

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 4:1-10.**
- B. Immorality was the rule of the day in first century Rome. Due to many slaves, many had time on their hands to get into all kinds of temptations and sin.
- C. Paul's challenge to the Thessalonians was to live a life different than how they had grown up. Sensual lust was to be replaced by spiritual liberty.

I. WALK IN HOLINESS.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:1-8.
- B. First, walk in holiness to please God (4:1).

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.

 - 1. Everybody lives to please somebody.
 - 2. But we cannot go through life only pleasing ourselves (Rom. 15:1).

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.
 - 3. Pleasing God needs to be a major motive in our Xian life. Pleasing God means doing His will from the heart. Shallow or half-hearted service is not acceptable (Eph. 6:6).
- C. Second, walk in holiness to obey God (4:2-3).

For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority of* the Lord Jesus. **3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;...

 - 1. One commentator said that the word *commandments* is a military term meaning to receive orders handed down from superior officers. The context of 4:2 would bear that out.
 - 2. God's will (desire) for our lives is sanctification; to holy and set apart for His purposes.
 - 3. The warning here is unmistakably clear, Xians are not to commit fornication (1Cor. 6:18-20).

Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.
- D. Third, walk in holiness to glorify God (4:4-5).

...that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, **5** not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;...

 - 1. This is the positive side of the commandment.
 - 2. Xians are to make a clean break from sexual immortality, and have control of their body (2Cor. 4:7; 2Tim. 2:20-21).

(2Cor 4:7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;
(2Tim 2:20-21) Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. **21** Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.
 - 3. When Xians learn to glorify God in their own bodies, then they are useful in glorifying God in His body, the church.
- E. Fourth, walk in holiness to escape the judgment of God (4:6-8).

and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*. **7** For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. **8** Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

 - 1. By walking in sin the Xian is rejecting:
 - a. God the Father who called them.

- b. God the Son who died for them.
 - c. God the Spirit who lives within them.
- 2. The story is told of a Xian woman who was upset with the preacher and his sermons against sin in the lives of Xians. Her reply was that "sin in the life of a Xian is different than in the life of a non-Xian." Yes, replied the preacher, "it's worse."
- 3. Sexual sin is serious business. It is a tremendous tragedy when we hear of "gay churches" or churches that extend fellowship to those who claim to be homosexuals and lesbians. God said, "Walk in holiness" and that means to abstain from all forms of sexual sin. May we rid ourselves of all facets of fornication in our lives (TV, movies, books, magazines, Internet, etc.).
- 4. You will not be ready for the second coming of Christ if you are engaged in sexual sin when He comes!

II. WALK IN HARMONY.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:9-10.
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; **10** for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,...
- B. God began His teaching process when He gave us the HS (Rom. 5:5).
...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
As we practice the fruit of the Spirit we will learn to be people that love one another. And when we learn to love one another, we will not sin against each other.
- C. We are admonished to practice love one for another:
 - 1. 1John 4:19.
We love, because He first loved us.
 - 2. John 13:34.
"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."
- D. God can help us to grow in our love one for another but putting us in situations that call for it. May we look at the difficulties we sometimes have in our relationships as opportunities to learn to love more.
- E. How good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell in harmony (see Psa. 133:1).

III. WALK IN HONESTY.

- A. Scripture text: 1Th. 4:11-12.
...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; **12** so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.
- B. This is one of my favorite passages in the NT. And it is a commandment.
- C. First, lead a quiet life.
 - 1. We don't need spiritual detectives, or watch dogs in the body of X.
 - 2. We don't need antagonists, and agitators to keep things stirred up.
 - 3. We don't need people who think everyone has a right to hear their opinion.
 - 4. We don't need people who gossip, lie, backbite, and swear.
 - 5. We DO NEED people who will be quiet and hear the word of Lord (Hab. 2:20). Allow your quietness to be that of the mind and heart--an inner peace that will be visible to all.
- D. Second, attend to your own business.
 - 1. We don't need busybodies, matchmakers, or trouble-makers (Col. 4:5).
Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.
 - 2. We DO NEED workers who will be busy at home, busy at their jobs, and busy doing the Lord's work.
 - 3. If we do this right, it will be a full time job and we won't have time to meddle in the affairs of others.

E. Third, work with your hands.

1. Some of the Romans despised manual labor and insisted on their slaves in doing the work. Paul said that Xians are to be busy earning their keep.
2. Jesus said the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few (Mt. 9:37).
3. There is so much good to be done in the helping of people and the preaching of the gospel.
4. We must be busy working for there will come night when no one can work (see Jn. 9:4).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. How does one get ready for the second coming of Christ? By:
 1. Living a holy life.
 2. Living a harmonious life.
 3. Living an honest life.
- B. Our next sermon, Lord willing, will discuss from 1Th. 4:13-18, what will happen when Jesus comes again. I pray you will be present for that lesson.
- C. However, desires to life a holy, harmonious, and honest life in X may do so.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.