

***WAITING FOR THE LORD'S RETURN, PART 5:
"CALLED AND KEPT AS A FAMILY"***
1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

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Personal Introduction

Hi everyone! My name is Resha and I'm NOT a pastor at HMCC of Jakarta, and it's my privilege to preach the Word of God to us today.

Sermon Series Introduction

We're currently in Part 5 of our sermon series called "Waiting for the Lord's Return," where we're going through the Books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians together.

And today's sermon marks the end of the book of First Thessalonians, and is titled: "Called and Kept as a Family."

I'll pray for us again before we jump in.

Sermon Introduction

My all time favorite movie is The Lord of the Rings. One aspect of this movie that I find very moving is how the fellowship of the ring was brought about at the beginning of the story, and what it turned into by the end of the movie.

The 9 members of this so-called fellowship didn't like each other that much at the beginning, they argued a lot, they had trust issues with each other. But by the end of the movie they have grown to treasure each other so much that they were willing to fight an essentially hopeless battle so their friends, who were trapped in the middle of their enemy's headquarter, could complete their mission.

Right before the doomed battle, 2 members of the fellowship, Gimli and Legolas, a dwarf and an elf who at the beginning wanted to kill each other, had a brief conversation:

"Never thought I'd die fighting side by side with an elf", said Gimli.

"How about side by side with a friend?" replied Legolas.

"Aye, I could do that."

The One Thing

Let's be the spiritual family God calls and keeps us to be.

Scripture Introduction

Before we begin let me remind us again of the context of the passage that we're going through today which is 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28:

1. This is part of the letter that Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, it is a young church that's barely one year old.
2. It seems still small in size – we can see how issues happening with some members have adverse impact on the church as a whole – such as unexpected deaths, idleness, and persecution.
3. In the earlier part of chapter 5, Paul reminds Thessalonian believers of their identity as children of light. He exhorts the believers to personally live according to that identity – awake and sober, ready for the Lord's return.
4. He ended the first half of the chapter by saying “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” (v11), expanding his exhortation to a wider context of a community, which leads to the passage we're going to listen to today.

Scripture Reading

So let's read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 (ESV)

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

²⁵ Brothers, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This is God's Word.

Overview

We'll look at this passage in four parts.

- I. Honoring your elders (vv. 12-13)
- II. Loving one another (vv. 14-18)
- III. Testing everything in light of Scripture (vv. 19-22)
- IV. Being assured of God's work in you (vv. 23-28)

I. Honoring your elders (vv. 12-13)

Turn to vv. 12-13.

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

The first subject that Paul addresses here is how the church should be treating their leaders.

- a. Who are the leaders he's referring to here?
 - i. Based on what Paul is saying regarding the roles of these leaders, it seems like the "leaders" he refers to here are Elders of the church.
 1. He describes the leaders' roles as being "over you in the Lord", which means providing spiritual oversight, shepherding and keeping watch of the members' souls. Admonishing in light of God's Word and instructions. These describe the role of the office of Elders.
 - ii. On top of that, the Thessalonian church was a small and young church, hence all the more likely that the appointed leaders were elders.
- a. The first thing Paul says is to respect the elders who labor among you
 - a. This shows a few things: that they're not idle, lazy people to begin with.
 - b. They are not people who put themselves above others and just boss them around.
 - c. They are people working hard, laboring alongside the very people they are called to lead.
 - d. The same hard-work and laboring Paul has consistently give example of throughout his ministry!
- b. Because of their genuine labor among the people then they were appointed as leaders over them, **in the Lord**
 - a. What does Paul mean by "over you in the Lord"?
 - i. It means Elders are expected to provide spiritual oversight over the people they lead – they're supposed to guide, direct, cast vision, nurture, advise, counsel them.
 - ii. And do all those things in the Lord, not in their own understanding.
- c. After being placed as a spiritual overseer over the church, Elders are also expected to admonish people who are straying.
 - a. To admonish means to warn, correct, rebuke, reprimand. In other words, have difficult conversations with their members.

