follow their example?
7. How is growth the essential ingredient, and not perfection?
8. Look at what Paul told the Colossians in 1: [25](#)*I became its servant by the commission God gave me to fully proclaim to you the word of God, [26](#)the mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to His saints. [27](#)To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* What mystery has been revealed to us, His saints? How does "Christ (being and working) IN us" work for His honorable reputation/His glory? Whom should your neighbors and family members see when they see you?

9. What is the "hope of Glory?" See [footnote 5 below](#). What assurance do we have that this glory will be revealed?
10. What is glory? How is that like a jar filled with fireflies?
11. How is that glory snuffed out when we put a lid on the jar and do not poke holes for the firefly to breathe?
12. Look up 1 Corinthians 6: [15](#) *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!* [16](#) *Or don't you know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."* [17](#) *But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.* What does it mean that your body is a member of Christ? How real is this to you?
13. Continuing Paul's exhortation: [18](#) *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.* [19](#) *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;* [20](#) *you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.* What does sin do to the body? What happens to the Spirit? How does one "...glorify God with his body?"
14. How does one serve the Spirit in the temple?
15. Look at what Paul wrote prior to verse 15: [9](#) *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who submit to or perform homosexual acts,* [10](#) *nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.* [11](#) *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.* Why is Paul telling the "washed, sanctified and justified" to flee from sexual immorality?
16. How long does it take for those who have been sanctified in their spirit to be likewise sanctified in the flesh?
17. What is the price of wickedness?
18. What is the cost of repentance and deliverance? What is the reward?
19. What do our neighbors and our family see when we heed Paul's warning?
20. How is the revelation of Christ in you going to affect those around you?
21. How is this, as Mark says, "...influencing and altering the world around us?" Do you have a testimony?
22. How do you pursue the Spirit that resides in you?

Review John 15: [1](#) *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard.* [2](#) *He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful.* [3](#) *You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.* [4](#) *Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.*

[5](#) *I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing.* [6](#) *If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned.* [7](#) *If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* [8](#) *This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.*

1. What do you see?
2. What do you think? Have you been cut off? Or are you being pruned? How do you know the difference?
3. Look at the hope that Paul gives in Romans 11:[22](#)*Take notice, therefore, of the kindness and severity of God: severity to those who fell, but kindness to you, if you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. [23](#)And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24](#)For if you were cut from a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into one that is cultivated, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!* What do you see? Describe the power of repentance.
4. Put the promise of John 15:7 and 8 in your own words.
5. What does it look like to bear much fruit? What does “much” mean?

Pastor Mark concluded looking again at the last verse of chapter 1:[12](#)*so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.* He asks, “Would you consider with me that you are going to be a person of peace, a person of calm and confidence, knowing that you have been called to abide in Jesus, that He might be glorified in you...his light shining in you as a firefly. That Light would emanate, bringing peace, as evidence of His presence in this dark season that lies ahead? Would you consider what it is going to take to abide in Him? What is it going to take to remove the dead branches in your life...that you think ARE producing fruit, but they are not producing any fruit? Will you consider how you should walk so that His glory can shine in your life?

1. What do you see?
2. What are your final thoughts?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Ask yourself today, “How do I live my life in a way that glorifies God?” Write down the answer.
3. Write down step one. When you take that step, write down the result.
4. Pray. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Write down what He tells you.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On Paul's traveling companions**—Paul begins his letters by listing those who are with him at the time of his writing. This is not to show that Paul is not alone, and this is not a random listing of names. When we understand that “Silvanus” is the protracted/formal version of the name “Silas” (like “Charles” is to “Chuck”), we perceive that the same team who first brought the gospel to Macedonia, who were together to write the first epistle, were still together as a team. These are three well-known friends joined again to write this second letter to the Thessalonians. What is the impact of that?

2. **On Karma, some new age principles and Christianity**—There are some surprising biblical principles that permeate global culture. The concept of Karma is one of them. Karma is the new age principle that declares “You reap what you sow.” This surprises sometimes, and some have been trained to condemn the principle as “New Age,” merely because the New Age teaches it. In today’s message we saw that Christianity teaches it clearly and far better, because the root of the principle lies in God’s decision to be the One Who judges, and He alone decides times and seasons. Built into the reaping is God’s timing that includes the offer of repentance and sure mercy. The church often forgets that God is not God of the righteous alone, but He is the Creator and God of ALL...That is why Hanani declared to a disgruntled King Asa, “The eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout the WHOLE EARTH to show Himself strong on behalf of the one whose heart is perfect toward Him.” (2 Chr. 16:9) Socrates, c. 500 B.C. was the first in recorded history to explain to his students that it was key, when persecuted, to “...turn the other cheek.” Jesus was not quoting Socrates when He said it. He was citing one of the known principles of the Kingdom. Socrates was wise enough to recognize this Kingdom principle.
3. **On hell, God’s presence, and being kept away from it**—In Numbers 6, Moses is told to put God’s name on the people, and he did it in these terms: [24](#)“May the LORD bless you and keep you; [25](#)may the LORD cause His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; [26](#)may the LORD lift up His countenance toward you and give you peace.” What do you think comes from the practical manifestation of this blessing? What happens to a nation that is not so blessed? As shown in the notes [above](#) what happens to those who persecute the innocent? Why is eternity separated from God’s face so to be feared? If, as it is written, “...in [God’s] presence is fulness of joy,” what can be anticipated away from His presence?
4. **On the division that has been prophesied**—Micah addresses the division of the last days in very sobering terms. Jesus quotes from Micah 7 in His own prophecies concerning these days. [1](#)Woe is me! For I am like one gathering summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster to eat, no early fig that I crave. [2](#)The godly man has perished from the earth; there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt one another with a net. [3](#)Both hands are skilled at evil; the prince and the judge demand a bribe. When the powerful utters his evil desire, they all conspire together. [4](#)The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is sharper than a hedge of thorns. The day for your watchmen has come, the day of your visitation. Now is the time of their confusion. [5](#)Do not rely on a friend; do not trust in a companion. Seal the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms. [6](#)For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man’s enemies are the members of his own household. Note this, and keep it in mind, but DO NOT neglect the verses that follow. Notice well, that as vengeance is the Lord’s sole prerogative, so also is our own defense against the enemies: [7](#)But as for me, I will

look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. ⁸Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will arise; though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. ⁹Because I have sinned against Him, I must endure the rage of the LORD, until He argues my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me into the light; I will see His righteousness. ¹⁰Then my enemy will see and will be covered with shame—she who said to me, “Where is the LORD your God?” My eyes will see her; at that time she will be trampled like mud in the streets. What does this promise mean to you?

5. **On Biblical Hope**—The Greek word for “hope” is *elpis*. It differs from the English word in this important facet: If you hope for something in English, you are wishing it to happen with no assurance. The Greek concept of hope is akin to the Spanish verb *esperar*, which means to await with certain expectation. Biblical hope is born of God’s promise, and therefore stands unwavering until the promise is fulfilled. Psalm 105:19 says, “*Until the Word of the Lord came to pass, the Word of the Lord tested [Joseph.]*” Hope was born in Joseph at his first dream. In Pharaoh’s dungeon, that hope was tested, and Joseph’s faith was tried. He did not know in Pharaoh’s dungeon that Pharaoh’s right-hand was only two dreams away. At no point, however, did he lose the hope that he based on the assurance from two childhood dreams.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Colossians 4:5-6
Tuesday: Romans 16:17-18
Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
Thursday: John 15:4-8
Friday: 1 John 2:9-11
Saturday: Galatians 6:6-8
Sunday: Deuteronomy 32:34-36

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.