

“Building Up One Another”  
1 Thessalonians 5:11  
(Preached at Trinity, November 24, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In the previous chapter Paul wrote to correct some misunderstandings the Thessalonian Christians had regarding the second coming of Christ. We greatly benefit from their misunderstanding because from it came Paul's richest teaching regarding our future hope.
2. In the course of his teaching Paul covers God's grand purpose in the redemption of the elect. God's glorious purpose is to redeem a multitude through Jesus Christ.  
**1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 NAU** - "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him."
3. God's redemptive purpose is on the backdrop of the sinfulness of the human condition. Human beings have fallen into sin and corruption and have become the enemies of God. We are under God's just condemnation. His wrath is kindled and will consume His adversaries. The Second Coming of Christ will usher in the Day of Judgment which will be a day of terror for multitudes who will not give God the glory He deserves.  
**Romans 1:18 NAU** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"  
**Romans 1:21-22 NAU** - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,"  
**Romans 2:5-6 NAS** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who will render to every man according to his deeds:"
4. The return of Christ will bring an end to history. Jesus Christ will come in judgment and usher in the new heavens and new earth.  
**2 Peter 3:10-13 NAU** - "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! <sup>13</sup> But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."
5. Paul reminds us that this event can occur at any moment.  
**1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 NAU** - "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape."

6. While it is a terrifying event for most of humanity, for God's elect it will be the consummation of our blessed hope. We will be raised to meet our Savior in the air.  
**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NAU** - "the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."
7. Paul commands us to comfort and encourage one another with this glorious expectation.  
**1 Thessalonians 4:18 NAU** - "Therefore comfort one another with these words."  
**Verses 13-18 of Chapter 4** and **Verses 1-11 of Chapter 5** form a unit, each ending with the same admonition – "Comfort one another."
- A. The word translated "encourage" in 5:11 is the same word translated "comfort" in 4:18 - παρακαλέω. It is a word Paul used often – 8 times in this letter.  
 It can be translated *comfort or encourage*.  
 It can also carry the sense to *exhort or urge*.  
**1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 NAU** - "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup> for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,"  
**1 Thessalonians 5:14 NAU** - "We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone."  
 He uses it again this way in **2 Thes 3**.  
**2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 NAU** - "For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread."
- B. Paul uses this word to tie these two passages together – "Comfort one another."  
 The Second Coming is a sweet comfort.
8. But Paul closes out this section with far more than a charge for us to comfort one another. Here, it also carries the other meaning – "exhort" or "urge." It's in the imperative.  
**Verse 11** begins with "Therefore"  
 Paul had just concluded a section admonishing us to stay alert and sober. In light of the nearness of the return of Christ these are days to remain watchful. They are days to maintain our armor and to continue the great battles of the faith.  
 Therefore, we must urge one another to press on! To stay the course! To remain alert and watchful.
9. Paul adds another admonition in **Verse 11** also in the imperative –  
 "and build up one another"  
 He uses the word, οἰκοδομέω – It refers to the building of a house.  
**Matthew 7:24 NAU** - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

10. It is also used metaphorically in the sense of building up or edifying. It refers to a Christian being strengthened or built up spiritually. Edification is the act of maturing as a believer. Paul is commanding his readers to give attention to building up one another.
11. In our hyper-individualistic, self-centered culture it is difficult for Christians to comprehend this important truth. We are responsible for one another. Most people choose a church according to what the church can do for them.
12. Paul reminds us that we must give attention to how our words and deeds edify our brothers and sisters.
- Edification includes growing in our knowledge of Christ and growing in our relationship with Him, having our affections increased.
  - Edification includes the increase of our faith and confidence as we experience the continuing work of God in our lives. In **Verse 8** Paul refers to the “hope of salvation.” Our edification increases this hope.
  - Edification includes maturing in our wisdom and discernment, of growing stronger in our ability to resist temptation.
  - Edification includes growing in sanctification whereby we are increasing in righteousness and holiness.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 NAU** - "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality"
13. We must never forget our unity in Christ. In the previous chapter Paul spoke of brotherly love – **Verse 9**. We are all a part of the body of Christ. We are united to one another. We share a corporate solidarity. One member of our church can weaken the whole. We should seek to build up one another that our entire church might be built up.
- I. First, before we can consider the concept of building up God’s people we have to understand the importance of a proper foundation. A person cannot be built up unless he rests upon the proper foundation.
- A. The foundation is Christ alone. Paul has kept Christ at the center of this entire discussion.
1. Christ must be received by faith  
**1 Thessalonians 5:8-10 NAU** - "But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup> For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him."  
    - (1) The word for “obtaining” literally means to “acquire” or “take possession of.” This doesn’t mean that our salvation is meritorious. But it does look upon salvation as something that must be acquired.
    - (2) We acquire salvation by faith in Christ alone. He is the focus, the center. Salvation rests upon Christ and His saving work.
  2. We are built up upon Christ. We must have the helmet of the hope of salvation. The church is built upon Christ. He is the Chief Cornerstone.

