

Session 8

## *An Exposition of I & II Thessalonians*

### *I Thessalonians 4:7–13*

#### Scriptures

<i>I Thessalonians 4:7</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:12</i>	<i>John 3:3</i>
<i>Galatians 5:13</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:13</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:48</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:8</i>	<i>Romans 8:10</i>	<i>Colossians 1:27</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:9</i>	<i>Ezekiel 36:27</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:49</i>
<i>I John 4:7</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:45</i>	<i>I John 3:2</i>
<i>I John 2:15</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:46</i>	<i>Romans 5:2</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:10</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:47</i>	<i>John 5:21</i>
<i>I Thessalonians 4:11</i>	<i>John 8:21–23</i>	

*I Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

While it is true Christians are called unto liberty, they are also called unto holiness. Thus, it is a great distortion to infer that the freedom Christ gives, will allow any the right to sin. Yet this is often evidenced in sinners where one truth of God is used against another truth in order that men may justify themselves for the sin they commit.

***Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.***

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Gal. 5:13*

*An occasion to the flesh.*—Do not, under the name “liberty,” give way to sensual excesses.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 5:13*

*Only use not liberty ...* - The word *use* here introduced by our translators, obscures the sense. The idea is, “You are called to liberty, but it is not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. It is not freedom from virtuous restraints, and from the laws of God. It is liberty from the servitude of sin, and religious rites and ceremonies, not freedom from the necessary restraints of virtue.” It was necessary to give this caution, because:

(1) There was a strong tendency in all converts from paganism to relapse again into their former habits. Licentiousness abounded, and where they had been addicted to it before their conversion, and where they were surrounded by it on every hand, they were in constant danger of falling into it again. A bare and naked declaration, therefore, that they had been called to liberty, to freedom from restraint, might have been misunderstood, and some might have supposed that they were free from all restraints.

(2) it is needful to guard the doctrine from abuse at all times. There has been a strong tendency, as the history of the church has shown, to abuse the doctrine of grace. The doctrine that Christians are “free;” that there is liberty to them from restraint, has been perverted always by Antinomians, and been made the occasion of their indulging freely in sin. And the result has shown that nothing was more important than to guard the doctrine of Christian liberty, and to show exactly what Christians are freed from, and what laws are still binding on them. Paul is, therefore, at great pains to show that the doctrines which he had maintained did not lead to licentiousness, and did not allow the indulgence of sinful and corrupt passions.

***1 Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.***

If a man treats as insignificant the pursuit of sanctification, then this reveals contempt for the Lord Himself.

For none can spurn God's spiritual command that His people should be holy and not at the very same time show contempt for divine law.

The Greek word for *despise* is #114 *atheteó*, "to do away with what has been laid down, set aside." Its usage is "I annul, make of no effect, set aside, ignore, slight; I break faith with."

For then to set aside that which has its origin in God is to both ignore and set aside God Himself.

Consequently, no man should think that he can *set aside, ignore, and make of no effect* God's commandments and not in the process despise the Lord who gave them to men to live by.

***1 Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.***

Transitioning from one of the strongest desires of the flesh, fornication, to now the strongest evidence of the Spirit, love, the apostle again takes up the importance of pursuing love.

God had taught the Thessalonians to love, and the fact that they possessed it, proved their obedience to the gospel.

Because God had led these early Christians to love, it became unnecessary that Paul needed to teach it again but only that he should encourage them to increase manifesting it in their lives.

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 Thess. 4:9*

*Ye need not.*—A sweet rhetorical figure, by which men are encouraged to the performance of a duty in which they are not perfect, by the praising of their imperfect attempts: a specimen of that "courtesy" which is a part of "brotherly love."

In truth, there is no greater evidence that men and women have been taught of God than when love manifests itself in their lives. By *love* Jesus said men would know who were His disciples (John 13:35).

And by *love* we can know if a man has passed from death unto life (John 3:14).

Love is the mark of true Christianity, and if a man does not possess divine love, he should not assume himself Christian at all.

The genuineness, therefore, of any man's religion is directly visible by love filling his soul.

By abiding in God's love, believers can know that they are no longer born simply of the flesh but have been now born of God.

***1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.***

Love is that divine quality that proves that a man genuinely knows God and has had personal contact and relationship with Him.

Yet when men love the world, any sincere love for God and His people will be absent. Practically speaking, if a man loves the world, then he cannot truly love either God or God's people.

