

Additional Notes

Dissident Disciples – Part 11

How are We Made Holy?

Jerry Cisar — September 16, 2018

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Introduction

The goal of this letter is that we arrive holy and blameless, together, at Christ's appearing.

I. Paul's Clown Car (23-24)

A. Peace and grace (5:23 & 28)

i. Grace and peace 1:1

ii. Christ's kingdom functions on grace and is filled with peace.

Grace does not mean that there are no commands. Grace means that the first and foremost command is forgiveness, for we have been forgiven.

B. What is Paul saying here?

i. What he is *not* saying: humans have 3 parts.

ii. What he is saying: May God make you completely holy!

“Now may the God of peace Himself make you completely holy, and may you completely, spirit and soul and body, be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is the One who calls you, Who also will accomplish it.” (My translation)

a) *The emphasis is not on parts, but on wholeness.*

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.

- From 1 Thessalonians, how might you show that the goal of the letter is that we arrive holy and blameless, together, at Christ's appearing?
- How does Paul speak to both sides of the “tension” in sanctification (God's work vs. ours) in this letter? How might the idea of a fruitful garden help us understand how sanctification works?
- How might the pursuit of Christ's kingdom and peace have caused the Thessalonian believers to experience less peace in culture? How might our obedience to Christ cause us the same today?
- Paul uses family language repeatedly through this letter. Why do you think this was such an emphasis? How does this speak to you?
- How might the instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss speak to how believers should relate to one another in the church today?

b) Mark 12:30

II. Paul's Confidence (23-24)

A. Sanctification: God's Work or Ours?

- i. What makes for a fruitful garden?

- ii. Paul instructed them in what they need to do *more and more*. Here, the emphasis shifts to what Paul prays God will do.

B. What Philippians 2:12-13 says in two verses, 1Thessalonians declares through the whole letter.

- i. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - a) 1:3, 9
 - b) 4:1, 10-12
- ii. "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order that you would do what pleases Him."
 - a) 3:12-13
 - b) 5:23-24

III. Paul's Commands (25-28)

A. "Brothers and sisters, pray for us."

- i. *brothers and sisters*.

- ii. We are called to pray for one another.

The goal of the prayer references in this letter is not reached until we pray!

B. "Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss."

- i. What is this "holy kiss."

- ii. A "kiss" greeting was not for the slaves or the people of a different class. When you become part of God's family, those class distinctions are done away with.

C. "Have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters."

- i. *I make you swear by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.*

- ii. Paul is making a claim about the authority of his writing. He knew it was no *mere* letter.

D. "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Weima: "In contrast to secular letters where the farewell wish expresses the desire that the recipients will have physical strength ('Be strong!') or prosperity ('Prosper!'), Paul calls on God to give his readers that which he believes to be a more valuable gift and one that is needed more: the gift of grace."

- i. The letter begins with grace and peace and ends with peace and grace.
- ii. How will the grace of Jesus be with us?