Paul asks the Thessalonian church to respect the Elders who are doing these things, and to **esteem them very highly, in love, because of the work they do.**

- a. Why is Paul asking the church to esteem the Elders very highly specifically because of the work they do?
- b. My take is that because spiritual leadership is different and, dare I say, a lot harder, more exhausting than conventional or secular leadership. Let me break down the differences between the two here, I'm using leadership in a business or corporate context as an example of secular leadership:
 - a. Secular or conventional leadership comes with a legally or contractually enforceable authority.
 - i. When someone hires a person to work for them, there is an immediate professional authority that they gain over that new-recruit, as leader, that they can exercise within the context of the organization.
 - ii. This makes things a lot easier – the leader doesn't necessarily have to put in the initial labor to earn this new employee's trust, they are immediately put in an "overseer" role over this person. Of course bad leadership may cause trust and respect to erode over time but that is a different topic and we're not going to discuss it today.
 - iii. Now, having such authority at the company also means that the leader can immediately **demand** adherence to their directive, whether people like it or not. If they were good leaders, ideally they should strive to make sure that everyone understands where they are coming from regarding the decisions they make, but in instances where there are disagreements, these business leaders have the contractual authority to enforce their direction and the team is obligated to follow it.
 - iv. This is not the case with spiritual leadership. Paul establishes this by putting "respect those who labor among you" as his first exhortation regarding the Elders. Their authority comes from trust that is built from the ground up as they labor among the people they lead.
 - b. Secular leadership has a more specific or narrow scope compared to spiritual leadership.
 - i. In a company, a manager would typically have 1 on 1 meetings with their direct reports, and from time to time they might ask their team members how they are doing personally, and their team members might even confide in them.
 - ii. But it is also understood that the manager's role is not to counsel them and advise them on what to do in regards to their personal life. The manager might suggest some arrangement on the work-side that may be helpful while their team members are dealing with the issues outside of work, such as giving them days off, temporarily moving some of their workload to another person, etc, but that's about it. Their scope of leadership doesn't extend beyond that.
 - iii. While spiritual leadership is more all-encompassing. When someone struggles with their work, their families, their mental health, when they're making major life decisions, when they're wrestling with sin and struggling in their personal relationship with God, when they're in conflict with others – Elders are expected to provide guidance in all these aspects.
- c. In most secular leadership contexts people are required to esteem their leaders, in law. In spiritual leadership Paul asks us to esteem our leaders very highly, in love. It is very different.

In light of this I want to ask all of us here a few things:

- a. When was the last time you asked to catch up with your pastors simply because you love them and care about them? When was the last time you offered them your prayer, and actually prayed for them? Have you ever asked them what is the best way for you to support them?
 - a. If the answer is “a while ago” or you can’t even remember when, then maybe you should consider reaching out to them.
- b. I’ve personally asked P. Eric about this: what would be the best way to support him in his role as an elder, and his answer is very straightforward – disciple one another. Something to keep in mind, as one of the ways we can honor our pastors is to imitate them as they imitate Christ, including in discipleship of one another.

Paul closed his exhortation regarding church leaders with “be at peace among yourselves”.

- a. This is interesting because this could’ve been just a general exhortation. Isn’t “being at peace among ourselves” a generally good thing to do, and we should strive to do it in any part of our lives? Why does he tag it on to his exhortation about respecting, esteeming, and loving our Elders?
 - i. Here’s my thoughts on this - conflicts are damaging in any kind of context, including (if not especially so) in the context of a community. Let me clarify first, conflict is not the same as a healthy, respectful debate or discourse. Frictions may happen in a discussion, it may even get a bit heated and that is good, healthy, and necessary. But the moment it devolves into a context where people attack each other personally, that’s where it stops being helpful and starts being damaging.
 - ii. Drawing parallel in business, no manager would be happy to see their team members attacking each other. It hurts everyone that gets dragged into it, and it may even affect other people who are not directly involved, and ultimately affect the entire organization. This is definitely not the picture of a spiritual family that God calls us to be.
- b. This doesn’t mean that we have to be absolutely conflict free – that’s not possible, we’re sinful people to begin with.
 - i. This means that when we stumble into a conflict with our brothers and sisters we should endeavor to lovingly resolve it, instead of being stubborn, selfish, and immature about it.