***I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.***

*Benson Commentary, I John 2:15*

*If any man love the world* — Esteem, desire, or pursue it, or any thing in it, inordinately, so as to place his happiness in the enjoyment of it; *the love of the Father is not in him* ...

***I Thessalonians 4:10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;***

The ability to love, and the sincerity of love, should increase the more believers are led by God's Spirit.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, I Thess. 4:10*

Neither love, nor any other grace, is made perfect at once; even those that are taught of God.

Regardless, then, of how much a man or woman loves, both the purity and the amount of it can be increased in their lives.

By also spreading God's love to others, the very fragrance of what God is gives witness that His presence remains in the world.

***I Thessalonians 4:11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;***

It is God's will, and in agreement with walking in love, that believers study to be quiet and to do their own business.

Teaching us that it is always the opposite of love for any man to meddle in affairs that are not his own.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 4:11*

*study to be quiet*—Greek, “make it your ambition to be quiet, and to do your own business.” In direct contrast to the world's ambition, which is, “to make a great stir,” and “to be busybodies” ...

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 4:11*

*Do your own business.*—Not merely was each individual to do his own work, but the whole Church was to refrain from interfering ostentatiously with other Churches.

***I Thessalonians 4:12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.***

When men tend to their own affairs, and work with their own hands, while also not meddling in the lives of others, the promise is that they will live without lack.

By keeping God's commandments and walking in His love, the Lord shall supply all that man needs to both serve God and bless his fellows.

Industry never makes a man poor, even as it tends towards godliness itself.

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I Thess. 4:12  
*have lack of nothing*—not have to beg from others for the supply of your wants (compare Eph 4:28). So far from needing to beg from others, we ought to work and get the means of supplying the need of others. Freedom from pecuniary embarrassment is to be desired by the Christian on account of the liberty which it bestows.

When men then work, they should not have to beg, and should also have sufficient left over to help with the needs of others.

This is also why if men refuse to labor when fit and able to do so, then God says they should not eat (II Thess. 3:10).

It is a man's responsibility to take care of himself, and if he refuses to do so, it should not be required of others who do work, to supply his needs.

***I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.***

*But I would not have you to be ignorant.*

The Bible speaks of many things men can be ignorant of: God's righteousness (Rom. 10:13), the mystery of Israel's rejection until God's appointed time for their restoration (Rom. 11:25), ignorance of the fact that though many are called, few will actually be saved (I Cor. 10:1–5), the gifts of the Spirit, Satan's devices (I Cor. 12:1), and last, as seen in Thessalonians, ignorance of the hope that awaits the saved.

Surprisingly, these areas of revelation that the Lord does not want people to be ignorant of are the very areas where human ignorance is at its greatest. This is seen by how many foolishly pursue their own righteousness, how they know little to nothing of the Holy Spirit or His gifts, and how saints are wrongly tempted to believe that they have the same absence of hope as the unsaved around them.

The language Paul uses in his instruction to the Thessalonians that they should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*, is strong so that his point may be clear: the fate of an unsaved man is vastly different than that of a saved man.

This teaches us that for Christians there is hope, but for those who have no relationship with the Son of God there can be only sorrow.

And like the thieves crucified with Christ on the cross (Luke 23:39–43), two men can die at the very same time and in the exact same manner yet have two totally different futures.

For this reason, Christians should not grieve as do those to whom physical death brings much sorrow. If a man has Christ in him, though his physical body is destined for death, his soul/spirit will live because of his connection to Christ.

***Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.***

*Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:10*

*And if Christ be in you* — Namely, by his Spirit dwelling in you: where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ: *the body is dead* — τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν, *the body indeed is dead*, devoted to death; for our belonging to Christ, or having Christ in us, does not exempt the body from undergoing the sentence of death passed on all mankind; *because of sin* — Heretofore committed; especially the sin of Adam, by which death entered into the world, and the sinful nature derived from him; *but the Spirit is life* — The soul is quickened and made alive to God; and shall, after the death of the body, continue living, active, and happy;

The key to a man continuing to live once his fleshly body dies is through the Christ Spirit living within him. The manner in which Christ lives with the Christian is through the Spirit of God, Christ imparts to them (Gal. 4:6).

But how, though, does a man know that Christ lives within him?

It cannot be just because he assumes it to be so but must rest on a much more concrete foundation than human assumption.

