

# 1 Thessalonians 5

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[0:00] 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. It should surprise you like a thief.

You are all children of the light and of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then, let us not be like others who are asleep, but be awake and sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

For God did not disappoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we live to gather with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, and care for you and the Lord, and who admonish you.

[1:31] Hold them in the highest regard, in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and destructive. Encourage the disheartened.

Help the weak. Be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong with wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always.

Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the spirit. Do not teach prophecies with contempt, but test them all.

Hold on to what is good. Reject every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. Brothers and sisters, pray for us. Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all brothers and sisters.

[2:37] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Do you want to open up your Bibles or apps to that passage that Elliot read for us?

1 Thessalonians 5. If you're new, and every week there's always folks who are new for various reasons, then just to explain that at Cornerstone, we kind of work our way through books of the Bible.

And so we've been working our way through this letter of Paul, who was one of the original kind of proponents of the Christian faith. He particularly took the gospel to Europe.

And we've been hearing just how the gospel, when it was preached in Europe, just was impacting people's lives. People's lives were turned around. And in particular, in this instance, he was in Thessalonica, northern Greece, and he's writing to them, having only been there for a short time. And as we've gone through the chapter, through the book, we've seen just how, had a glimpse at kind of authentic Christianity, original Christianity, true Christianity, if you like, as it's been modeled to us through this young church, these baby Christians there in Thessalonica.

[3:53] We saw in chapter 1 how they modeled authentic church. In chapter 2, how Paul modeled authentic Christian leadership to us. In chapter 3, we saw the authentic progress in the gospel as the Holy Spirit was changing their lives, sanctifying them.

And chapter 4, we saw something of authentic Christian living. And here in chapter 5, we're going to look at something about authentic or sanctified Christian community.

And I've been using that word authentic all the way along to convey that actually as we look at this, the Bible is the place to look, isn't it?

If we want to discover what fresh-faced Christianity looks like, what true Christianity looks like, there's been many centuries since and kind of Christianity has gone in various directions. But actually, it's good to go back to the source, go back to the original letters, the original teaching, and see what's going on there. Actually, I've used the word authentic, but actually probably to pick up on a word that Paul uses, that sanctified might have been a better word to use.

[5:03] And again, if you knew, sanctified in essence just means becoming Christ-like, becoming distinctively Christian, that the aroma around our fellowship and our being together is not Febreze or the culture around us, but it's something of the aroma of Christ, of his life-changing, transforming work and power by his Holy Spirit, founded in the deep, deep love of the Father which we are receiving.

And actually, that can look very, very messy at times as we trip up, we stumble and fall, and as we sort of pick ourselves up and so on.

And as life gives us just hard knocks, and we try to navigate life before the Lord. And again, Tash was helpful in just kind of exemplifying some of that for us this morning.

And rightly, as we seek to do that as a community, we center on the cross and the power of the cross, the deep work of the cross established for us by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that brings new life to us through which we receive the mercy and the forgiveness of our gods.

But interestingly, Paul also gives us another frame of reference to help us in our progress in the faith. And that is not just the cross of Christ, but the return of Christ also.

[6:31] And we're going to see how that works out as we seek to live this authentic or sanctified community, shaped, first of all, as we'll see here in a kind of second look at this idea of hope, how we are shaped by hope in the first instance.

And again, if you're new to Christianity, to looking to the Bible, the Christian, when the Bible uses the word hope, it's not a kind of fingers crossed hope it's going to happen, you know, that it might or might not happen in the way that we tend to use it in our society.

Actually, it means a much more certain thing. It's a sure hope. And so I've changed the title on the screen to sure hope. It's what is being conveyed. So verse one, now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

But last week, we saw how these baby Christians were worried because some of them had thought that, you know, only those who were alive at the time, the return of Christ, would actually be taken up to heaven with Christ.

And Paul reassures them, say, no, no, let me just help you there, and kind of reassures them that we were there alive when the Lord returns or whether we've already died, that actually we will all be gathered and he will take us all home.

