

Life Group Notes 6/9/2024  
Pastor Mark Warren 2 Thessalonians Week 2

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[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](mailto: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.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/9. 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 the vocabulary of Christ's "return." "Coming," "epiphany" and parousia.](#)
2. [On "...what is restraining him..."](#)
3. [On "the breath of His mouth."](#)
4. [On God "...sending delusion."](#)

\*\*\***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. \*\*\*

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Start by looking up 2 Thessalonians 2: 1Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you, brothers, 2not to be easily disconcerted or alarmed by any spirit or message or letter seeming to be from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has already come. 3Let no one deceive you in any way, for it will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness—the son of destruction—is revealed. 4He will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship. So he will seat himself in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Pastor began today by recognizing that a phishing email was sent out in his name this week, and many friends of the church received it. The email asked the recipient to contact him immediately.

1. Did you get one? What did you do?
2. How do you recognize a scam? How do you recognize the genuine?
3. The authenticity of Paul's letters was proven in his signature. The scam email was signed, "Lead Pastor Mark Warren." How is that obviously a scam?
4. Who would be fooled by such a scam? Who could not be fooled? How does a relationship protect from fraud?

5. Looking at Paul's letter, verse 2 above, how old is the technique of using scam mail to deceive?
6. What was the purpose of the scam in Paul's day?
7. How close are we to the day Paul describes? What are the signs that you see today?
8. What does a "man of lawlessness" do?
9. What is lawlessness?

Look up Matthew 7: **22**Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' **23**Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!' **24**Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock...

1. What do you see?
2. Were the miracles real?
3. Were the workers of miracles real disciples?
4. Why not? Apart from working real miracles and casting out demons, what did they also work? Do true disciples work lawlessness?
5. Who benefitted from the miracles? Should the miracles themselves be rejected?
6. What benefit did the worker of lawlessness derive from the miracles?
7. Review 1 Corinthians 13: **2**If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. How can you distinguish the difference between counterfeit and genuine? What role does relationship play?
8. What is the danger of deception? What is the danger of *following* a deceiver?

**5**Do you not remember that I told you these things while I was still with you? **6**And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. **7**For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the one who now restrains it will continue until he is taken out of the way. **8**And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath (see footnote 3) of His mouth and annihilate by the majesty of His arrival (the *epiphany* of his *parousia*) (see footnote 1).

**9**The coming of the lawless one will be accompanied by the working of Satan, with every kind of power, sign, and false wonder, **10**and with every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, because they refused the love of the truth that would have saved them. **11**For this reason God will send them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie, **12**in order that judgment may come upon all who have disbelieved the truth and delighted in unrighteousness.

1. What is now restraining him? (See footnote 2 below.) What do you think?
2. What is the "mystery of lawlessness?"
3. Where did this mystery first work? How effective was this mystery...in the garden of Eden?
4. Compare this to Mark 13: **21**At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There He is!' do not believe it. **22**For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that were possible. **23**So be on your guard; I have told you everything in advance. What do you see? What can we expect? What deceiving signs and wonders are seen today?
5. On the coming of antichrist, look up Daniel 11:**31**His forces will rise up and desecrate the temple fortress. They will abolish the daily sacrifice and set up the abomination of desolation. **32**With flattery he will corrupt those who violate the covenant, but the

people who know their God will be strong and do exploits. [33](#)Those with insight will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by sword or flame, or be captured or plundered. [34](#)Now when they fall, they will be granted a little help, but many will join them insincerely. [35](#)Some of the wise will fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time. Without being too esoteric, what do you see?