Ultimately then, it is only by men keeping Christ commandments that it can be seen that Christ lives in His people. The proof therefore that the Holy Spirit lives within a man is that he will both keep and walk in God's laws.

It was for this purpose that the Spirit was sent, and all who have Him will manifest this fruit.

***Ezekiel 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.***

*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Ezek. 36:27*

*My spirit*; the Holy Spirit of God, which is the immediate principal cause of that change of an old heart into new, and of hard into soft. By the efficient cause we may know the effect; and understand what a new heart is, and what the new spirit is, when we know they are wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which is given to and dwelleth in the saints, which makes them saints, and then abideth with them.

*Cause you*; sweetly, powerfully, successfully, yet without compulsion; for our spirit, framed by God's Spirit to a disposition suitable to his holiness, readily concurrereth and co-worketh.

*Keep my judgments*; be willing and ready, able, and in your degree sufficient, to keep the judgments and to walk in the statutes of God, which is to live holiness.

Because of the presence of this divine spiritual nature, sent by the Son of God to the saved, spiritual death need not follow bodily death.

Though the natural body must return to dust from whence it was made, the spirit, because its source is God, returns to God.

Practically speaking, the natural material realm, which is what the earthly body consists of, cannot pass over to the higher spiritual realm where God maintains His being. Each world, natural and spiritual, consists of two completely different substances, and because of this the natural body, whether alive or dead, cannot without transformation enter the higher spiritual realm of God.

For this reason, to save any from spiritual death, Christ must impart to them a new and different nature, which is holy and suited for heaven.

***I Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus Christ] was made a quickening spirit.***

It was from the first Adam that we derive our natural, physical, and carnal nature, but it is from the last Adam, Jesus Christ, that a new spiritual life is given to us. This life is not natural; rather, it is spiritual and descends from the higher spiritual realm. Its source is God; its sender is the Son of God.

Those of the *last Adam*, who have been born again or born from above, are made living spirits both like and by Christ. Hence, whereas the first Adam genetically passed natural life to his progeny, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, because He is a living Spirit, imparts eternal life to His children.

*Benson Commentary, I Cor. 15:45*

Christ is called Adam, because believers receive their sanctified, spiritual nature, and their immortal bodies, from him, (see Ephesians 5:32,) just as mankind have derived their corrupted nature and mortal bodies from the first Adam. He is also called *the last Adam*, because he is posterior in time to the first Adam, or because there shall be no restorer and head of the human race after him. *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, &c.* — That is, as the first Adam existed before Christ was sent to assume our nature, and become our Saviour, so must we first wear that animal body, which we derive from the one, before we put on that spiritual body which we receive from the other. Here we are taught that the plan of the divine government is to lead his creatures from a lower to a higher state of perfection.

***I Corinthians 15:46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.***

Adam's creation by God was a natural one. All the elements used in it came from the natural realm. Adam was the first of an earthly race of men who would populate and spread over a natural and organic world. A splendid and bountiful earthly garden was prepared for Adam's residence, purposed by God not only to bless Adam's life but also to provide the necessary sustenance for his survival. The first man, Adam, was earthly in every way.

The next Adam, though, Jesus Christ, is not natural but spiritual, and for those called to heaven through Him, God has purposed heavenly habitation.

***I Corinthians 15:47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.***

Adam's body was from the earth, from the dust and matter that comprises it; whereas Christ's origination is from above, and from the higher realm of heaven.

Jesus's words to the Pharisees who did not believe He was the Son of God reveal the great gulf between the natural and spiritual world.

***John 8:21–23 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.***

<sup>22</sup> ***Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.***

<sup>23</sup> ***And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.***

In plain and simple language, Jesus revealed why those who did not believe in Him could not follow Him where he was to go. It was because they were from *beneath*, and He was from *above*.

For a man to enter the higher spiritual realm, biblically defined as heaven, he must be born again. This teaches us that for any to live beyond the grave, a new spiritual birth must be given to them by God, whereby through the Spirit they are given the same nature as God.

Jesus taught this important truth to Nicodemus in John chapter 3.

***John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

Ultimately, it is spiritual birth produced by being given the Holy Spirit that produces heavenly sonship.

***I Corinthians 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.***

Just as believers must share in the weakness, deficiencies, and death of the first man, Adam, they will also share just as equally in the glory of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

***Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

Being born of God through possessing the Spirit of God gives hope of glory in the world to come.