Now let’s move on to the second part.

II. Paul’s joy in the Thessalonians’ faith (3:6-13)

Look at verses 14-18.

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

From the text there are 3 groups of people that Paul addresses specifically:

- a. First is the idle.
 - a. It seems that there were lazy people who just refused to work, and instead they took advantage of the believers' kindness.
 - b. As believers we are exhorted to take care of each other, to help those who are in need, and share with each other.
 - c. To this group of people, Paul urges believers to admonish them – to rebuke and correct them
- b. Second is the fainthearted.
 - a. The literal translation of the word means the “small-soul”.
 - b. Now how could a person be “small-souled”? Likely it is due to the struggles, and burdens of their lives press on their mind, causing them to be discouraged.
 - c. In the case of the Thessalonians this could be people who experience unexpected deaths in their families, or those who are persecuted.
 - d. For this group of people, Paul urges believers to encourage them.
- c. Third is the weak.
 - a. It is not clear what specific weakness Paul is talking about here – could be physical, mental, emotional, financial.
 - b. But regardless, Paul wants the church to help them.

Beyond the specific ways Paul wants the Thessalonian believers to minister to these groups, there is one principle that he applies to all – be patient with them all.

- a. In a different letter where Paul talks about love and its characteristics, he names patience as the first one – love is patient and kind. So actually, Paul exhorts Thessalonian believers to love one another by being patient with each other.
- b. Paul knows very well that addressing these issues is not going to be instantaneous. Most likely it is going to take time for people to change.
 - a. Some are going to be hard-headed about their idleness, they may even argue back.
 - b. Some people are going to take time to overcome their depression and recover from it.
 - c. Some people are going to progress slowly in improving on their weaknesses.

Now let's ask ourselves – what usually prevents us from being patient with others? Especially when we are trying to help someone who is struggling.

- a. Maybe it is a lack of empathy?
- b. Maybe it's our pride that makes us think that our time is too valuable to spend helping others?
- c. Or maybe it's selfishness, that we'd rather spend our time doing something that pleases ourselves?

Or maybe there's other reasons –this is something we should reflect on and bring to God, and genuinely ask Him to grow in our capacity to love others.

Not only remaining patient with everyone, Paul also asks the believers to not repay evil for evil, but instead to always do good to one another within the church and also to everyone outside the church.

- d. Which is not a new instruction – Jesus himself gave a similar exhortation during the sermon on the mount.

And Paul also wants the believers to:

- a. Rejoice always
- b. Pray without ceasing
- c. Give thanks in all circumstances

All these is said within the same context of loving and serving one another through admonition, encouragement, help and good deeds. In other words Paul urges the believers to rejoice, pray, and give thanks for one another.

- a. This is not surprising as Paul himself does this consistently, his letters are filled with them.

But this leads us to an important question – is it even possible to be in a state of constant joy, prayer, and thanksgiving, in the context of living life in a community and ministering to each other? Especially considering that we have problems of our own.

So is Paul asking us to do the the impossible here?

- a. Let's be clear, it is impossible to be constantly joyful, in every single second of our lives.
- b. It is also impossible for us to just spend all our time praying – we have to work, we have to do chores, we have tasks and responsibilities to attend to.
 - a. Looking at the lives of Paul, and even Jesus Himself, there were definitely obvious moments of sorrows, sadness.
 - b. Forgive my Inside Out reference, but there will definitely be times when joy has to step aside.
- c. What Paul emphasizes here is about the general theme, general pattern in a believer's life.
 - a. That joy, prayer, and thanksgiving have to be consistently present in our lives, through all the circumstances, and ups and downs of life. Those should not be absent.
 - b. We see this pattern throughout Paul's letter – he does admits that he is anxious at times, he is disappointed at times, he is concerned at times, and for sure he suffers at times too, but through all those there is also plenty of rejoicing, prayers, and thanksgiving.

