

SBL, Seminar on Early Christian Prophecy: "The early Christian prophet was an immediately-inspired spokesperson for God, the risen Jesus, or the Spirit who received intelligible oracles that he or she felt impelled to deliver to the Christian community or, representing the community, to the general public."

a) The test of one who prophesies in the NT is two-fold:

- Their fruit.
- The conformity of what they say to the Truth.

b) Shepherd of Hermas:

"How then will a man know which of them is the prophet, and which the false prophet?" ... "Try the man who has the Divine Spirit by his life. First, he who has the Divine Spirit proceeding from above is meek, and peaceable, and humble, and refrains from, all iniquity and the vain desire of this world, and contents himself with fewer wants than those of other men, and when asked he makes no reply; nor does he speak privately, nor when man wishes the spirit to speak does the Holy Spirit speak, but it speaks only when God wishes it to speak."

*Our worship as a community must value the active work of the Holy Spirit, which means that we must be active participants in it!*

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.*

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What kinds of attitudes and actions are prescribed here and in other New Testament texts for disciples to have toward their leaders?
- How does our text describe the work of church leaders?
- What do vv14-15 tell us about what life in the church will be like? ... about what it will require of us as disciples?
- How does v15 speak to a manner of life that is unnatural for us? How does our culture push against it?
- What are the three instructions given for worship in the community? How can we use the *congregational mic* to more effectively obey these texts? How might these instructions have adjusted your thinking?
- Why might it be that the Thessalonian believers had the opposite problem that Paul was concerned about in Corinth? How might we benefit from applying these instructions regarding the Spirit's activity in worship?

### Dissident Disciples – Part 10

#### *Life and Worship in the Household of God*

Jerry Cisar — September 2, 2018

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

#### I. Life in the Community (5:12-15)

A. Disciples are Followers First (12-13)

- i. Respect leaders and hold them in high regard.

"And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!" (1 Thess. 5:12-13 The Message)

*The first qualification of discipleship is not leading but following.*

ii. Leaders are defined by their service.

a) They "work hard."

- In the Word and preaching (1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 2:15)

- In personal discipleship (1 Thess 2:11)

b) They "care for you in the Lord."

c) They have the difficult task of *admonishing you*.

iii. Who are these leaders? \_\_\_\_\_

*No where does the NT envision a leaderless environment as the normal experience of Christian life.*

B. Disciples Learn How to Lead by Conformity to Christ (14-15)

Thomas Currie: "So much of the Christian life has to do with small things...."

More often, we struggle and fail. We struggle with ourselves and our disordered loves; we struggle to bear with the person in the next pew or in bed beside us; we struggle to forgive those who have wronged us in some inconsequential way.... How deflating to think that the Christian life may come down to things like controlling one's temper or being grateful for those who feed us word and sacrament or simply living at peace...."

Bonhoeffer: "If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian community in which we have been placed, even when there are no great experiences, no noticeable riches, but much weakness, difficulty, and little faith... then we hinder God from letting our community grow according to the measure and riches that are there for us all in Jesus Christ."

i. Warn, or admonish, the idle and disruptive.

ii. Encourage the disheartened.

➤ Isaiah 35:4

iii. "Be devoted to... hold fast to... the weak."

Bonhoeffer: "*Christian love and help for the weak means humiliation of the strong before the weak, of the healthy before the suffering, of the mighty before the exploited.*"

iv. "Be patient with everyone."

v. Do not return evil for evil, but good (15).

a) Romans 12:17

b) 1 Peter 3:9

c) Matthew 5:39

## II. Worship in the Community (5:16-22)

A. Our worship is to be joyful, prayerful, and filled with thanksgiving (16-18).

i. The worship of the community should be filled with rejoicing.

a) Psalm 32:1-2, 11

b) Colossians 1:12

ii. The worship in the community is persistent in prayer.

a) Psalm 102:16-22

b) Prayer from Clement of Rome (1<sup>st</sup> Century)

iii. The worship of the community is to be filled with thanksgiving!

a) 1 Thessalonians 3:9

b) Colossians 3:16-17

B. Our worship must value the active work of the Holy Spirit (19-22).

David May: "For Paul the quenching of the Spirit implies a serious and deep theological consequence. It meant denying the new age had broken into this old age. It is negation of the good news of the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Spirit as a guarantee that the new age had begun (2 Cor. 1:11)."

i. Vv19-20 tell us what not to do in regard to prophecy:

a) Do not quench the Spirit...

b) which means, do not treat prophecies with contempt.

ii. Vv21-22 tell us what to do in regard to prophecy:

a) Test them all

b) Hold on to what is good

c) Reject any kind of evil prophecy.

*It is neither okay to disregard prophetic ministry, nor to accept it uncritically.*

iii. Prophecy cannot be taken to mean "preaching."

a) See 1 Corinthians 12: 14:4