

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

February 28, 2016

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

God is Awesome

Revelation 1:12-18: "And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ps. 96:1-4

+We Adore Him

Hymn #65, "Before Jehovah's Awesome Throne" *fr. Psalm 100*

We Confess Our Sin

Daniel 9:4-7a, 16-19

Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets, who spoke in Thy name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land. Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame...

O Lord, in accordance with all Thy righteous acts, let now Thine anger and Thy wrath turn away from Thy [church];... for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, [we]

have become a reproach to all those around us. So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplications, and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary. O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations and the [church] which is called by Thy name; for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #519, "Fountain of Never Ceasing Grace"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication

Ps. 96:7-9

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #469, "How Sweet And Awesome Is The Place"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship

Jn. 6:34-35

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #11, "Now Blessed Be"

Psalm 72:8, 11, 12, 18, 19

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

Excellence in the Ministry, Pt. 2b

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Study Notes for February 28, 2016

I. Introduction: A Living Sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)

II. Excellence in the Ministry, 1 Thes. 4:1-12.

A. As it Relates to God: Devotion, vv. 1-8.

1. The Foundation, vv. 1-2.

- a. Salvation, v. 1a.
- b. Union with Christ, v. 1b.

c. Submission to God's Word, vv. 1c-2.

1. It Involved Knowing God's Word, vv. 1c, 2a, 3a, 6c.
2. It Involved Appraising God's Word Accurately, v. 2b.

3. It Involved Understanding the Aim of God's Word, v. 1d.

Paul gives us in part the telos/end of the word of God... "walking with and pleasing the Lord." Let's talk about both of these. First of all...

1. "Walking with God" (cf. Jn. 17:3; Gen. 4:1a; Mt. 7:22-23)

***Point:** What was the aim of Paul's teaching ministry amongst the Thessalonians? It was giving them "instruction as to how they ought to walk... with God!" (v. 1d) It was teaching them how to cultivate a walk with God which transcended all of life- the good and the bad times, the weak and strong, when they were in plenty or in want, or when life was sweet or bitter. That was the focus and so the objective of Paul's teaching. Yet there is another objective referenced here which pretty much means the same as what we just saw...

2. "Pleasing God" (cf. Phil. 4:18; Heb. 11:6; Eph. 5:8b-10)

***Point:** And so we are NOT talking about morally neutral actions which if done with intensity and frequency MAKE a person pleasing to God and therefore a candidate for blessing (that is how we use the term). RATHER, we are talking about actions that are morally praise-worthy in and of themselves which place the worshipper in a position of deeper fellowship and communion with God.

***Point:** From all of this you must see that a large part of Paul's teaching ministry in Thessalonica was instructing the people of God as to what offerings they ought to give to God in the context of worship/fellowship. Look at the text; they received instruction, "...as to how you ought to walk and please God" (v. 1d). The "walking" which involved deep and abiding communion with God was deemed "acceptable" or "pleasing" to the Lord. That which resulted in alienation and/or despair would have been deemed as unacceptable.

4. It Involved Indulging in the Word of God unto their Spiritual Growth in Grace, v. 1e.

Not only did Paul instruct them on how to have a deep and abiding relationship with God, the Thessalonians responded!! In their living, they walked with God! That tells us that they knew the joy and blessings of being refreshed by God, gazing upon His beauty and glory, and knowing the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension!

They could identify with the sons of Korah (Ps. 42:1-2), Asaph (Ps. 73:25-26), David (Ps. 16:11), and Paul (Phil. 3:8, 10)...

...clearly this was representative of the Thessalonians' relationship with God. Paul spent 6 weeks teaching them about how to walk with Christ, and the Thessalonians' responded!!! Long after Paul had left them, they were still "walking with God"!

***Where We Live**

1. With this we turn to the heart of Paul's first exhortation (v. 3)...

2. Next time we are going to address this in earnest, but this morning I want you to understand how The Foundation Paul established here is crucial to success over sexual immorality and so Moral Excellence in one's life. **To do that we begin with "The Problem"**

3. **What is God's answer to all of this? Paul** has given it to us with **The Foundation** he established in the **text** before us. Let's consider it in relation to sexual immorality...

4. Attacking the Sin of Immorality...
 a. The first Foundational Pillar is: **Being saved and so living in light of that salvation (v. 1a).**

***Point:** Moral impurity is a fast track to feeling dirty, reprehensible, and so guilty before God. It is easy at these times to think that that is how God must view us as well. This thought alone is enough to lead a person to indulge in the sin thinking that God already must hate them. Yet Christian, do you understand that in Christ there is "no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1)?

- b. The second Foundational Pillar is: **Understanding and so enjoying Union with Christ (v. 1b).**

***Point:** Victory over moral impurity is incredibly difficult. Like "a dog that returns to its vomit" (Prov. 26:11), so many men have returned to this sin again and again- and that after vowing never to do it again! How long will the Christian endure this cycle before he concludes that the struggle is futile? He never will have victory! Union with Christ says, "Away with such thinking! Christ presence in our lives means that no matter how many times we've fallen, we still can rise (Prov. 24:16)! His resources are always available to us (2 Pet. 1:3)!"

- c. The third Foundational Pillar: **Submitting to God's Word as our guide, rule book, encouragement, and more in our Fellowship with Christ (v. 2).**

***Point**

1. There is no question that sexual impurity is an amazingly enticing sin (Prov. 7:13-21)...

2. So what is there in the Kingdom of God that can compete with this sin? The Person of Christ Himself! Truly it is this that is up for grabs when we indulge in sexual impurity- NOT our salvation, NOT our right standing with God, BUT the depth of our walk with Christ (or the potentiality of that depth)! Accordingly, fighting the battle of purity requires faith/trust in God's word...

Statistics:

In a recent survey, 97% of the men queried said that they had watch pornography. Two percent refused to answer (which doesn't take much to read between those lines). One percent said they did NOT view it regularly (*Proven Men: Pornography Use and Addiction*).

Approximately two-thirds (64%) of U.S. men view pornography at least monthly. There is no difference in this statistic among men making a profession of Christ (*Proven Men: Pornography Use and Addiction*).

Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet. Every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography on the internet. Every second 372 people are typing the word "adult" into search engines. Forty million American people regularly visit porn sites. Thirty two percent of all internet downloads are related to pornography. Twenty five percent of all search engine queries are related to pornography, or about 68 million search queries a day (*Internet Filter Review, 2006*).

One third of porn viewers on the internet is women (*Internet Filter Review, 2006*). Ten years later, I've recently heard it is up to 40%!

"In the fall of 1982, *Leadership* magazine carried an unsigned article by a pastor who confessed to years of bondage to pornography of the grossest kind. He tells the *story* of what finally released him... The author ran across a book by Francois Mauriac, the Catholic French novelist, *What I Believe*. In it Mauriac admitted how the plague of guilt had not freed him from lust. He concludes that there is one powerful reason to seek purity, the one Christ gave in the Beatitudes: **'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8)**. It is the 'precious and magnificent' promise that the pure see God that empowers our escape from lust. The lust-bound pastor wrote, 'The thought hit me like a bell rung in a dark, silent hall. So far, none of the scary, negative arguments against lust had succeeded in keeping me from it... **But here was a description of what I was missing by continuing to harbor lust: I was limiting my own intimacy with God.** The love He offers is so transcendent and possessing that it requires our faculties to be purified and cleansed before we can possibly contain it. **Could He, in fact, substitute another thirst and another hunger for the one I had never filled? Would Living Water somehow quench lust? That was the gamble of faith.'**" (*Future Grace*, Revised Edition, chapter 27, Kindle Edition, emphasis mine)

In response to this, Piper wrote, "The challenge before us in our fight against lust is not merely to do what God says because he is God, but to desire what God says because He is glorious. The challenge is not merely to *pursue* righteousness, but to *prefer* righteousness. ¶ [Toward that end...] The role of God's Word is to feed faith's appetite for God. And in doing this, it weans my heart away from the deceptive taste of lust. **At first, lust begins to trick me into feeling that I would really miss out on some great satisfaction if I followed the path of purity. But then I take up the sword of the Spirit and begin to fight.** I read that it is better to gouge out my eye than to lust. I read that if I think about things that are pure and lovely and excellent, the peace of God will be with me (Philippians 4:8). I read that setting the mind on the flesh brings death, but setting the mind on the Spirit brings life and peace (Romans 8:6). I read that lust wages war against my soul (1 Peter 2: 11), and that the pleasures of this life choke out the life of the Spirit (Luke 8:14). But best of all, I read that God withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11), and that the pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8)." (*Future Grace*, Revised Edition, chapter 27, Kindle Edition, emphasis mine)