The big question is – how? How can Paul persistently rejoice, pray, and give thanks in all those circumstances?

- a. He explains it when he says "...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
 - a. So doing all those things is the will of God and it is only possible to do when and if we are in Christ Jesus.
- b. But how is that possible? What do we receive by being "in Christ Jesus" that would enable us to live that way?
- c. I entered the phrase "in Christ Jesus" into my ESV Bible search function, and this is the result
 - a. Romans 3:24 – we are justified by grace through redemption in Christ Jesus.
 - b. Romans 6:11 – we are alive to God in Christ Jesus
 - c. Romans 6:23 – we receive free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus
 - d. Romans 8:1 – we are freed from condemnation in Christ Jesus
 - e. Romans 8:2 – we are set free from sin and death in Christ Jesus
 - f. Romans 8:39 – we are inseparable from God's love in Christ Jesus
- d. The question is then – how can we not be rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks if we have received all those things in Christ Jesus?

So what does this mean for us?

- a. Firstly, have we taken a look around, and try to see the brothers and sisters around us who may be struggling with idleness, discouragement, and or moments of weakness?
 - i. If we haven't, then we definitely should. And we should ask ourselves – how does God want me to minister to them? How does he want me to admonish, encourage, and help them? How can I love them and be patient with them?
 - ii. If you are the one who is struggling, have you tried sharing your struggles with your brothers and sisters? And ask them to minister to you?
- b. Secondly, we should pause and examine our lives – do we see a consistent pattern of rejoicing, prayerfulness, and gratitude in it?
 - i. If yes – great! Try to help others to experience the same Christ-centered life too.
 - ii. If not yet, then you should assess – what often robs your joy, distracts you from prayer, and prevents you from being thankful, and why?

Testing everything in light of Scripture (vv. 19-22)

Now let's go to verses 19-22.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

This part might feel like Paul suddenly shifts gear and brings up the topic of quenching the Spirit and prophecy, but he is actually addressing a particular issue that plagues the minds of Thessalonian believers, sowing confusion and doubts.

- a. In his 2nd letter to the Thessalonians Paul points out issues with false prophets, people sending letters claiming to be him sharing questionable teaching.
 - i. Which jaded the Thessalonians, causing some of them to act in a way that was quenching or extinguishing the Spirit, and despising prophecies. Possibly it means that they were disregarding prophetic messages and teachings in general, which an over-reaction.
 - ii. We wouldn't demolish a whole house just because of a leaky faucet in it. In the same way, the gift of prophecy itself is good and it could be a useful way to minister to each other – Paul doesn't want Thessalonians to completely diminish it due to some faulty practices.
- b. Before going deeper into this let's make sure that we are all on the same page about what the gift of prophecy is according to the bible.
 - i. It is often mistaken solely as the gift of foresight, foretelling of what's to come. While this may be part of it but prophecy is not limited to that.
 - ii. Paul explains that prophetic gift is a gift to speak to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. It is a gift to be able to clearly discern God's message, so that it may be shared to others for the sake of building them up.
 - iii. Now let's be clear here – the gift of prophecy is a beneficial spiritual gift, and we should use it should we have it, according to how the scripture instructs us. However it is not fundamental for the growth of our relationship with God. What we absolutely need and we cannot go without is God's Word – the Scripture itself. This is the primary way of God communicating with us. Paul says that the scripture is breathed out by God, and it is useful for teaching, for

correcting, for training believers to be complete, full-fledged men and women of God, equipped for every good work.

