

never rained. But when the judgment came, Matt 24:38 says, **“Noah entered the ark.”** But the people of the world **“did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.”** First came Noah’s deliverance, then came the sudden destruction of God’s **“wrath,”** of which the world was unaware, likely thinking it was a time of **“peace and safety,”** or at a minimum, another day as usual, eating, drinking, marrying, etc...

B. who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing – Can we have a greater proof that God will not destroy us than the fact that He sacrificed His Son so that we could live? Can He say in greater terms that He intends for our good and that our salvation is of such importance to Him that He would sacrifice the most valuable thing in the world to Him, even His only begotten Son? Indeed the Christ **“who died for us”** is proof of God’s love toward His called and chosen people, and sufficient means to save us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 - 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is **Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.** NASB

Paul now refers all the way back to 4:13-15 when he says, **“so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.”** His point here is, whether we Christians are alive now, or have passed away in death, **“we will live together with Him.”** Christian believers are now **in Christ** and shall never be separated from Him. Nothing in life, nor even death, can separate us from Him.

Romans 8:38-39 - 38 For **I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us** from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

Colossians 3:3-4 - 3 For you **have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 – 12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. NASU

A. Here Paul has ended his discourse on the parousia (verses 4:13-5:11), and moves onto a yet different theme. In this closing section he will give various greetings and statements on church life, as is his custom at the close of a letter. As he shifts his thinking to matters of church life, he respectfully addresses the matter of church leadership stating, **“But we request of you, brethren.”** Here Paul will address both the members of the church in regard to their disposition before the leadership (verse 12-13), and also the leadership themselves in regard to carrying out their duties (verse 14-15). He first exhorts the church members in two ways about how they relate to their leaders. He tells them that they should both **“appreciate”** them and also **“esteem them very highly in love.”** The Christian duty here is that they both *honor* and **“love”** their leaders. Of this honor Paul describes it as **“appreciate,”** meaning to be both grateful to God and to consider them valuable. To further amplify this duty of **“appreciate”** he says they should **“esteem them very highly,”** esteem meaning to place value upon, and this he says they should **“very highly in love.”** The degree of this honor and esteem to church leaders is not just high, but held in the *agape* love of God. This is to say that you regard your church leaders so highly that you are committed to them with much affection and in the self-sacrificing love of God. This was Paul’s common teaching referred to in many places.

Philippians 2:29-30 - 29 Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, **and hold men like him in high regard; 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ,** risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me. NASB

Hebrews 13:17 - 17 **Obey your leaders, and submit to them;** for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. **Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.** NASB

Now as to who these leaders are Paul describes them as, *“those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction.”* Here see the office of an pastor-elder plainly referred to. It not just those who work hard among you, but those who *“diligently labor”* and also *“have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction.”* These are the basic duties of a Christian *elder*, and describe in general terms the ministry of a *pastor* or *shepherd*. It was Paul’s custom to appoint elders in every church (Titus 1:5), including on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). He would frequently instruct the church about honoring, obeying and compensating these men. His emphasis was on those who *“diligently labor”* and *“work hard”* for the spiritual benefit of the church.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 - 7 Let **the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.** 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." NASB

1 Corinthians 9:13-14 - 13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? 14 So **also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.** NASB

Now the reason he gives for this honor and respect toward elders is because of their work in serving the spiritual life of the church. And so he tells them, *“you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.”* Not only does he want them to honor and love them, but also to *“Live in peace”* with them as well as everyone in the church, stating *“with one another.”* Christians are to submit to their leaders and by so doing, promote an atmosphere of peace among the family of God. (see Rom 14:17-19, 2 Cor 13:11, Eph 4:3, Col 3:15, 2 Tim 2:22)

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 – 14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. NASU
A. Here Paul exhorts leaders in the church in regard to shepherding the flock. See his stronger exhortation, *“we urge you brethren,”* impressing upon them a series of important practical exhortations for their ministry and for all Christians in all churches as well. Verse 14 brings four exhortations, *“admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”* Notice how the remedy is fit for the infirmity. The *“unruly”* need to be admonished as to correct their rebel heart, but those who are *“fainthearted”* need to be encouraged. The *“weak”* need *“help”* carrying their load, and we must *“be patient with everyone,”* for God knows our growth in godliness is at times moving rather slowly. As is common in Christian teaching, we are not to take revenge, and Paul makes that clear here stating, *“See that no one repays another with evil for evil.”* Surely these persecuted Thessalonians had many occasions to repay with evil so Paul exhorts them not to. In contrast to being vengeful he gives them that wonderful exhortation to Christian love, *“but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”* What a wonderful world this would be if men only practiced this one rule. Is this not in fact the golden rule of our Lord?

Matthew 7:12 - 12 "Therefore, **however you want people to treat you, so treat them,** for this is the Law and the Prophets. NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – 16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NASU

A. To *“rejoice always”* can be difficult to do, but when accompanied by prayer *“without ceasing,”* the command is carried out more easily. When these two, constant *“rejoicing”* and constant prayer are accompanied with *“giving thanks in everything,”* the sweet temperament of

Christian life is obtained. For who can bear the burdens of this weary life without the constant strength that the Lord gives through prayer, and how we are reminded in it to **“rejoice always”** and to **“give thanks in everything”** as well. This is Paul’s teaching elsewhere.

