**Render No One Evil for Evil**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11-15**

**Wednesday Evening**

**October 20, 2021**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11-15**

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. 12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,

13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

**11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**

Saints, despite persecution and their sorrow over fellow believers who had died, the Christians needed to encourage each other about the certainty of their future reunion with all believers who had gone on before and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

**Psalm 119:49-50**

49 Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. 50 This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.

Saints, they also learned to build each other up in the faith. Even as one believer receives encouragement, he or she at another time will be in a position to offer it. The mutual giving and receiving in the body of Christ keep the church strong against the forces that attack it. God’s people always need to stand together as they anticipate their Savior’s return.

**12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,**

Saints, the brothers and sisters in the church needed to show honor to those in leadership in order for everything to function smoothly. The word “honor” is also translated “respect.” These leaders in the Lord’s work probably were the elders who held positions of leadership and responsibility.

Elders carried great responsibility, and they were expected to be good examples. Because these men work hard among the believers, they deserved to be honored. Paul expressed a similar thought in his letter to Timothy.

**1 Timothy 5:17-20**

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

Saints, the leadership structure in local churches began very early. As Paul planted a church and then moved on, he needed to leave behind an organized group of believers.

The elders in the Church have been ordained by God to bless the body of Christ.

**James 5:13-15**

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

**13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.**

Saints, leaders are not to be ignored or argued with, they are to be thought of highly and given wholehearted love because of their work. When believers respect their leaders and join them in their work for God’s Kingdom, the church will grow.

**Philippians 4:8-9**

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Proverbs 12:20**

"Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy"

Of course, it also helps if the leader does not have to spend all his time in dealing with internal conflicts—hence, Paul’s reminder that believers should live peaceably with each other. All are to work together to build the Kingdom and to serve one another.

The best way for this “peace” to occur is for all believers to serve with their God-given gifts, to let others use their gifts, and then to respect and love one another for what God is doing through them.

**14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.**

Saints, while the leaders have special responsibility to guide the church, believers are not exempt from their responsibilities to care for one another. Paul singled out three groups in this church and “urged” the believers to look after or deal with them—each in a different way.

First, they are to warn those who are lazy. The word “warn” means to firmly admonish. They were to warn the lazy, idle believers. The word translated “lazy” is used only in the letters to the Thessalonians and seems to have been a particular concern for this church.

The Greek word translated “lazy” (ataktous) was used for soldiers who would not stay in the ranks. These people had set themselves outside the prescribed pattern for the church while everyone else was working and serving, but they would not.

The problem with idle people is that, because they are not busy enough with valuable activities, they usually stir up trouble of one kind or another. These people need to be warned to get back in line and to use their God-given gifts in service for the Kingdom.

**Proverbs 13:4**

The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

**Proverbs 15:19**

The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway.

Second, they are to encourage those who are timid. The lazy need to be warned, but the timid need to be encouraged. The “timid” are the fearful people who lack confidence—perhaps in themselves or even in their faith.

They have become discouraged or worried, possibly by persecution or by the deaths of their fellow believers. These people need loving instruction from their fellow believers to calm their fears and to build their confidence.

**Psalm 46:1-3**

1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Third, they are to take tender care of those who are weak. The word for “take tender care” is antechesthe (also translated simply as “help”); it pictures the action of holding on to these people, wrapping arms around them, clinging to them.

This is the kind of help suggested for the spiritually “weak,” those weak in faith, those in need (such as financial need) or those who might be struggling with the sins associated with paganism that Paul wrote about.

These might be struggling, needy, or immature Christians who need the arms of strong fellow believers to guide them, give them support, and let them know they are not alone.

**Romans 14:1**

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things"

**1 Corinthians 8:9**

"But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak"

**15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.**

Saints, to a church under persecution, the command against retaliation is not an option. See that no one pays back evil for evil. Personal revenge and retaliation are clearly forbidden to those who call themselves followers of Christ.

**Matthew 5:38-49**

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

**Matthew 5:43-45**

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

**Romans 12:17-20**

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

During the times of Paul the apostle’s day and including our day as well, there would be times where relationships between believers would be strained. They would also need to remember that they should never pay back evil for evil but should always try to do good to each other and to everyone else—thus including those in the church and those outside, even their enemies.

That believers should “always try” indicates a lifestyle of kindness that should permeate all their dealings with people.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**