- c. So in response to this issue of false prophecy, Paul exhorts the believers to test everything, to assess whether they are authentic and are from God or not.
 - i. This brings us to a question – how are we supposed to test?
 - 1. When we test whether something is genuine or not, the common method is to identify the characteristics of the authentic item. I recently helped a friend look for an engagement ring and we ended up discussing (and looking up) ways to test the authenticity of a diamond.
 - 2. We found out that real diamonds have unique characteristics such as high density that causes it to sink in water, it clears up fog quickly from its surface, it is so hard that it can scratch up most materials without damaging itself. Most of these tests can be done at home.
 - 3. The same principle is applicable here, to be able to test whether a message comes from God or not, we need to first know God's word. We need to know what the Scripture says about Him, His desires, His heart, and we need to use the Scripture to test and validate whether the message we're hearing aligns with it or not.
 - ii. God does not contradict Himself. Anyone bringing a message or teaching that goes against what is written in the Scripture is false and evil and Paul exhorts us to abstain from every form of it.

A couple questions I want us to ask ourselves:

- a. First - how well do we know the Scripture? How well do we know our Shepherd's voice? Jesus says that his sheep hear his voice and follow him - are we spending time in His Word and applying it daily? If not yet, then we should consider starting a bible ready plan. Or join a life group to study the word with others.
- b. Second - are there worldly teaching that we blindly follow? They might sound great but have we tested them against the Scripture, and see whether there are misalignments?

IV. Being assured of God's work in you (vv. 23-28)

Let's take a look at verses 23-28.

²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

²⁵ Brothers, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

In this final part, Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, and then he asked for prayers from them. We'll take a look at his prayer for the church first.

- a. First, He prays to God for the believers to be sanctified completely. What does this mean? Aren't we saved already through Jesus' death and resurrection? Why do we still need to be sanctified?
 - a. It is true that we are saved already through Jesus' death on the cross. His death and resurrection changes our status from "citizen of the world" who is destined for death to citizen of God's Kingdom destined for eternal life.
 - i. But that change of status needs to be accompanied by transformed life as well.
 - ii. We cannot be citizens of God's kingdom while still thinking, behaving, living the way that citizens of the world do. I'll give some examples:
 1. Anyone has switched job before? When you switch job, the moment you accept the job and sign your employment contract with the new company, your status changes. You were an employee of company A before, and now you're an employee of company B. But it is impossible for you to completely adhere to the new company's values and culture and working dynamics from the very first day. It takes time for you to adjust your mindset, behavior, and decision making habit to attune to the new company's values. You'll have to learn in theory via new employee orientation program, where they'll likely give you materials to read, and you'll have to learn through coaching process with your managers, and you'll learn by making mistakes as well. The hope is that some day you will become a model employee that embodies and live out the values and culture of the company well.
 2. For those of you who are married, or about to be married. On that wedding day, when you stand before The Lord and your family and friends, and make your vow to take on each other as husband and wife, your status officially changes. But that does that mean that you immediately know how to be good, biblical husband and wives right from that point? No. It takes a long and painful, lifelong process to learn how to be better husband and wife to each other, through open and honest communication and deepening trust and affection for each other, through enduring hard times together as a family, through arguments and restlessness together, through prayers and worship and time spent together in communion with God. So you can be more and more like the couple God wants you to be.
 - iii. That is sanctification.
 - b. Again, it is true that we are saved by Jesus' death and resurrection, and for as long as we are in this world we are going to be continuously sanctified so we'll be fully ready to live as citizen of God's kingdom. This is Paul's first prayer.
- b. Second, he prays for the Thessalonians to be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Now what does it mean to "be kept blameless"? What is Paul talking about here?
 - i. Drawing from the wholistic context of his letter, if you remember in chapter 3 Paul expressed deep concerns that "somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain".

- ii. He was extremely worried that the believers in Thessalonica whose faith was relatively young might've lost their faith in light of afflictions, persecutions, death of loved ones, and even false prophecies that occurred in the church. And therefore they may also feel like they've lost their confidence of their salvation.
- iii. In light of that Paul prayed a prayer of assurance, highlighting that God Himself would keep his people blameless, that they would keep their status as His children all the way to the day of His return.