[7:51] So the subsequent question is then, okay, right, so, okay, when is this going to happen? And we'd all love to know the answer to that question.

And many have tried to kind of give the answer to what they thought was going on over the years, saying it's going to be here, it's going to be there, and so on. But actually, Paul, quoting Jesus, sets us all straight on this, doesn't he?

Verse 2, the day of the Lord, the day that Christ returns, will be like a thief in the night. It'll be like a thief in the night.

You know, thieves don't usually tell you in advance when they're coming. That wouldn't work particularly well. It's always a surprise in it, and that's what the illustration that Jesus used and Paul reiterates here means.

It will be a surprise. It will not be at the time that we expect, but we need to be ready. And again, if you're unfamiliar with this, let me drill a little bit deeper down and quote Jesus further on this.

[8:54] Jesus says, Matthew 24, 36, he said, but about the day or the hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

So if somebody comes and tells you, it's this day or that day, you just need to point them to this verse and say, well, that's funny, because Jesus says, nobody knows except the Father. So speculation is pointless.

So the question really is not when is it going to be, but how do we live in the light of the sure and certain hope of his return? Because if you think about it, if we manage to get that right, then it's

going to change how we sort of respond.

For some folks, if you think it's going to be, have a wrong impression of it, you think that it's going to be soon, then you might sort of try to get everyone to repent and go around just telling people all the time about Jesus.

And maybe there's something in that. But if you think actually it's going to be a long time away, then we might become complacent. And that's not great either.

[10:06] And for many of us, if we're honest, we hover probably a little closer to that latter attitude, that complacency that sort of fosters lukewarmness or lacking in zeal or fervor in serving the Lord.

And when we sort of mention that out into the light, we think, you know, that's a thing, isn't it? So how are we to live in the light of the unknown but sure hope of Jesus returning?

Well, Paul firstly speaks to the complacent unbeliever or seeker. And this is somewhat somber. And in a sense, he's speaking not only to them, but to anyone at the moment who is amongst us, who is as yet undecided about Jesus, or to the wider culture and society and family and friends who are not yet believing.

Verse three. You know, while people are saying peace and safety, destruction will come on them suddenly as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. And Paul's no doubt drawing in terms of his own thinking and the prophetic writings given by, you know, Jeremiah or Ezekiel in Jeremiah 6, Ezekiel 13, about false prophets declaring, oh, peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Or even you might be thinking back to Genesis at the time of the flood. People were scorning Noah, carrying on with life just as they thought it should be done. And all of a sudden, the watery judgment comes upon them like a thief in the night.

[11:30] He says, you know, and when it starts, it will be unstoppable. It will be like a pregnant woman giving birth. It's just an unstoppable process. I wonder also in here, and this is mentioned in our community group, that as part of, at the time, Roman imperial propaganda, it was just that.

It was peace and security was part of the Pax Romana that was declared by the imperial Roman Empire. Fostering, in a sense, a false sense of security.

A false sense of security that comes from ignoring the truth, suppressing it, as Paul talks about in Romans chapter 1. And putting our trust in the wrong places. Thinking that our peace and security will ultimately come from them, whether it's economic or political or educational solutions alone.

And not that these are not important, they are. But for the believer, we know that our trust is not in these things. It's refreshing to hear Tim Farron, Westminster MP of Long Service, stand up at the Kessett Convention a few years ago and say, he said, you're going to be surprised to hear this from me.

He said, but politics is not the ultimate answer to put our hope and trust in. Of course, it's a help done well. And it's right, but that's for us as believers.

[12:50] It's not where we ultimately put our trust. Our trust and hope are put in the Lord as the one who steers the course of men and women, the higher throne that we were learning about in the book of Revelation.

And I wonder if you've come along this morning, and maybe you've been coming for a few weeks, maybe you've been looking into the Christian faith for some time, you're thinking, you know, actually, I haven't yet put my trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. But I sense the Holy Spirit working in my heart just inexorably.