6. Contrast those who are perishing with those who know their God.
7. Notice, some of the wise fall...why are they NOT perishing?
8. Pastor Mark asks, "Is Paul talking (above) to those in the church or to those outside the church?" Looking at Daniel's prophecy above, what has God provided to those who need the revival Pastor Richie spoke of to be fanned into a flame?
9. Look up Hebrews 5: [11](#)We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain, because you are dull of hearing. [12](#) Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to reteach you the basic principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food! [13](#)For everyone who lives on milk is still an infant, inexperienced in the message of righteousness. Where are you at? Do you teach others? How does Hebrews fit into Daniel's prophecy?
10. Mark asks, "Is it possible that we ourselves are perishing?" Looking at Mark 13:22 above...is the elect able to be deceived?
11. Should we be concerned? How do you avoid being deceived?
12. Look again at verse: [10](#)and with every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, **because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** What do you see?
13. What are the consequences of this refusal?
14. Review Romans 1: [28](#)Furthermore, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, He gave them up to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. [29](#)They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, [30](#)slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent new forms of evil; they disobey their parents. [31](#)They are senseless, faithless, heartless, merciless. [32](#)Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things are worthy of death, they not only continue to do these things, but also approve of those who practice them. Describe the delusion.
15. Have we delighted in unrighteousness? Is that happening today? What is the danger? How is unrighteousness used to entertain us?
16. How is the delusion Paul speaks of in verse 11 above self-perpetuating and self-enforced?
17. What is the best way to prevent deception? How does the truth restrain deception?  
[13](#)But we should always thank God for you, brothers who are loved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning to be saved by the sanctification of the Spirit and by faith in the truth. [14](#)To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15](#)Therefore, brothers, stand firm and cling to the traditions we taught you, whether by speech or by letter.
  1. Look closely at this passage. What differentiates these friends from those who have received strong delusion? What have Paul's friends in Thessalonica loved?
  2. How do they compare to the wise in Daniel's prophecy above?

3. Look at verse 13: What two factors play in their salvation? How do the Spirit's sanctification and their faith in the truth work together?
4. What traditions should they cling to? What traditions should they not cling to?
5. Where are the right traditions found? In whose teachings? What traditions should be questioned?
6. Review what Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3:*18*Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. *19*And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. *20*Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. Discuss the source of the delusion. After the truth has been revealed, who makes the next choice? Who responds to that choice?
7. How does darkness hide the truth? How does light expose it?
8. Why do darkness and delusion go hand in hand?

Pastor Mark says, "God is putting delusion out there, in essence saying, 'You are able to choose what is false, but the falseness only establishes the real nature of the truth.' Your choice gives evidence to who you are. (Which is why you guard your heart above all else, because your heart sets the boundaries to your own life. (Proverbs 4:23)) "God is giving us choices. This delusion is always testing our heart, finding evidence of what is also in our hearts. If we are choosing the truth, then that is what is in our hearts."

1. What do you see?
2. How easy/difficult is the choice?
3. Look at what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:*18*First of all, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. *19*And indeed, there must be differences among you to show which of you are approved. How do the divisions highlight the approval of righteousness? How do the deceived behave differently from the approved? What do they seek?
4. Is it possible for the elect to be deceived? Is it possible for you to be deceived?

Look up Matthew 24: *9*Then they will deliver you over to be persecuted and killed, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. *10*At that time many will fall away and will betray and hate one another, *11*and many false prophets will arise and mislead many. *12*Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. *13*But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved. *14*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

1. Compare Jesus' prophecy to [Daniel's above](#). What do you see?
2. What is the key factor highlighted in verse 12?
3. What steps help us to persevere? What do you need?
4. Why does the gospel get preached effectively in adversity? What is the testimony that the preaching of the gospel brings?
5. Pastor Mark says, "I can guarantee that you will not be deceived if you guard your heart toward love." Explain.
6. He continues, "You can reject the church, because you have been hurt by the church and your heart has grown calloused. Then you go on your way, but your heart has grown hard, and you can no longer discern right from wrong." How does this fit in Jesus' prophecy above?

7. How does a heart grown cold make one prone to deception? To strong delusion?
8. How has wickedness multiplied since you were a child? What is permitted today that would never have been in your childhood?
9. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul says, "If you do not have love, you have nothing." What is the danger Paul is describing? How does this fit into Jesus' prophecy above?

Pastor Mark says, "The new covenant did not eliminate the Law...but it changed from a covenant based on rules to a covenant based on relationship. Jesus said, 'All the Law and the prophets flow from the Law of Love.'" He goes on to say that to make our heart deception-proof, to preserve the love and to respect the boundaries that our heart makes, "...we need an openness and a humility to allow the Spirit of God to come into our heart and reveal what needs to be revealed and to heal what needs to be healed."

1. What do you see?
2. What practical steps do we need to take?

He continues, asking, "What are we doing with our time, church, because that reflects what is going on in our heart?"

1. How does this question make you feel?
2. Are you comfortable with your use of time?
3. How does your use of time reflect the state of your own heart?
4. During worship, Pastor Richie prophesied of "...pursuing revival in the hearts of those around us." What struck you?
5. Do you have a testimony? How has someone else revived you? Have you been told that you brought revival to others?
6. Mark spoke of serving at GCC, because "...serving allows us to take the focus off of ourselves and put it on someone else." How is this good therapy?
7. Do you have a testimony?
8. Psalm 34 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Is this a step to avoid deception? How is this step taken?

Pastor gave this advice: In pursuing revival, do not pursue signs and wonders. Pursue love, because if you pursue love for Jesus and for one another, then your hearts will be able to differentiate the counterfeit from the authentic.

1. How is this the best response to Jesus' exhortation to "Seek the Kingdom of God first, and His righteousness...then all these things will be added unto you."
2. If you set your priorities correctly, how does this prevent being scammed by the counterfeit?
3. How do you assess what your actual priorities are?
4. Have you ever looked at your own timetable, assessing how your time is spent, to determine actual priorities? Do you have a testimony? What comes first on your schedule?
5. Pastor says, "You cannot fake love and you cannot fake selflessness." Look at Matthew 16: *24* Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. *25* For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. *26* What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" "If you do this, you will be able to discern the truth, and you will recognize deception." How will this help?

Look how Paul finishes the chapter:

<sup>16</sup>Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who by grace has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope, <sup>17</sup>encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good word and deed.

1. What does an answer to this prayer look like?
2. How necessary is this prayer in this day?
3. Take the time to pray this prayer for one another.

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Take a moment to assess how well your heart is guarding against the deception of this age? How is your time spent?
3. Assess how your love is increasing or decreasing this week.
4. Pinpoint what God is revealing. Describe what needs to be healed, and set these as this week's priority in prayer.

### **Take the time to pray.**

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#### **Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On the vocabulary of Christ's return: "Coming," "Epiphany," and *parousia***—The return of Christ and the signs of His return are a major theme in Paul's preaching, especially among the Thessalonians. We often talk about Christ's "coming," the promise of imminent return, but there are two words in Greek that pertain to this, both often translated "coming/return/appearing" that should be known. The first is ἐπιφάνεια, *epiphaneia*, from which we get the word "Epiphany." A sudden epiphany relates to a glorious manifestation, like a revelation. The second word, παρουσία, *parousia*, not only relates to "coming", but it often means "presence." In this passage in 2 Thessalonians, Paul uses both in verse 8 side by side to speak of "...the glorious revelation of His presence..." in contrast to the *parousia* of the man of lawlessness in all Satanic working in the very next verse. God's presence in the church is her strength, and, according to Paul, the mystery of her righteousness: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Is this a key to revival, not the coming, but His presence?
2. **On "...what is restraining him..."**—One of the most puzzling passages in Paul's writings is this, where the evil one is being restrained, but Paul does not tell us what that restraint is. Without pretending to know, I have often seen what resulted from removing prayer from the state schools, and I know what a lack of restraint leads to. Proverbs 29 says "<sup>18</sup>[Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the Law.](#)"
3. **On "...the breath of His mouth"**—When Paul says the man of lawlessness is destroyed by "...the breath of His mouth...", the Greek word he uses here

is πνεύματι, *pneumati*, a form of *pneuma*, which indeed means breath, but it is the Greek word for Spirit as well... To destroy a satanic minion by the spirit of His mouth is to bring him down with the two-edged sword we see in the mouth of Christ in Revelation 1, that is, "...the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

4. **On God "...sending delusion..."** Mark says, "My anchor in this is to return to this principle: God's character never changes." The Bible recounts more than one time where those who reject the Law and the Prophets are given over to deception and delusion. In 1 Kings, Ahab wants the prophets to tell him what he wants to hear. Look at chapter 22:<sup>19</sup>*Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one suggested this, and another that. <sup>21</sup>Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.' 'By what means?' asked the LORD. <sup>22</sup>And he replied, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' 'You will surely entice him and prevail,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' <sup>23</sup>So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you."* This is not a case where one gets what one "deserves." Ahab got what he asked for.

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**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: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15
Tuesday: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
Wednesday: Matthew 7:22-24
Thursday: Mark 13:21-23
Friday: Daniel 11:31-35
Saturday: Hebrews 5:11-13
Sunday: John 3:18-20

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.