Now what is Paul basing this assurance on? What is it that could possibly give us an absolute, unwavering confidence that our salvation is kept, that God is going to keep us? That we will go to sleep tonight a believer, we'll wake up the next day still a believer.

- a. Is it our constant faithfulness? Good works? The way we live and behave in the church community we're part of?
 - a. Praise God it's none of those things.
 - b. In verse 24 Paul establishes – He who calls you (God Himself) is faithful, He will **surely** do it.
 - c. Our assurance that we will be kept blameless, that we will keep our faith, that we will be continuously sanctified, comes from the fact that God is the one who calls us, and he is the one who's going to keep us, because He is faithful.
 - d. 2 Tim 2:13 "if we are faithless, **he remains faithful** -- for he cannot deny himself."
 - i. God is faithful to us because first and foremost he is faithful to himself. He has to be. He cannot be untrue to himself, he has to keep his integrity, and because of this we can trust that He is going to do what He has promised.
 - e. In this truth we can find our greatest assurance, that we are His children today, and we will be tomorrow, until He returns. And He Himself will ensure our readiness for that day.

Then how should this blessed assurance affect us? What difference should it make in our lives?

- a. I stumbled upon an online forum that has a group discussion about existentialism. One of the users posted the following:
 - i. *"I'm so scared of dying. I turn 20 in April, and I am absolutely dreading it. I feel like I'm constantly in a race but I'm up against time. I feel sick thinking about how I'm basically 2 decades old already and I probably only have around 5 left. I can't fathom the fact that i just won't exist one day. I can't comprehend how we just can't get time back and we have to accept that. It's so weird to me, I hate it. I constantly feel a sense of impending doom purely because i just feel like I'm so old and I don't have long left"* – posted 209 days ago.
 - ii. I'm sure that at some point in our lives we've had to deal with the nerve-wrecking anxiety that comes from uncertainty. When we just don't know whether something bad, something difficult is going to happen to us. Pacing around the room as we're waiting for the news that could be either really good, or really bad. And death is probably one of the biggest, if not the biggest, unknown variables for mankind. It could be so paralyzing especially due to its inevitability. The writer of the post was only 20 year old when they posted this last year, but yet they were already haunted by the sense of impending doom.
- b. For those of us who have not put our faith in Christ yet – perhaps you've wondered about the same thing too – what is on the other side of death? And you've felt the overwhelming sense of uncertainty

surrounding the topic. Let me make it clear here, the salvation that is made available to believers in Christ is available for you too. Jesus died on the cross so that all of us who decide to put our faith in him can receive eternal life – enjoying the victory that he has claimed over death and grave. If you'd like to learn more about this please don't hesitate to ask me, or Pastor John/Pastor Eric/Pastor Jeff, or anyone around you. We will all be happy to share more about this.

- c. For those of us who have received Christ as our Lord and Savior – this is what makes the assurance – that God will surely keep us blameless, saved, redeemed, sanctified and ready to join him on the day of his return all the more valuable! We should be jumping in joy every day because we no longer have to question what's going to happen to us when we face the inevitable end of our time here on earth. We will live with our God in his Kingdom forever!
 - i. But let's be honest here, we often take this assurance for granted. Maybe we've been believers for some time and it has become one of those things we keep hearing over and over again.
 - ii. Therefore, just as Paul reminded the Thessalonians, we ought to remind each other, and continuously assure one another that our faithful God is going to keep us blameless until he returns, and that this is something worth celebrating for the rest of our lives.

Paul then closes this part of the letter by requesting for prayers, greet each other with holy kiss, and he implores that the letter be read to the whole congregation so everyone is on the same page. As we conclude our journey through the book of 1 Thessalonians, let's remember Paul's heartfelt and loving intention in writing this letter, which is to encourage and strengthen the young church in their faith, love, and hope amidst trials and uncertainties. And finally to paint a picture of the Spiritual family God wants his church to grow into.

The One Thing

Let's be the spiritual family God calls and keeps us to be.

Let's pray.