I want to. Well, do it today. Put your trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. And know the sure hope that is offered through the gospel. But what is Paul saying to these baby believers directly?

Verse four. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

And so here, you know, darkness is contrasted with light as metaphors for life lived outside of and in Christ. Our old lives before, we put our trust in Christ.

[13:58] And the new lives that we have now, before we were in darkness, now we're in light in terms of understanding of the gospel and God's purpose and so on. So for us, Christ's return will not be an absolute surprise.

He's given us advance. It's coming. And the question is, so how do we live in the light of understanding of that? And the answer is that we keep living as children of the light.

We live faithfully to the one who has called us and who is faithful. We live Christ-like lives before the one who has saved us and is redeeming us.

Irrespective of whether he comes this afternoon or a millennia away, the call is to come and live as children of the light until he comes. You know, the night is when and where dark deeds are done. Imagine this streetlight stop working right across the country. Every town, every city, every village streetlight gone. The place in darkness.

[15:04] Not even moonlight. Imagine what would happen in that circumstance. How many dark deeds would be conducted under the cover of dark? And of course, that illustration would be completely known to those at the time that Paul was writing because they didn't have streetlights.

And so people didn't go out at night because of the dangers then. We were people of the day.

Verse 5. You're to not to live like it's night where dark or evil deeds are done.

No, we are to be those who live in the light by the dynamite or fireworks of the gospel that has exploded new life into our souls. You are.

You are. You are children of the light. That word spoken to them, declaring their identity, who they are in Christ, was spoken not just to them but to us today.

Hear these words. You are children of the light and of the day. We are. That is who we are. That is how we are. That is how we are to live. And that is how we should think of ourselves.

[16:11] Of course, we're not perfect. Let's not finish with this yet. We're not to think of that self righteously but humbly and gratefully. But we are to think of ourselves as living in the ways of the light of Christ, the ways of holiness in our speech, in our actions.

Whether if we're on the pitch or off the pitch, in work, in our homes, at the work, do around the dinner table. And light here is, of course, associated in Paul's mind with things that he was saying earlier about the Holy Spirit that leads us into holiness and a blameless life.

Or as he wrote elsewhere to the Galatians, for example. And have a look at Galatians with me.

These will be familiar words. But turn to Galatians chapter 5 and then verse 19.

So these are the ways of darkness that the acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality and purity and debauchery.

Idolatry and witchcraft. Hatred. Discord. Jealousy. Fits of rage. Selfish ambition. Dissensions.

Factions. Envy. Drunkenness. Orgies and the like.

[17:27] And I warn you, as I did before, he says that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But he says, no, you are children of delight. Live in this way.

Verse 22. According to the fruit of the Spirit's work in you. For the fruit of the Spirit is love. It's joy. It's peace. It's patience of forbearance.

It's kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

And then he begins, Paul, if you flip back to chapter 5, begins to move on to what you wonder is one of his favorite illustrations.

To help the young believer, the baby Christian, understand their discipleship. I kind of give a vivid picture of what it means. And he's taking it, of course, from the Roman soldiers who they would have seen walking around the streets all the time.

[18:31] Would be very familiar with. And, you know, they're sort of renowned for being, you know, self-controlled or disciplined. And, of course, all get up in their armor and their attire.

So, verse 6, he says, So then, let's not be like others who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night.

Those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. See, the Roman soldier, when they were on duty, were alert.

Not asleep and not drunk on duty or else they would face severe consequences. Their armor in place to protect them. And you see him circling back right, in a sense, to another three things that he would instruct young believers in as part of the discipleship.

To faith, hope, and love. As he was already mentioned in chapter 1, verse 3. Actually, I tried to get Al to do a picture of a sort of modern work person in their sort of, you know, with faith, hope, and love and a helmet of salvation and so on.

[19:51] And so, it produced a workman, you know, quite clever with their hard hat on, a high-vis vest. Unfortunately, the workman was cross-eyed and said, FAUTH on their high-vis vest.

