

HOW YE OUGHT TO WALK

TEXT: I THESS. 4:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

1. First Thessalonians 3:13 ends with a reference to the second coming of Christ, “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”
2. In that verse, we have two great themes of this epistle – holiness and the second coming of Christ.
3. The Bible teaches our Lord is coming back but we do not know when. In the meantime we ought to be “unblameable in holiness before God” (3:13).
4. Second Peter 3 deals with the second coming of Christ. Then Peter says in II Peter 3:11, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”
5. When a surgeon selects a scalpel in the operating room, he does not settle for one that is only a little bit defiled. That would be just as bad as selecting one that was totally defiled.
6. The degree of defilement is of no consequence – the fact of defilement is all that matters.
7. A thing is either sterile or defiled, clean or unclean. And a person is either holy or unholy (cf. I Thess. 4:7).
8. Leviticus 10:10 says, “And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.”
9. Ezekiel 44:23 says, “And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”

I. GOD WANTS US TO WALK IN HOLINESS (4:1-8).

1. One of the reasons God established the local church is evangelism. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16).
2. Another reason is discipleship. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

3. We are to teach Christians how to “walk” with God (4:1, 2).
4. We are to teach holiness and purity and morality (I Thess. 4:3-5).
5. “For this is the will of God” (4:3).
6. There was an article in the newspaper the other day about a young woman who grew up in Manhattan and went into the pornography business. The headline was: "From Prep School Kid to Millionaire Porn Star" (*New York Post*, April 27, 2014).
7. It is obvious this girl was never taught Biblical morality! (4:3, 5).
8. Sanctification (4:3) means holiness. In the New Testament, a common name for believers is “saints” (cf. I Thessalonians 3:13), which means “holy ones” (cf. I Tim. 5:10).
9. Another recent headline: "Two popes will be made saints." The RCC cannot "make saints." Only God makes saints.
10. Sanctification is an important Biblical teaching. It means set apart for holy use.
11. If you are born again, you are sanctified, i.e., God has set you apart for holy use. You have been separated from the world, and separated to God. Therefore, Paul says, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (I Thess. 4:3).
12. Thessalonica was a typical heathen town with all sorts of immorality, and much of it was connected to pagan worship. The Christians of Thessalonica were to be separated from all of that.
13. Sanctification has three aspects:
 - (1) POSITIONAL: when we are saved (Heb. 10:10; I Cor. 6:11). Our sanctification is based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. To be “partially sanctified” is as unscriptural as being “partially saved” or “partially justified.”
 - (2) PRACTICAL: we are growing in our walk with God. We need to continually yield to God and obey the Word of God. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).
 - (3) TOTAL: when we leave this sinful world, and are present with the Lord (cf. I John 3:1-3). Some people call this ultimate sanctification “glorification.” Paul says in Romans 8:30, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

14. “The Gentiles which know not God” (I Thess. 4:5) can be expected to indulge in the sins of the flesh. They are ungodly, unregenerate, and unholy. They have rejected the light God has given them (Romans 1).
15. While immorality is commonplace among the ungodly, it is scandalous when believers do it (4:5; cf. I Cor. 5:1; Eph. 4:17-20).
16. In I Thessalonians 4:6, “go beyond” means “to transgress” and “to overstep the proper limits.” “Defraud” means to take another man’s wife. “Brother” in this context means a brother man – a fellow man – not necessarily a brother in Christ.
17. Sexual immorality is a sin against God. Joseph said to Potiphar’s wife, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
18. After committing adultery with Bath-sheba, David prayed to God, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:4).
19. Sexual immorality is also a sin against one’s own body. First Corinthians 6:18 says, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”
20. But it is also a sin against our neighbor. The tenth commandment says, “thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife” (Ex. 20:17).
21. Joseph would have sinned against Potiphar if he had committed adultery with his wife.
22. David sinned against Uriah the Hittite when he committed adultery with his wife. That terrible sin even led to murder.

II. GOD JUDGES SIN

1. The Bible warns, “The Lord is the avenger of all such...” (4:6).
2. AIDS, herpes, mental depression, and countless other problems are the result of man violating God’s laws.
3. Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”
4. News articles have reported that according to the NYC Health Department, the AIDS rate in NYC was more than three times the national average (<http://www.nysun.com/new-york/ny-hiv-infection-rate-tops-national-average/84740/>).
5. Revelation 21:8 says, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and

- idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
6. Those who flaunt their immorality despise God (I Thess. 4:8). God hath given us His Holy Spirit (4:8), in order that we might live lives that are holy and pleasing to Him (cf. 4:1).
 7. All three members of the Godhead are involved in our sanctification – God the Father (4:3), God the Son (4:2), and God the Holy Spirit (4:8).

III. GOD WANTS US TO WALK IN LOVE (4:9, 10).

1. Genuine Christianity should be marked by purity and love.
2. Paul is speaking here of “brotherly love” (*philadelphia*), the special love Christians have for another.
3. Someone once said, “To dwell above with the saints we love, oh that will be glory, but to live below with the saints we know, well, that’s another story.”
4. Paul is saying that he does not need to write to them about it, “for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (4:9).
5. Romans 5:5 says, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”
6. Brotherly love must continue to “increase more and more” (4:10) as we grow in grace (cf. I John 4:7-19).

IV. GOD WANTS US TO WALK HONESTLY (4:11, 12).

1. “And that ye study to be quiet” means to be at peace with God.
2. Christians are to work hard (“to work with your own hands” – 4:11; cf. II Thess. 3:10-12).
3. Unfortunately, some Christians are slackers, deadbeats, and moochers. That is a bad testimony.
4. Apparently some members of the church in Thessalonica were not working because they felt that there was no need to if the rapture was imminent (cf. I Thess. 4:13ff).

CONCLUSION:

Our text tonight has been summarized by these three points:

- * A holy life — free from immorality (4:3-7)
- * A harmonious life — always increasing in brotherly love (4:9)
- * An honest life — living quietly, minding our own business, working with our own hands (4:11)

