

Concluding Exhortations and Commandments (1)

Introduction:

Last Lord's Day we gave attention to the paragraph contained in 5:1-11, in which the apostle wrote his concluding words regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ. The day of the Lord will arrive one day, in which unbelievers will be overtaken suddenly and unexpectedly, as a thief strikes in the night. But Christians are to be ready for the coming of the Lord so that day not overtake them as a thief. Christians need not fear the future judgment, for thankfully, "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him" (5:10).

Beginning with verse 12, the apostle gave forth his concluding remarks to this church. From verse 12 unto the end of the epistle, we have a series of exhortations and commandments. Actually there are 16 total, 18 if the benediction is also considered.

Now we might say a word about the nature of these injunctions before we consider them individually. There are some evangelicals, who argue that Christians in the church age are no longer under law, but rather grace. Now covenantal, this is certainly true. We are no longer under a covenant of works as a basis of relating to God, but rather our relationship with God is based on the grace of God that is in Jesus Christ. For "we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved" (Acts 15:11). But some have taken this truth that we relate to God due to the grace of God in Jesus Christ and have twisted it into a distorted principle of living. They say, "Since we are no longer under law but rather under grace, Christians no longer have obligation to keep God's laws." "We are only required to *believe*." They say, therefore, that there are no laws that govern us, for we are under grace. But this is a distortion of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This is evident before us, for again, in these final verses of 1 Thessalonians we have a number of commandments issued to us. God still governs our lives by His laws, but due to the grace of God that is in Jesus Christ, God not only gives us grace so that we *desire* to keep God's laws, but through His grace He *enables* us to live according to His laws. This is in accordance with what Paul wrote in Romans 8:

³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ***that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us*** who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ***Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*** ⁸So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ***But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit***, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. (Rom. 8:3-9)

Because we are in the Spirit, not characterized as ones with carnal minds, that is, unregenerate and unconverted minds, our spiritual minds are subject to the law of God. That is why Paul could write at the end of Romans 7:25, "So then, ***with the mind I myself serve the law of God***, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Let us read our passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28.

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

²³Now 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. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

²⁵Brothers, pray for us.

²⁶Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

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

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (1 Thess. 5:12-28)

1. Paul's exhortation to show regard to church leaders, who are probably elders (1 Thess. 5:12f).

Paul's first exhortation in his concluding paragraph is for the Christians in the church at Thessalonica to respect and honor those in leadership. We read in **verse 12**,

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

Some might read this verse and conclude that Paul was referring to three types of leaders in the church: (1) those who *labor* among you, (2) those who *are over* you, and (3) those who *admonish* you. But in the Greek text, the language in which Paul first penned this epistle, it is clear that he was writing of one group of leaders,¹ who exercised these three functions within the church. The church leaders performed these three functions—laboring, overseeing, and admonishing.

Paul was telling these Christians that they were to have regard for the *elders* in their church. In 1 Timothy 5:17 Paul used the same 2 verbs he used here, “rule” and “labor”, applying it to elders. “Let the elders who *rule* well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who *labor* in the word and doctrine.”

Why did Paul see the need for this exhortation? Timothy had recently returned from Thessalonica with a favourable report of the church, for the most part. But the church was not perfect. Apparently there were some in the church who were “idle”, or perhaps better, “disorderly” or “unruly.” These “Christians” in the church refused to work, assuming that the Lord was coming very soon. Rather than supporting themselves, they had become a burden to the church to support them, and apparently they had refused the admonition of the elders to change their behavior. We can read of these people in the church in 2 Thessalonians, where Paul became more direct regarding them.

⁶Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we

¹ In the Greek text there is a single direct article, τοὺς (translated “the”), that is placed before and to be applied to all three participles—who *labor* among you, who *are over* you, and who *admonish* you. This indicates he was speaking of one group of leaders who functioned in the church in these three ways.

worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. (2 Thess. 3:6-12)

And so here, in 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul was writing to the church that all the members should have regard for and be obedient to those who were over them in the Lord, who served them, who labored among them. But perhaps he was subtly addressing these disorderly persons, ones to whom he would be more direct in his second epistle. They had failed to be responsive to the instruction and admonishment of their church leaders.