So, it didn't quite work. Anyway. So, but you get the picture, don't you? That Paul is creating. That as we step out into the day, we step out in the armor of God.

The breastplate in place. Faith and love. Shaping our character. At the foremost of the way that we carry ourselves. And we walk daily.

Verse 3. We remember before, chapter 1, verse 3. We remember before our God and our Father, your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

These familiar things that he revisits with them. But not just with them. Also, Colossians. The letter to the Colossians, chapter 1, verses 4 and 5. And of course, maybe more famously in 1 Corinthians 13, verse 3.

[20 : 51] These three things remain. And what are they? Faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. These are the things that we are to be characterized by. These are the things that our community is to be shaped by.

First of all, as is here in 1 Thessalonians, by hope. The sure hope. Jesus is coming back. So we live in the light of that, the power of the cross that is saving us and an assured return when we will be with him.

And we seek to walk faithfully before the one who is faithful. So verse 8. We put on, we wear faith and love on our chests as we set out into the week.

Is that how we think of ourselves? Do we check our armor, if you like, as we look in the mirror and kind of make sure, if you have hair, that it's done right? But you do the sniff test, if required or whatever, and you just sort of check and think, actually, is the armor in place?

Have I got faith? Love? Hope? The shield of faith? The word of God? And so on. In place. Maybe you could text that verse to one or somebody in your community group.

[21 : 57] Text verse 8 to us on Monday morning. Just as a reminder, as we step out into the week. Make sure you have the breast plate and the helmet in place. Spurring each other on in our identity and who we are in Christ.

Taking that out into the world. And the way that he's kind of shaping this and forming this is interesting, isn't it? Because we not only then live in thankfulness for the cross, but also in anticipation of what is to come.

As a fuel for our new lives. You know how it is that when you're planning a big holiday and you kind of have to save up for it.

And it's a couple of years away because it's a big cost. You're willing to forego a number of things and kind of make sacrifices for that. Because you know that the holiday is coming.

A future hope shapes a present reality and ability to cope joyfully with whatever sacrifices and so on that comes our way. And actually the writer of the Hebrews records Jesus holding on to a similar dynamic.

[23 : 06] For the joy set before him. That you would be with him. That's the joy that was set before him. He endured the cross. The joy set before him.

Eternity was shaping his ability to walk faithfully in the present. A future hope fosters a contentment with the present. Releasing us from complacency as we live in anticipation of what is to come.

And of course this can work out in a million different ways. Paul in other places said I know what it is to have much. I know what it is to be in need. But I'm content in every situation.

Future hope reshaping his present reality. Sam Albury in his book *The Seven Myths of Singleness* talks about how that future reality shapes his contentment now as a single person.

He says marriage we know is temporary. It's for this life. Singleness is our future. And in a similar way to Jesus who also was single. Future hope allows Sam Albury to see his singleness then as a strategic alignment with Christ's pattern.

[24 : 20] Of being single and celibate and heavenward focused. Turning what culture deems incomplete into a powerful testimony of satisfaction in Christ alone.

See future hope can help shape the things that we wrestle with in our present experience. Paul goes on. Verse 9. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath or judgment but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep. And here he's talking about a kind of sleepy faith that we are to avoid. Therefore as we trust in him. And we live together in him.

So we see how Paul in his understanding is cosseted in his Christian life. Behind him the cross that has secured what is a sure and certain hope for him in the future.

And so he's able to weigh down anchor. If you like. In what is to come. In that sure hope of heaven. And that his anchor weighed there will help sustain him through the stormy seas of life.

[25 : 28] Whether he's in plenty or in want. It settles his soul. Fuels his joy. As he trusts in him. In this sure and certain hope that is to come. And that's what we want isn't it.

Lives that are settled in that secure hope. That enable us to kind of stand in him. In the storms of life. And in the ups and downs that we experience.