3. Paul spoke of this marvelous foundation  
**1 Corinthians 3:10-11 NAU** - "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
  4. A person without Christ cannot grow. There is no foundation. He can join a church. He can become religious, but there is no spiritual life. We all know people who are members of Christian churches who have no spiritual reality in their lives.  
 There is nothing upon which to build.
    - a. Paul's first priority was to determine if they possessed genuine faith. He was highly encouraged by Timothy's report.  
**1 Thessalonians 3:5-6 NAU** - "For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. <sup>6</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love"
    - b. This means with regards to some church members the work of edification begins with evangelism.
  5. As Christians we are being built upon Christ. He is the focus. He is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega. He has become the focus of our life, our chief love. We grow up in Him.
- B. As we seek to build up and edify one another Jesus Christ must be the focus
1. We urge and compel one another to continue in the faith, to remain vigilant and watchful. To keep our focus upon the return of Christ.
  2. In order to do this we have to be in love with Christ. If our life is about ourselves and our desires then that will be the focus of our energy. If Jesus is the focus of our lives then we will direct our energy towards honoring Him.
  3. Everything is about Jesus Christ. We preach Christ, we teach Christ. Each of us are seeking to know Christ more and laboring to point others to greater heights of knowing Christ.
  4. Every believer shares in the building up of the body. It is our duty, our responsibility as a part of the body of Christ.  
**Ephesians 4:15-16 NAU** - "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."  
**Romans 14:19 NAU** - "So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another."

- II. The second thing we must consider in this great work of building up God's people is the proper building material
- A. The chief building material is love. Or we might more accurately say, love must undergird everything we do regarding our brethren. In other words, we can only build up one another in an atmosphere of love.
1. In an atmosphere of harshness and criticism where everyone walks on pins and needles edification is stunted. Love encourages. Love forgives. Love is patient. Love isn't critical.
  2. It is our love for Christ that compels us to desire our own edification and the edification of our brothers
    - a. Christians love by nature  
**1 Thessalonians 4:9 NAU** - "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another"
    - b. Paul reminds us of the triad of grace – faith, hope, and love  
**1 Thessalonians 5:8 NAU** - "But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation."
    - c. It is our love that drives our sanctification. We are built up upon love.  
**Ephesians 3:17-19 NAU** - "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."  
**2 Corinthians 5:14 NAU** – "For the love of Christ controls us" NKJV – "For the love of Christ compels us"
    - d. Paul tied love to our sanctification in **Chapter 3**  
**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NAU** - "and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."
  3. Of course, there are many other important things to consider as we think about edification, but love is our chief consideration.
    - a. There is the issue of knowledge. Knowledge is essential, but it can only be used properly when undergirded with love. Paul said knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.  
**1 Corinthians 8:1 NAU** - "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies."  
We must speak truth in love to the building up of one another  
**Ephesians 4:15 NAU** - "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,"
    - b. God equips each of us by His Spirit with gifts designed to edify the church. But without love our gifts become useless

- c. Without love we are nothing. It is only in an atmosphere of love that the people of God grow and mature. In an atmosphere of pride, selfishness, criticism and self-righteousness God's people are weakened.
- B. True love is demonstrated in sacrifice
- John 15:13 NAU** - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
- Philippians 2:3-4 NAU** - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
- 1. True love is demonstrated by a desire for building up our brothers and sisters even at our personal sacrifice. It leads us to consider others before ourselves
  - 2. In light of the eminent return of Christ, where do we place our priorities? Paul is saying, stay alert and watchful, and be mindful of your brothers and sisters.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. We are to build up one another in love.
  - a. This is the teaching of the NT  
**Ephesians 4:16 NAU** – “being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”
  - b. This is at the heart of our church covenant  
*“I promise, therefore, to watch over my brothers and sisters in Christ in brotherly love”*
- 2. We must search our hearts honestly and thoroughly. Am I building up this church? Is this my great desire? Do my actions demonstrate it? Is my membership at this church contributing to the edification of the saints?
- 3. In light of the eminent return of Christ are you keeping a priority on gathering with the saints and encouraging them to press on? Or is your life serving more as a hindrance.  
**Hebrews 10:23-25 NAU** - "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."
- 4. The encouraging thing about the Church of Thessalonica are the final words of **Verse 11** – “Just as you also are doing.”  
Is this true of you? Is it true of our church? Are we expending ourselves in those words and deeds that strengthen and edify our church?  
It isn't an option. This is in the imperative.  
**1 Thessalonians 5:11 NAU** - "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing."