

More Church Epistles

Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians

Overview of Section

Carried over from the last chapter, we continue in the Church Epistles. Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians are all written by Paul who is mainly writing to deal with specific issues in each one of these churches. Each church is dealing with different issues but they all have one in common and that is that false teachers are attempting to malign the name of Paul and teach false gospels. Paul deals with those false teachers and teachings by defending his apostleship and refuting the false gospels by pointing the people back to Christ.

Philippians

Theme: Unity in Christ

- ❖ **Author & Date:** Paul (AD 60-62) Paul's 1st imprisonment.
- ❖ **Author's reason for writing:** Paul wanted to express his thanks for the Philippians' gift. He also wanted the Philippians to know why he had sent Epaphroditus to them, so that they would not think his service to Paul had been unsatisfactory. He wrote to exhort them in unity and also to warn against false teachers.
- ❖ **Literary Style:** Epistle
- ❖ **Background and Setting:** Philippi was the first church planted by Paul in Europe (Acts 16:6-40) Written to encourage them while he was imprisoned for his faith.
- ❖ **Key People:** Paul, church in Philippi, and Epaphroditus
- ❖ **Outline:**
 1. Christ as purpose in ministry and life
 2. Unity in life through living Christ-like
 3. Righteous through Christ alone
 4. Exhortation and thanksgiving

Colossians

Theme: Christ's Sufficiency

- ❖ **Author & Date:** Paul (AD 60-62) Paul's 1st imprisonment
- ❖ **Author's reason for writing:** Written while Paul was in prison. He wrote to encourage of the deity of Christ, to speak of reconciliation and redemption.
- ❖ **Literary Style:** Epistle
- ❖ **Background and Setting:** The church in Colossae was started from Epaphras who likely heard the gospel from Paul in Ephesus. Epaphras reported to Paul the needs of the church and Paul wrote them in response.
- ❖ **Key People:** Paul, Timothy, Epaphras – founder of the Colossian church; Mark – cousin of Barnabas
- ❖ **Outline:**
 1. Sufficient doctrine
 2. Sufficient direction

1 Thessalonians

Theme: Growth of a baby church

- ❖ **Author & Date:** Paul (AD 51) From Corinth to Thessalonica
- ❖ **Author's reason for writing:** Though he had many reasons to write, all were coming out of his concern for the flock he had been separated from. He wrote to encourage the church, answer false allegations, comfort the persecuted, express his joy in their faith, remind them of the importance of purity, condemn the saggard lifestyle, and to exhort the flock in the basics of Christian living.
- ❖ **Literary Style:** Epistle
- ❖ **Background and Setting:** The capital of Macedonia, Thessalonica was a busy center of trade and philosophy. Paul preached the Gospel in Thessalonica with quick response and persecution (Acts 17) and is writing to continue and encourage them in growth.
- ❖ **Key People:** Paul, Timothy, Silas

- ❖ **Outline:**
 1. Thanksgiving and encouragement for growth 1-3
 2. Glorifying God in sanctification 4:1-12
 3. The second Coming 4:13-5:11
 4. Community and conduct 5:12-28

2 Thessalonians

Theme: Waiting with diligence

- ❖ **Author & Date:** Paul (AD 52) From Corinth to Thessalonica
- ❖ **Author's reason for writing:** Though the church was maturing and growing, pressure and persecution were increasing as well. The seeds of false doctrine and misunderstanding of the second coming had been sown and the people were behaving disorderly. So Paul wrote to the flock.
- ❖ **Literary Style:** Epistle
- ❖ **Background and Setting:** Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians was likely written shortly after the first to remind and correct some issues in the church.
- ❖ **Key People:** Paul, Silas, Timothy
- ❖ **Outline:**
 1. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians 1:1-12
 2. Refuting false claims 2:3-5
 3. Rebuking idle 3:6-18

Gospel Connection

- ❖ **Philippians** – Paul intimately describes his relationship with his Lord with the words “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (1:21) Paul's selflessness leads not to feelings of loss but only to joy and peace in Jesus (4:4-7). Therefore, he encourages believers to seek Christlikeness.
- ❖ **Colossians** – The message of Colossians affirms the believer's perfect completion in Christ (1:28)

- ❖ **1 Thessalonians** – 1 Thessalonians discusses the believer's hope in Christ, particularly His second coming (1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:16, 5:23). Paul instructs believers to prepare for the Day of The Lord for it shall come as a “thief in the night” (5:2).
- ❖ **2 Thessalonians** – Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians describes the effects of Christ's second coming. It describes the glorification of believers on that day and God's judgment on unbelievers (1:10, 12, 2:8-12)

Life Passages

Philippians

- ❖ **1:6 A complete work**
 - How can this verse give us hope for perseverance in our faith?
- ❖ **1:21-24 Paul's struggle**
 - Do you find evidence of this struggle in your life?
- ❖ **2:4-8 Humility**
 - How does this passage define humility? How does Christ's example effect your thoughts on humility?
- ❖ **2:12-13 Fear and Trembling**
 - What is the difference between “fear and trembling” and “worry and panic”? Why are fear and trembling appropriate responses in the working of salvation? (see Phil. 2:8-10)
- ❖ **2:14 Grumblers?**
 - Where in your life do you see grumbling?
- ❖ **3:8 All things as loss**
 - What does it mean to count all things as loss for Christ's sake?
- ❖ **4:6-7**
 - Do you see Anxiety in your life? Is Anxiety a sin? Why?

- ❖ 4:8 Dwelling thoughts
 - Why is it important where our minds are focused?
- ❖ 4:11-13 The means of contentment
 - What brings Paul contentment?

Colossians

- ❖ 1:16-20 Christ Preeminence
 - What is this passage saying of Christ?
- ❖ 2:6-8
 - How does this passage address how we should live, and warn of distractions.
- ❖ 2:9 Deity of Christ
 - How does Christ's deity give us hope?
- ❖ 3:2 Eternity
 - Can you be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good?
- ❖ 3:5-10 Putting on the new
 - How does this passage give us hope and strategy for sanctification?
- ❖ 3:16 Community life
 - Have you ever admonished someone?
Have you done it with a song?
- ❖ 3:18-21 Gods design for the family
 - What is Gods design for the family? Is this suggestion or command?
- ❖ 4:2 Prayer
 - Got devotion? Why do we need prayer?
- ❖ 4:5 Walking with outsiders
 - How should this passage effect our evangelism?

1 Thessalonians

- ❖ 2:7-12 Shepherding the body
 - Does this only apply to a pastors care of his church?
- ❖ 2:13 The word working
 - What are ways that the word can work in you?

- ❖ 4:3 Sanctification?
 - Does this leave a sense of completion in Gods will for your life? why?
- ❖ 4:18 Encouragement
 - How does Paul say we should encourage each other? (therefore)
- ❖ 5:16-18 & 5:21-22
 - How can you apply these to your life this week and beyond?

2 Thessalonians

- ❖ 3:6 Idleness
 - How do we apply this to our friendships? (Does Mathew 18:15-17 apply here)
- ❖ 3:14-15 Take heed to this letter
 - Is this a practice of ours? Is it practiced as verse 15 commands?