And therefore no wonder he says verse 11. Encourage one another. Build one another up in these things. In our community groups. In our Sunday mornings. In the various groups that were involved through the week.

We're as student groups in our homes. And he says just actually as in fact you're doing. The cross behind me and heaven before me. That is shaping our lives.

Then Paul moves on to drill down on how that future hope works out. In their present lives together. As a Christian community. And you know as I was reading through these things too.

[26 : 33] There's huge challenge in them isn't it. As we work these things out in our daily lives.

Verse 12. Now we ask you then brothers and sisters. To acknowledge those who work hard among you.

Who care for you. Literally over you in the Lord. And who admonish you gently and lovingly. Correct as he said like my mother and a father. And then verse 13.

Hold them in the highest regard. In love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. So the Christian community that unfolds from this secure, sure hope that we have.

Is one that is verse 13 peaceable. You know in their culture. I'm sure as in ours. Part of our fallen human nature I think. We have an issue with authority.

With leadership. In our day it's a reaction to the excesses and abuses at all levels. In all sectors of society. Which include also the church.

[27 : 30] And there are right calls I think for more openness and transparency. But at the same time. There needs to be the encouragement for us as believers. To kind of see governance as the Bible sees it.

As God given. That God has instituted three forms of governance in our society. There's the state. There's the family. And there's the church. These are three institutions established by God.

To help us with the ordering of human life and society. And in each there's a call to pray for them. And to give each honour where honour is due. Now yes that doesn't mean to say that we give unqualified.

You know. Credence to them. But we must acknowledge that actually authority. Are things that are given by God. Verse 12.

There are many in our fellowship who I think do these things. Men and women who work hard amongst us. The Greek word there is toil. Putting in the hard yards in the unseen preparations.

[28 : 36] For the ministries that they exercise amongst us. Teaching as they are at the moment. Our children and our youth. Taking them to camp. Responding to the pastoral care calls.

That go out sometimes urgently. Can you come now? Getting alongside others. Discipling. New believers. Those who are struggling.

Those who have stumbled and fallen. And are looking to be restored. Those who are working hard among us. Toiling in prayer ministries.

Leading and serving. Also in the partner organizations that we're affiliated with. Those who come up on the screen. Who are taking and leading various teams that we have.

Not only our elders. But you know team leaders. Whether it's set up. AV. The office based team. And the worship team. Who bless us week after week. I'm going to get in trouble for this.

[29 : 36] And I'm going to do it anyway. You know. Through the week. Those who are leading us in our sung praise. You know they spend time prayerfully.

Thinking through the passage. Selecting songs. They'll practice before the service. They might even be practicing at home. They'll come in early. To get set up.

And to practice and to lead us. And I think part of the encouragement here of this verse. Is that we think about actually encouraging them.

And you know honoring them. By trying to come at 1030. I know that you know it's not always possible. There are various reasons. Traffic or whatever. But in that way we honor them don't we. In their preparation for the ministry. That they want to. That God has given them to exercise amongst us. That's right isn't it. So hold those who lead us.

[30 : 36] Like that. In high regard says Paul. It's easy to follow the culture. And tear folks down. You know when it's done. Just isn't done quite right.

You got it wrong. Say stupid things. And you know I say stupid things. And I apologize. When I've done that. In those unguarded moments. When I forget to put on the breastplate of love and truth. But let us let love cover over a multitude of sins. Not as a cover up for evil. Or doing wrong. But in the little things. They're not a big deal. That we honor those amongst us.

Even when. They're having the hard conversations with us. The admonishing part of this passage. We listen. We weigh up what they're saying. And trust that they love us.

And I want to lead us. So is there someone. This week that you can encourage. Students. Is it your CU leader. Or your NAVS leader. Your young life.

[31 : 43] The folks who lead you. In young life. Is it the band. Is it you know. Those who are leading the team. That you're involved in. Is it your community group leaders. Or who can you encourage. This week. Because encouragement.

