**Faith in Uncertain Times – Part 5**

**How to Live - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Feb. 21st, 2021

**Intro:**

* Christianity is not a morality improvement program, but a life-transforming relationship with the living God. We love because He first loved us. We live because He is alive in us. We know the truth because He is the truth.
* And because we have a relationship with Jesus, God transforms our lives, making us more like Him through His Holy Spirit.
* In our next section in the letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gives us instructions on how we are to live as Christians. These four points will be helpful to you in living your faith as a Christian.

**Aim to please God**

**1 Thess 4:1-2 NIV**

**Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.**

* This should be your primary aim and the question that you ask when facing a choice. Which of these things would please God or most please God? If we made a habit of asking this question, we would make much better and more Godly decisions.
* If you need wisdom, you should ask God, and God will show you His will. His will is that you please Him, because in pleasing Him, you will find what is truly best and worthwhile.
* It is simple, though not always easy. But you will be glad you did.
* Often, we aim to please ourselves or please others, but God's will is for us to please Him.
* Even if you are doing so on some level, we are urged to do this "more and more," which tells us this is a growth process for all of us.

**Live a holy and honorable life**

**1 Thess 4:3a NIV**

**It is God's will that you should be sanctified:**

* It is God's will that you should be sanctified, that is, be made holy.
  + **Justified = holiness declared**. This happens at the moment of salvation – we are "born again."
  + **Sanctified = holiness displayed**. This is our life becoming more like Christ. It is what you are, but you have to bear the fruit of it – like a tree.
  + **Glorified = holiness perfected**. This happens after you die when the sinful nature is no more.
* So after we are saved (justified), it is God's will that you should be sanctified. And one of the ways that we are to be sanctified is to avoid sexual immorality.

**1 Thess 4:3b NIV**

**that you should avoid sexual immorality;**

* It is God's will that you should avoid sexual immorality.
* How?

**1 Thess 4:4-5 NIV**

**that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;**

* *By learning to control your own body* – you control your body; your body does not control you.

If it is not holy or honorable, then it is out of bounds.

* *By knowing God*. Knowing God gives us the power to overcome passionate lust. Holiness is not a matter of being free of sin but being full of God. Being free from sin is not the ultimate goal; it is the byproduct of achieving the goal.

**1 Thess 4:6a NIV**

**and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.**

* *By truly loving others*. Controlling our bodies in a way that is holy and honorable makes sure we have right relationships with others, that we don't "wrong them" or take advantage of them. Love does no harm to your brother, who also includes our spouse. So many people have been wronged and taken advantage of when they failed to control their bodies. (Example of Ravi) Your faith cannot be built upon any person other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Thess 4:6b NIV**

**The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.**

* *By fearing the Lord.* The Lord Himself will punish or avenge such sins. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord" (Rom 12:19). Vengeance can come in many different forms, from turning us over to our sin (Rom 1), to exposing our sin (Luke 8:17), to being disciplined (Heb. 12:6), to losing our reward (2 Cor. 5:10).
* "Standing in the rubble of the consequences of your sin is a terrible place to be." This line is from a sermon from a man who had to leave the ministry because of his sin.

**1 Thess 4:7-8 NIV**

**For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.**

* *By relying on the Holy Spirit* to empower us to follow the call of God to live a holy life. You cannot do this in your own strength and in your own power.

**Love other believers more and more**

**1 Thess 4:9-10 NIV**

**Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. 10 And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.**

* Those who are following God will love each other. Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love (1 John 4:12 ESV). There is no such thing as an unloving Christian. And we are to love other believers more and more.
* So as Christian – we are to work and look for ways to love others more and more. Meet a need, write a card, provide a meal, lend a hand, take a risk, bend a knee. Be intentional, be creative, be persistent and grow in love.

**Win the respect of outsiders**

**1 Thess 4:11-12 NIV**

**Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**

* With those who are outside the faith, win their respect by:
  + Leading a quiet life – not always living loud – but by being respectful of others around you.
  + Minding your own business – don't be in everyone else’s’ business.
  + Work with your hands – be a hard worker so that you will not be dependent on anyone.

**Conclusion and Communion**

* As people who are Christian, our beliefs must be evidenced by our actions. And this is how Christians are to live because of the grace of God and the power of the Spirit.
  + Aim to please God.
  + Live a holy and honorable life – especially in the area of your sexuality.
  + Love the family of believers more and more.
  + Win the respect of outsiders.

**1 John 4:9-11 NIV**

**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**