Without being self-serving, let me urge us to take this matter to heart. Church members are to have a high regard for their elders and are to receive their admonitions, even as they labor among their members. I say this because it is in the text, certainly not because I see it as a weakness or failure in our church body. This church has always held its leaders with the utmost regard and have treated them respectfully, honouring them for their work. I thank the Lord for that, for I know of some churches that have utterly failed in this regard. I know of one church in our general area that has had a number of good pastors in recent decades, but the church has not treated these pastors well. Our friend, David Green, said of this church, “Some churches do not deserve a good pastor.” This verse of 1 Thessalonians 5:12 should be learned by that congregation and applied in the life of their church.

But we are also mindful of those leaders of churches that are abusive in their authority. I could cite examples of these churches in our region as well. The leaders expect and demand that they are treated as though they were better or superior to their members. But the manner that this verse is worded has a corrective to this kind of abuse. The elders are not to be regarded for their own sakes, but because of the nature of the work that they perform. They are to be respected and esteemed “very highly in love *because of their work*.” If they do their “work” well and faithfully, that is, in accordance with the Scriptures, then they are to be respected and esteemed highly. It is the high regard for the work of the ministry that is cause for treating these men with high regard and respect.

2. Be at peace among yourselves (5:13b).

This may be connected with the exhortation that went just before. **William Hendriksen** paraphrased the apostle, “Stop your carping. Instead of continually criticizing the leaders, follow their directions, so that peace (here: absence of dissension) results.”² Another commentator, **G. G. Findlay** (1849-1919), also linked this command with what went before: “the general ‘peace’ is to be kept through affectionate loyalty to the approved leaders.”³ The Greek text suggests this command is to maintain the peace, rather than to begin to make peace. **Matthew Henry** seemed to concur with these two men. He wrote:

Some understand this exhortation (according to the reading in some copies) as referring to the people's duty to their ministers, to live peaceably with them, and not raise nor promote dissensions at any time between minister and people, which will certainly prove a hindrance to the success of a minister's work and the edification of the people. This is certain, that ministers and people should avoid everything that tends to alienate their affections one from another. And the people should be

² William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary (Baker Academic, 1955, 4th printing, 2007), p. 135.

³ G. G. Findlay, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians*, Thornapple Commentaries (Baker Book House, 1982), p. 123.

at peace among themselves, doing all they can to hinder any differences from rising or continuing among them, and using all proper means to preserve peace and harmony.⁴

I believe we can say that when a church has faithful elders who are laboring diligently among the people of the church, leaders that are faithfully watching over the people of the church, and admonishing those who are unruly within the church, there will be a proclivity for that church membership to be characterized by peace between them.

3. “And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle” (5:14)

In verse 14 we see that there were three types of people in the church at Thessalonica that needed special “ministry.” These included (1) the “idle”, also referred to as the disorderly, (2) the “fainthearted”, and (3) the “weak.” Paul first addressed the idle. We see that the best way to help these people is to admonish them.

We already gave attention to the problem that this church had with some who refused to work. They were “idle”, depending on others to support them. These were not needy people in that they could not work. These were ones who could work, but failed or refused to do so. Paul said that they need to be admonished. This involves a strong and direct rebuke of their idleness and perhaps laziness.

We have this problem in our society. There are many who are able to work but choose not to do so. They burden their neighbor rather than bear their own burdens. But if there were anyone in our church who was this sort of person, it would be our responsibility to admonish him or her. This would entail teaching that we are to live as Christians, if at all possible, so that we are not a burden on others, but that in sincerity purpose to support ourselves as the Lord enables us. These idol people are to be told their behavior discredits their Christian witness. They need to be warned of their danger before a holy God who will hold them accountable for their behavior. They are in need of being urged and perhaps directed how to correct their behavior.