Lifts the soul. Doesn't it. It melts the tired. Disgruntlements. It's good for us. To encourage one another. Isn't it. As a Christ. Centered.

Community. To love others. As Christ loves us. To encourage others. As Christ has encouraged. Us. So we're a peaceable. Community.

Where the Holy Spirit. Is at work. Amongst us. Encouraging one another. Giving honour. Where honour is due. But also. We're a patient. Community. Verse 14. And we urge you.

Brothers and sisters. Warn those who are idle. And disruptive. Encourage the disheartened. Help the weak. Be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong. But always strive.

[32 : 39] To do what is good for each other. And for everyone else. So here Paul's linking idleness and disruptiveness. And it's interesting isn't it. Folks with too much time on their hands.

Causing a bit of havoc there in Thessalonica. Causa. So what's. How do we. How do we. Think of that today. What's. What's a kind of modern. Application for that.

You know. I don't love. The internet. I use it far too much. There are. There's good things about it. There's a lot of rubbish on it. But sometimes. Christians can be tempted.

To go down rabbit holes. In a particular issue. Can't we. Particular. Particular doctrinal views.

Origins. End times. Stings the spirit. And so on. And you know. They feel. Zealous.

And they need to kind of. Share it. And so on. And put it out. And. Actually sometimes. There's just a lack of wisdom. Or a misappropriated zeal. In that. But Paul says.

[33 : 36] Don't. Don't let that be the outlet. For your zeal. Rather. Let these things. Be the outlet. For your zeal. Encourage. The downhearted. Sit.

In. The pain. With them. For a season. Feed them. Spiritually. Or physically. Or socially. Help the weak. Where they're frail in body.

Or frail in resolve. Where addiction. Has been. Eating away at that. Frail in conscience. Overly sensitive. And fearful. Be patient.

And. In the reading. That was doing on this. Someone. You know. Said. Actually. Think of patience. You know. We easily think of being short tempered. But actually. Patience is long tempered. Just elongating the fuse with folks.

Just being patient with them. In the way that. Actually. Christ has been patient with us. Oh so patient. Be patient with everyone. And sometimes.

[34 : 33] Just with. With one another. You know. It feels that. Because of the pain. That we're. Somebody is going through. And we're supporting them. They're almost. It's as if they're sort of.

You know. Battering their. Their. Their fists. Spiritually. Metaphorically. Against our chest. Because of their. Their anger with God. Sometimes it feels that.

They're taking it on us a little bit. But we're patient. In those moments. Patiently waiting for them. To get to the time. Where they're ready to hear. The things that they need to hear. To be pointed.

Where they needed to be pointed. It's. Who do you need to be patient with. At the moment. In the way that Christ.

Has been. Oh so patient with you. Students. Is it your flatmates. Your hallmates. Are they already getting on your nerves. That big pile of pots. That is in the sink. Nobody has cleaned it up.  
[35 : 29] Again. Parents with kids. Kids with parents. Somebody in the Bible. In the community group.

Doing your head in at the moment. Who do we need to be patient with. Verse 15. No revenge. You know that kind of.

I'm going to. Get them. For that. I know in Christians. You know. So I never do that. Oh we have subtle ways of doing that. Don't we. You know what I'm talking about.

Paul says. That's not our way. How do we get over that. Think of the cross. Think of Christ. How he deals with you. Maybe you need to have.

A bit of a chat about it. But you know. Maybe you don't. But notice how selfless. All these things are. What an antidote.

[36 : 25] To our self-absorbed culture. And some of our. Mental health issues. That come from that. Thinking about ourselves. Too much. We gain much.

C.S. Lewis. Tim Keller. Remind us. Not by thinking less of ourselves. But by thinking. About ourselves. Less. We gain much. Not by thinking less.

Of ourselves. But about thinking less. About ourselves. So we are.

Peaceable. We're patient. We're prayerful. And joyful. Verse 16. Rejoice. Always. Pray. Continually. Give thanks. In all circumstances. For this is God's will.