Again, it needs to be emphasized that the connection to the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is not less than the one to the first man, Adam, once a man is born again.

Thus, just as men must physically die because of their relationship to the first man, Adam, so too will they eternally live because of their relationship with God's second Adam, Jesus Christ.

***I Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.***

In all ways, those born of the first Adam have been made to share in his fleshly image and destiny. Equally true is that those born of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, will also share in Christ's heavenly image.

The Greek word for *image* is #1504 *eikōn*. (from 1503 *eikō*, “be like”) – properly, “mirror-like representation,” referring to what is very close in resemblance (like a “high-definition” projection, as defined by the context). Image (1504 *eikōn*) then exactly reflects its source (what it directly corresponds to). For example, Christ is the very image (1504 *eikōn*, supreme expression) of the Godhead (see 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15).

“1504 (*eikōn*) assumes a prototype, of which it not merely resembles, but from which it is drawn” (R. Trench). 1504 (*eikōn*) then is more than a “shadow”; rather it is a replication (F. F. Bruce, Hebrews, 226; see also Lightfoot at Col 3:10 and 2:21).

Natural men are not only the same as their forefather, earthly Adam, on the outside but also in their inner beings as well, where sin lives. What Adam was, those born of

him are the same in completeness and totality. This same principle holds true when a man is born of Christ.

***1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

Ultimately, *we shall be like him* is the future hope of the Christian.

For most men it would be enough to be saved by the Savior, but this is not what God's Word reveals is the believer's true hope. This hope is to be made through Christ's power to share in Christ's own glory and likeness.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 15:49*

*We shall also bear the image of the heavenly* - The Lord Jesus Christ, who was from heaven, and who is in heaven. As we are so closely connected with Adam as to resemble him, so by the divine arrangement, and by faith in the Lord Jesus, we are so closely connected with him that we shall resemble him in heaven. And as he is now free from frailty, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, and as he has a pure and spiritual body, adapted to a residence in heaven, so shall we be in that future world. The argument here is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal.

Being made to share in Jesus Christ's heavenly image is the Christian's hope and cause for rejoicing.

***Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

The Greek word for *glory* is #1391 *doxa*. *Strong's* defines *doxa* as "honor, renown; glory, an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God, splendor."

Because of the Christian's connection to the glorified Son of God, he is said to have the hope of sharing in, and having conferred upon him, the same glory as the Son.

This hope of *glory* is the primary expectation of the Christian, whereby through God's power he will be made to share in the same glory, honor, and heavenly inheritance that is the Son of God's now.

Because Christ became a living Spirit and has life within Himself, He can both quicken and make alive spiritually those whom He wills.

***John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 5:21*

*As the Father raiseth up the dead* - God has power to raise the dead. By his power it had been done in at least two instances - by the prophet Elijah, in the case of the son of the widow of Sarepta 1 Kings 17:22, and by the prophet Elisha, in the case of the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings 4:32-35. The Jews did not doubt that God had power to raise the dead. Jesus here expressly affirms it, and says he has the same power.

*Quickeneth them* - Gives them “life.” This is the sense of the word “quickeneth” throughout the Bible.

*Even so* - In the same manner. By the same authority and power. The power of raising the dead must be one of the highest attributes of the divinity. As Jesus affirms that he has the power to do this “in the same manner” as the Father, so it follows that he must be equal with God.

*The Son quickeneth* - Gives life to. This may either refer to his raising the dead from their graves, or to his giving spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. The former he did in the case of Lazarus and the widow’s son at Nain, John 11:43–44; Luke 7:14–15. The latter he did in the case of all those who were converted by his power, and still does it in any instance of conversion.

*Whom he will* - It was in the power of Jesus to raise up any of the dead as well as Lazarus. It depended on his will whether Lazarus and the widow’s son should come to life. So it depends on his will whether sinners shall live. He has power to renew them, and the renewing of the heart is as much the result of his “will” as the raising of the dead.

The Son quickens and has the power to make alive whom He wills. This was proven by Jesus raising Lazarus (John 11:39–44), Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5:22–23, 38–42), and the widow’s son from the dead (Luke 7:11–17).

Hence, as surely as he who is without Christ will die eternally, just as certainly will believers who are given life through Christ live eternally.

All that was lost in Adam through the fall has been regained, and then some, by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in resurrection.

Because of this, we who have believed upon the Son of God should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