4. “Encourage the fainthearted”

This is also in verse 14, which again reads, “¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, *encourage the fainthearted*, help the weak, be patient with them all.”

There are often fainthearted people in the church. These may be discouraged or depressed people. Perhaps these are the ones who had been distressed about their loved ones who were Christians, but who had died. Paul had already taught them that they would be reunited at the coming of the Lord. He had instructed the church to “comfort one another with these words.” But there were probably others who were “fainthearted” for other reasons. Perhaps they were fearful of the difficulty they encountered for being Christian. We are not all as “Brave-heart.”⁵ That these Christians were suffering due to their faith is clear. Paul would write to them in his second epistle:

³We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, ⁴so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, ⁵which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; ⁶since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷and to give you who are troubled

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6 (Fleming H. Revell), p. 789.

⁵ A bold and fearless character in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, part two, who escorted Christiana and her party for much of the way to the Celestial City.

rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:3-8)

Here in 2 Thessalonians 1 we read of Paul doing exactly what he commanded the church to do here in 1 Thessalonians 5. He encouraged the fainthearted in that which was causing them difficulty and discouragement. He showed them that their difficulties were actually reason to rejoice before the Lord. He also encouraged them by assuring them that the Lord will administer justice in His own time. No act of injustice takes place in God's world that will not receive just recompense. God will not be mocked. Thankfully, however, with respect to the Lord's people, God's justice was fully satisfied through the death of the Lord Jesus, who suffered and died in their place. But for all others, God will render strict justice, either in this life or in the final judgment and the eternal punishment that follows, or both.

5. "Help the weak"

This is the third group of people in the church that were in need of ministry. Again, it is part of verse 14, "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, *help the weak*, be patient with them all." Perhaps the weak were ones who were struggling with temptation and the sin of immorality. Paul had addressed this in some detail earlier in 4:1-8. To refresh our memories, this is how that passage reads:

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

Those who are "weak" may be ones who are susceptible and vulnerable to this sin. They are easily and powerfully tempted to indulge in matters of immorality. It is our responsibility to "help" them.

This suggests several matters. It certainly means that we are to be a church fellowship in which we are approachable by believers with these kinds of problems. Often times a person who is "weak" in this area, will withdraw from others, and maintain distance and secrecy from the brethren. He is afraid to be discovered, fearful of the shame that would attend "exposure." We should be ones with whom these folks would feel comfortable, that they would be welcomed to come to us for help.

I had a friend many years ago in a church I pastored. He and his wife left our church to become members of another church in the region. It tended toward being a legalistic church, which held to high standards, but it was a church that did not encourage weak ones to come for help. After some months I saw my friend. He told me that although they were enjoying and appreciating aspects of their new church, there was something that troubled him. He said to me, "I would never disclose to anyone in that church the personal struggles I am having in life, like I was able to do in your church." I thought at the time that was a very unfortunate place for him to be. I learned some years later that he and his wife separated and divorced. Some of us could perhaps be characterized as "weak." If this is so, you need help. It is the responsibility of the church to "help the weak."

However, it may be that the apostle was speaking of “weak” Christians who are in need of help because they were newer Christians, young in the Lord, who had “convictions” about what was right and wrong that were largely shaped by what they had experienced or had been taught before they had become Christians. Paul addressed both “strong” and “weak” Christians in Romans 14 and also in 1 Corinthians 8. It would seem that the issue that resulted in numbers of people being “weak” in the church was because they were Jewish Christians who had been formerly sensitized to the Mosaic Law. After they became Christians, they struggled with what was right and wrong behavior within the church, especially with the Gentile Christians in the churches that did not have the same convictions. This was particularly true with regard to their diet of Old Testament categories of clean and unclean meat. These “weak” Christians were in need of assistance, in need of help.

Paul himself ordered his life so that he could be of maximum help to these weak Christians. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 9.

¹⁹For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; ²⁰and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ²¹to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ²²*to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak.* I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. ²³Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

Paul wrote of this matter in some detail in Romans 14. Let us turn there and consider a few of its verses. In the first four verses Paul introduced his subject of weak Christians.

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ²One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Paul opened this section with instruction to include believers in Christian fellowship who are “weak in faith.” Romans 14:1 reads, *“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”* He does not yet define what a “weak” Christian is, but apparently it is with respect to matters of a secondary nature, of non-essential matters to the faith. Here we see that Christian fellowship within a church is of such importance that care should be given to include all true Christians in the fellowship of the body. Nonessential matters should not be elevated as a “test” whether or not we extend fellowship to other Christians.

Notice that Paul first gave instruction to those he assumes are Christians who are “strong” in faith, although he does not use that term to define them. **John Calvin** said it well:

He passes on now to lay down a precept especially necessary for the instruction of the Church, — that they who have made the most progress in Christian doctrine should accommodate themselves to the more ignorant, and employ their own strength to sustain their weakness; for among the people of God there are some weaker than others, and who, except they are treated with great tenderness and kindness, will be discouraged, and become at length alienated from religion.⁶

⁶ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 19 (Baker, 1993), p. 491.

More mature Christians should be sensitive to those who may be less knowledgeable in Christian doctrine and practice. There are some who may be “weak in faith” in that they have personal convictions that they hold that may not be identical with others within the body. With respect to matters that are not essential to the faith, we are to show deference to others and not alienate them or distance ourselves from them in refusing church fellowship to them.

Matthew Henry gave these words of introduction to this section of Paul’s epistle:

It is certain that nothing is more threatening, nor more often fatal, to Christian societies, than the contentions and divisions of their members. By these wounds the life and soul of religion expire. Now in this chapter we are furnished with the sovereign balm of Gilead; the blessed apostle prescribes like a wise physician. “Why then is not the hurt of the daughter of my people recovered,” but because his directions are not followed? This chapter, rightly understood, made use of, and lived up to, would set things to rights, and heal us all.⁷

The point that Paul made in verse 1 is that personal opinions about non-essential matters should not be allowed to alienate some of the brethren.

In Romans 14:2 Paul defines whom he regards as the “weak” Christian. **“One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.”** The one who believes that there was no restriction on the Christian’s diet would have been a Gentile Christian. The “weak” Christian would have been a Jewish Christian.

Paul declared that there were some who were “weak in faith.” This probably means that the faith they had was weak because they thought that that secondary matters of what they ate and drank had some bearing on their relationship with God. Their improper emphasis on their diet revealed deficiency in their understanding of the faith. The weak in faith thought that God was more pleased with the Christian who ate only vegetables than He was with the Christian who also ate meat.

Now some have taken issue with this conclusion that Paul was referring to weak Christians as primarily those among the Jewish Christians of the church and that the implied “strong” Christians were those who were Gentile Christians. They argue that Jews were not ones who were vegetarian in their diet, which seems to be suggested here. However, this may not be the case, for there is some evidence that some Jews had been wholly vegetarian in their diet. Daniel and his friends while in Babylon only ate vegetables and drank water rather than eat the meat and drink the wine of their masters (Dan. 1:8, 12). The Jewish/Roman historian, Josephus, wrote of Jewish priests who ate only nuts and figs.⁸ There is some evidence in the Apocrypha that reflects Jewish belief of that period in history that there were Jewish people who abstained from eating meat altogether. In the Book of Judith, which is a book of the Apocrypha, Judith declined to eat meat and drink wine (Judith 12:1, 2). This is, of course, an uninspired book and does not belong in the Bible, but it does reflect a Jewish tradition that indicates some Jews thought abstention from eating meat and drinking wine was something that would bring blessing from God. In the Additions to Esther, another of the book of the Apocrypha, which dates to the second century BC, Esther is said to have refused to drink the king’s wine. It would seem to be the right interpretation to understand Paul referring to those who are “weak in faith” to have been Jewish Christian believers who had retained some of their Jewish convictions in their understanding of the Christian life.

We next read in Romans 14:3, **“Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.”** Paul indicates that the “weak” were being *judgmental* toward those Christians who believed it was okay for the Christian to eat all foods. The diet of these Gentile Christians would have shown no regard for the distinctions of clean or unclean according to Old Testament classification. The Gentile Christians who

⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6, p. 826.

⁸ Josephus, *The Life of the Jews*, according to Schreiner, p. 710.

felt free to eat all foods *despised* the more restrictive Christians because they were attempting to deny them their freedom to eat all things. And so Paul told the Gentile Christians that they were not to despise those who were “weak in faith.” He warned the weak not to judge the “strong”, that is condemn those who differed with them in their convictions about food, for God had accepted them. Paul was giving instruction to both groups.

He wisely and suitably meets the faults of both parties. They who were strong had this fault,-- that they despised those superstitious who were scrupulous about insignificant things, and also derided them: these, on the other hand, were hardly able to refrain from rash judgments, so as not to condemn what they did not follow; for whatever they perceived to be contrary to their own sentiments, they thought was evil. Hence he exhorts the former to restrain from contempt, and the latter from excessive moroseness.⁹

The challenge of verse 4 is Paul confronting the “weak.” *“Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”* The “weak” who were condemning the “strong” were assuming the prerogative that was God’s only. He is the judge of His people. The weak Christian is mistaken to think that the “strong” one is at fault and is unapproved of God. It is God who has brought him to salvation and God will see to it that he will stand in the faith. The Lord is able and has purposed to sustain His people in their faith.

When Paul stated that *“the Lord is able to make him stand”*, he was affirming that the Lord Jesus will see to it that His people will persevere in their faith unto the day they will stand in the day of His judgment. It matters not what food he may or may not eat, the Lord is the author of his salvation and He will see to it that his own will be stand before Him.

Let us return to 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Before we leave these three types of people in the church at Thessalonica that needed special “ministry”, let us be clear on this point. Paul was not giving instruction only to the church leaders to minister to these people. He is giving instruction to the whole congregation. It is our responsibility as Christians to serve other Christians who have these difficulties. Again, Paul wrote, “And we urge *you, brothers*, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak.”

The last clause of verse 14 reads,

6. “Be patient with them all.”

People have problems, and those people are among us. In fact we are they, or at least we will probably be as they, if we are given the time or circumstances. We are to be patient with them all. **Matthew Henry** summarized the matter well:

We must bear and forbear. We must be long-suffering, and suppress our anger, if it begin to rise upon the apprehension of affronts or injuries; at least we must not fail to moderate our anger: and this duty must be exercised towards all men, good and bad, high and low. We must not be high in our expectations and demands, nor harsh in our resentments, nor hard in our impositions, but endeavour to make the best we can of every thing, and think the best we can of every body.

This is the nature and display of biblical love.

⁹ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 19 (Baker, 1993), p. 494.

⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

We are not to hold grudges. This is set forth here, but it is also found throughout the Scriptures. The Book of Leviticus records, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD” (Lev. 19:18).

Paul urges patience toward all at this point, for in all of our *helping*, all of our *encouraging*, all of our *admonishing*, we do not always see positive responses and immediate results. But we are to be patient, knowing that sanctification is not a work accomplished fully in a few moments, but often occurs only by slight degrees and over prolonged periods of time. We need to be patient with them all, when we are working with them all in one way or another.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24f)

7. “See that no one repays anyone evil for evil”

It is the common reaction

(8) But always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

(9) ¹⁶Rejoice always,

(10) ¹⁷pray without ceasing,

(11) ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(12) ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit.

(13) ²⁰Do not despise prophecies,

(14) ²¹but test everything;

(15) Hold fast what is good.

(16) ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now 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. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

(17) ²⁵Brothers, pray for us.

(18) ²⁶Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

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

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