For you in Christ Jesus. Don't quench your spirit. Don't treat prophecies with contempt. But test them all. Hold on to what is good. Reject every kind of evil. You know there's an orientation of the heart.

[37 : 23] That is able to dwell. In verses 16, 17 and 18. Isn't there? That is rejoicing. That is praying. That is thanking. And if you're familiar with the Bible.

You'll see some of these familiar themes. For Paul. Where he connects the three. These three things in Philippians 4. As well. Another three pointers.

Faith. Hope. And love. And joy. Prayer. And thanks. All things you wonder. If Paul just used regularly. With baby Christians. And there's something here.

Isn't it? When our prayers move. From just asking. To thanking. To praising. To rejoicing. When we do. We've kind of turned a corner.

But also when our prayers move. From our quiet time. Which is important. That there's time. We just need to dwell in the presence. But actually where our prayers move. Out into the day.

[38 : 22] And you don't have to be jabbering on. All the time. But you know. Just those kind of. As we're going through the day. Just the orientation of our hearts. To the Lord. In our hearts. We're saying. Lord. I need your help here.

Lord. I praise you. And thank you for that. And then verses 19 and 20.

I don't have time to parse this out properly. But note that we can quench the spirit. We can grieve the spirit. By doing. Well the very opposite. Of what he's just been saying.

When the fellowship. The community is filled. With this sense of grumbling. Or impatience. Or lovelessness. Or selfishness. Sin. Faithlessness. The unsure. An unsure hope.

The spirit. And the illustration. It's just. Poured water on the fire. It's quenched. In regard to prophecy.

[39 : 21] Well of course. You know. We're a broad fellowship. There are different views on it. It's a secondary issue. We're not going to fall out over it. But what's been talked about here. Well in essence. It is.

The application of God's word. Isn't it? That's what the prophets in the Old Testament were doing. They were taking the word of God. And they were applying it. Into the lives of. The people of God. At the time. Both foretelling. And forth telling. And however. In a sense. We fall on understanding. That one thing is. That I think all of us need to take note of. Is that at the time. They didn't have the New Testament scriptures. At the time. The church was new.

At the time. They didn't. You know. At the beginning. When Paul hadn't even written a letter to the Thessalonians. And he was having to kind of instruct them. And then leave them. So there is. I think. That there's a shift.

[40 : 16] Isn't there? When. In the providence of God. The New Testament is put together. And we have kind of the. You know. Christ's words. We have the teaching of the New Testament. The

apostles.

So there's something there. There's a shift. From how it was then. And so the word of God. Has got to take a. You know. A big role. In our understanding of these things. I'm going to pray.

That when. That when. You know. We come. And there's a preacher. That their preaching is somewhat prophetic. That's speaking. And applying. With power. The word. Into our lives. As his Holy Spirit is working with. In our community groups.

As we open up the words. The spirit is moving. In power. Applying these things. To our lives. Helping us to draw closer. To him. At work. In our community life. Together. And so I'm much. I guess. More comfortable. Personally. When scripture is much more part of this kind of.

Conversation that's going on. You know. I was praying.

[41:16] For you. And these are the words from scripture. That came to. To mind. That's not to rule out. Dreams. You know. Many Muslims are being converted. That way. It's not to rule out.

But actually. Scripture plays. Maybe a big part. In what we're doing. Especially in weighing these things up. So my tuppence worth on this. Is to keep it.

Scripture central. You know. I'm an. Increasingly. Getting older. Highlander. And in the highlands. You know. We've got a bit of scope.

For this kind of stuff. Old minister. Who led me to Christ. One night. He let me. Preach goodness. Knows what I said. To one. In one of the villages. But we were sitting in this. Car. As he was dropping me off.

And chatting. And he said. You know Callum. I've been thinking about you. All this week. And with this scripture. Has been in my mind. And I've prayed about whether to share it with you. And it was a scripture from the book of Acts.

[42:09] And I can look back over 35 years. And see that. It was true. What. What he was saying. So I've seen things that are. That are vivid.

In this. In this area. Yeah. But I've also seen bonkers things. You know. When I was diagnosed with cancer in my 30s. I've told you this before. A woman would prophesy that I was going to die.

And there'd be. But there'd be a great testimony for it. And I was to take comfort in that. You think. You are off your head woman. So test. There's a good reason he says test it.

I think also. I'll be honest. I think there's something about vocabulary. Each Christian subculture has its own vocab. You know. I work for UCCF. You can tell a UCCF worker.

Not just by their fleece zip thing. That we all wore. But also by the way that. You know. We would unpack this passage. We had a particular vocabulary. And you just knew that. Oh.

[43:05] They work for UCCF. Or have worked for UCCF. Or whatever. And it's the same in NAVs. And young. We all have it. We'll have it here at Cornerstone. And you know. And so on. And so I think that.

We just need to be gracious with our. You know. In terms of how folks describe things. One person may wake up and say. You know. I've had this idea. I wonder if it's off the Lord. Another person say. I've had a vision. I think it's off the Lord.

You know. I think it's the same thing. Spirit of God. At work. You test it. And you trust it. That folks. As they're walking with the Lord. Seeking to walk closer. We respect one another.

We honour one another. We value one another. We love one another. And we seek. The work of God. Amongst us together. Love.

Patience. A common heart for the Lord. Those are the things that Paul's saying. Will keep you together. As a community. As you enjoy. The sure and certain hope. That is ahead.

[44:00] And the power of the cross. That is behind you. So verse 21. Hold on to what is good. Reject what is evil. Don't entertain it. I want to use verse 23 and 24. Before the end.

And then there's stuff about holy kissing. I've got an amusing story to tell you about that. But time has moved on. But we. Don't worry. It's huge. A community built on sure hope.

Peaceable. Patient. Prayerful. Joyful. You know. There's a tall order. How are we to do it?

Well these beautiful words at the end. That I used at the beginning of the service. I think are there to help us. The one who calls us is faithful. And he.

Will do it. He. Will do it. Let's open our hearts wide to him. In verses 23 and 24.

[45:01] The apostle himself. Praise. Not just for them. But for every generation of believer. And so I want. What I want to do this morning. Is. In keeping with this passage.

And honoring those who are. Kind of over us. In the Lord. I'm going to ask. Two of our. Older members. To come and pray these words. With us.

And over us. And just honor those. Amongst us. Who have worked hard. And toiled in the Lord. So Bunty and Willie. If you want to come up. And as they're coming up.

I'm going to embarrass them. You know. Willie and Bunty. Some of you will know them. Some of you will know their story. But they. They've sought to live. Wap with the Lord. And God was really gracious to them.

There was a time. Where they were in one of the villages. Just leading local. Kids work. And the Lord. Just worked. The work of many. A revival. Many of the kids. And the youths who were involved.

[45 : 58] Were converted. You'll not know that about them. But you do now. Because I've told you. And we want to just. You know. There's folks around us. Who we have. Who have these stories. Your Bunty.

Is a direct descendant. Some of you will know. When I say this. Captain John Payton. Who was one of the covenanters. Those who. Sought to kind of. Stand up for the. For the faith. The gospel.

At a time when it was threatened. Many of them lost their lives for it. And. You know. Also. One of our. Family members. In the past. Because of a tragic situation.

He decided to open their home. In hospitality. To those who were coming. To minister the gospel.

And gotten to sign the book. Dale Moody. C.H. Spurgeon. Wow.

Amazing. Amazing. We honour. Those. Amongst us. Who have sought to toil. And work hard. In the Lord. And so I've asked these guys.

[46 : 55] To come and to pray. Verses 23. And 24. Over us. Who's going first? First. Let's close our eyes. Let's take a moment.

And hear the prayer. May God himself. The God of peace. Sanctify you through and through. May your Holy Spirit.

Soul and body. Be kept blameless. At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful.

And he will do it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.