Philippians 4:4-6 - 4 **Rejoice in the Lord always**; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** NASB

Dear Christian pay close attention here, for Paul gives the key to living a profoundly joyful life here. It is only through our faith in the Sovereign God, that He apportions to us those circumstances that are best to work for our good, and being reminded of His Providence through prayer and thanksgiving, that we can ascend to that wonderful virtue of life in Christ whereby we can **“rejoice always.”** Moreover Paul tells us that this is not optional but rather, **“for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”** Here Paul refers to God’s moral will of desire for us to be constantly in prayer with thanksgiving, so that we can always rejoice before Him. Dear Christian, learn here, the Kingdom of God abides in us with such power that we can live in constant joy. Of this section of text John Calvin comments; *“He observes, here, almost the same order, though in fewer words. For, in the first place, he would have us hold God’s benefits in such esteem, that the recognition of them and meditation upon them shall overcome all sorrow. And, unquestionably, if we consider what Christ has conferred upon us, there will be no bitterness of grief so intense as may not be alleviated, and give way to spiritual joy. For if this joy does not reign in us, the kingdom of God is at the same time banished from us, or we from it. And very ungrateful is that man to God, who does not set so high a value on the righteousness of Christ and the hope of eternal life, as to rejoice in the midst of sorrow. As, however, our minds are easily dispirited, until they give way to impatience, we must observe the remedy that he subjoins immediately afterwards. For on being cast down and laid low we are raised up again by prayers, because we lay upon God what burdened us. As, however, there are every day, nay, every moment, many things that may disturb our peace, and mar our joy, he for this reason bids us pray without ceasing.....that God has such a disposition towards us in Christ, that even in our afflictions we have large occasion of thanksgiving. For what is fitter or more suitable for pacifying us, than when we learn that God embraces us in Christ so tenderly, that he turns to our advantage and welfare everything that befalls us? Let us, therefore, bear in mind, that this is a special remedy for correcting our impatience — to turn away our eyes from beholding present evils that torment us, and to direct our views to a consideration of a different nature — how God stands affected towards us in Christ.”* May it be that we ascend above this depressing world of grief and pain into that heavenly place where Jesus reigns, and His people live in joyful assembly before Him, **“for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 – 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. NASU

A. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; - Here Paul transitions from the practical exhortations toward our Christian attitudes, to some that pertain to the corporate practice of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. Whether one connects verse 19 to the preceding verses, or to the verses that follow, it is clear that we are to allow the motivating power of the Spirit to enable us to remain faithful in the practice of Christian life. He says, **“do not quench the Spirit,”** as to say that we by our stubborn wills can indeed **“quench”** the motivating activity of the Spirit. Therefore let us abide in a lively exercise of our faith and not allow our Christian life to become lifeless or weak, but let the motivation power of the Spirit forge us on as if a great wind in a sail.

B. do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; - There is much controversy concerning this passage of which the context of this

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lesson does not allow us time to indulge. In summary, some see the gift of prophecy as giving an infallible spontaneous revelation from the Spirit of God, whereas others see it as giving a spontaneous yet fallible revelation from the Spirit. Joined to these two opposing views is the view that it is simply preaching from an inspired text and giving comforting, encouraging, or corrective exhortations from the already infallible and inspired (God-breathed) text. **These three views are most widely held concerning the gift of prophecy,** and each has its exegetical *issues*.

1. infallible spontaneous revelation from the Spirit of God
2. spontaneous yet fallible revelation from the Spirit
3. preaching from an inspired text and giving comforting, encouraging, or corrective exhortations from the already infallible and inspired (God-breathed) text

Without entering the fray here I will offer what I think is the most important application of these verses to our modern context. Being that most Christian churches hold and practice one the three views above listed, let us therefore apply these verses in subjection to the pastoral leadership in our local church. Therefore, whichever position your church practices, when the Word is preached, ***“do not despise prophetic utterances,”*** for it would be very dangerous for you to ***“despise”*** the Word of God. The Word of God is to be cherished, believed and obeyed with all diligence and with a focused and intense commitment. Our attitude toward the Word is to be much like the Psalmist;

Psalm 119:111-115 - 111 I have inherited Thy testimonies forever, For **they are the joy of my heart. 112 I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes Forever, even to the end.** 113 I hate those who are double-minded, **But I love Thy law.** 114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield; **I wait for Thy word.** 115 Depart from me, evildoers, **That I may observe the commandments of my God.** NASB

The Word of God is not to be ***“despised.”*** Instead you should ***“examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.”*** The command here is plain and evident, that is, to exercise ***“careful”*** discernment to see if the nature and application of the teaching is in fact according to what God has said in Scripture. To say it another way, listen and carefully make an assessment of what is being taught and preached, and insomuch as it accords with God’s Spirit and His Word, accept it as the very Word of God. Much like the Bereans under Paul’s ministry.

Acts 17:10-11 - 10 And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 **Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.** NASB

After it has been accepted one should therefore be careful to obey it quickly and in a manner fitting of the One who spoke it. Paul says, ***“hold fast to that which is good,”*** meaning to *cling tightly* to it, as if to value and esteem it highly. It also goes without saying that if one finds what has been said to clearly contradict God’s Word, it should be rejected. Being that most Christian churches hold and practice one the three views above listed, let us therefore apply these verses in **subjection to the pastoral leadership** in our local church. If the issue becomes one of such annoyance and distress upon one’s conscience, I would exhort you to humbly and prayerfully engage the pastoral leadership in your church, and this only after you have very diligently studied the matter and made some very credible and defensible conclusions from the text of Scripture. When engaging the leadership, much respect and patience must be exercised. Do not gossip, stir up anxious hearts, or speak disrespectfully about others during this time, or anytime for that matter. After, much prayer, discussion and efforts to both keep the peace and bless and benefit all who are involved, you cannot continue to worship with a clear conscience, than it may be time to find another church where you can worship in an unhindered manner. James’ words are fitting for one in this situation.

James 3:17-18 - 17 But the wisdom from above **is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.** 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is **sown in peace by those who make peace.** NASB