

# 1 Thessalonians (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[ 0 : 00 ] The words to which I hope I have been directed, you may find in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, the fifth chapter, the nineteenth verse.

Quench not the spirit. The first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, the fifth chapter, the nineteenth verse.

Quench not the spirit. The apostle closes this epistle to the Thessalonian church with a number of very short and apt and very salutary admonitions.

And they follow one upon another in a certain sequence. They're not just put together, as one might say, in a haphazard way and manner.

But the word that I've read for our meditation is what we may call a key word to all these admonitions.

[ 1 : 23 ] In this sense, that not one of them can be rightly and acceptably fulfilled unless the Holy Spirit help us so to do in a spiritual way.

just look back for a little while. Rejoice evermore. Well, now, who can really rejoice with spiritual joy in the things of God unless the Holy Spirit animates his heart in that way?

And an affected and pretended joy is worse than an open confession of distress of mind and spirit. But to really rejoice from the heart with spiritual enjoyment needs the Holy Spirit's animating influence upon our soul.

It is only the Holy Spirit makes that so good and precious and effectual in our hearts that we can rejoice in it. Jesus Christ must be known.

His glory must be discerned. His love must be felt. His precious blood must be applied before we can really rejoice in Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 47 ] Pray without ceasing. Well, if there's anything in regard to which we need the Holy Spirit to help us, direct us, and animate us, it is in that we may pray without ceasing.

For it is really only as the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities, directs us in our thought and in our feelings and in our desires that we can acceptably pray at all.

So that if we quench the Spirit we cannot pray without ceasing. We cannot pray at all, really, with any liberty and feeling of heart and spirit.

If you would pray without ceasing, quench not the Spirit. And so again with the next admonition. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Well now, there's always occasion to give thanks. We might always feel grateful if we had that Spirit. Our mercies, providential and spiritual, call for continual thanksgiving from our hearts.

[ 4 : 04 ] but then, the occasions, the call for thanksgiving and the Spirit to give thanks are two different things.

thanks. We never lack occasion for thanksgiving, but I'm afraid we too often and too sadly lack a spirit of thanksgiving.

now we give thanks without ceasing. In everything, we give thanks insofar as the Holy Spirit enlivens us with that sense of God's goodness and mercy towards us that prompts the Spirit to give thanks to Him.

but if we quench the Spirit, we shall not be very thankful at all that offering of praise and thanksgiving that is so acceptable in the sight of God will not rise from our hearts very much to His throne in heaven.

And then, the apostle goes on a little to show or at least in one expression to show he'll not to quench the Spirit and that is to abstain from all appearance of evil.

[ 5 : 22 ] For there is nothing quenches the Holy Spirit more than evil. Well, the word then that I have read appears to me as being the key word to the fulfilling of all these other necessary and profitable admonitions.

and very much of a true spiritual life in our souls and of a life consistent with that consists very much in a fulfilling of these spiritual and gracious admonitions.

Thereby, we glorify God, we serve Jesus Christ, we enjoy His favour in our souls. Quench then not the Spirit.

The text is short, it is very important and if I may be enabled to open up the truth of it very copious.

Quench not the Spirit. Spirit. There is, I think, no question but that the Spirit in the text means the Holy Spirit of God.

[ 6 : 48 ] I should think it a very inadequate exposition of this word to make it appear quench not your own spirit. spirit. The translators, I think, are quite right when they put a capital S to the word Spirit to imply that it is a proper noun.

It is the Holy Spirit of God. Quench not the Holy Spirit. It is not on my mind just now to dwell very largely upon the personality of the Holy Spirit.

For I was speaking the other evening on the Trinity. If we call on the Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

The mystery of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is very glorious. The Spirit of God is a divine person proceeding from the Father.

As the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God so the Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of God. And though I'm not professing to either understand or explain this other than set it before you as I see it in the Scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God by an eternal generation.

[ 8 : 29 ] The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of God not by generation but by an eternal proceeding from the Father. And these three are one.

And so much one that where the Spirit is the Father is and the Son is. So if we have the Spirit with us we have the Father and the Son in and by the Holy Spirit.

This is a great mystery the personality of the Holy Spirit. and the Holy Spirit dwelling in a child of God is a mystery too.

But that also is a truth but a truth apparently that some in the New Testament days did not understand nor realise.

They believed in Jesus Christ they were savingly called by grace. They received the gospel in faith and love into their hearts but they did not realise that their bodies were temples of the Holy Ghost.

[ 9 : 54 ] But every child of God is personally a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within and what a solemn scripture that is for us to consider.

What know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit for the Spirit of God dwelleth in you except he be reprobates.

my mind is directed to speak of this in two ways that is the Spirit of God quench not the Spirit first with regard to the Church of God this epistle was written to the Church of God which was at Thessalonica it was not written as a few of the epistles were written to individuals as to Timothy and Titus and Philemon this epistle was written to an established Church for how be it the Apostle Paul had met with much opposition at Thessalonica especially stirred up by the Jews and had been obliged to leave Thessalonica yet still the Word of God had prospered there and as the effect of that and of the conversion of those who were affected by the power of the Gospel and by their baptism they were joined together as a

Gospel Church Gospel Churches are divine appointment it is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ very evidently that those who receive the truth in the love of it and in the faith of it and are brought thereby to repentance should be joined together and walk together in Gospel order and affection and that was the case at Thessalonica God Now the Holy Spirit dwells in Gospel churches I believe as it dwells personally in believers but there's a difference a distinction in this matter now the Holy Spirit may dwell for a while in a

Gospel church and his power may be evident his influence felt but there may be a quenching of the Spirit in divers ways and the Spirit of God may cease to be in that church but in believers we're instructed in the Word that where the Spirit of God comes with power where their bodies are really temples of the Holy Ghost he never leaves never that soul but even so there may be a quenching of the Spirit now what a solemn instance of this the case of the church of God was in Sardis as the Lord Jesus described the state of that church as it appeared in his all seeing view very solemnly he caused that word to be written to the church at

[ 13 : 52 ] Sardis I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead for the Holy Spirit had been so quenched there that the church as a church had become dead although it had a name to live it still continued nominally as a church of God but it was a dead church the Holy Spirit was quenched but then also the Lord Jesus said this there are few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments and they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy now the Holy Spirit dwelt in those few names in Sardis though the church was dead and the

Holy Spirit quenched but in those few the Holy Spirit still continued to dwell they did not quench the Holy Spirit in themselves it is a very sad thing when the Holy Spirit is quenched in any church and congregation because then that condition is sure to follow thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead and that word of Jesus Christ come upon such a church your house is left unto you desolate for a church without the Holy Spirit is a desolate house this was not the case with the church of God at Thessalonica they were still in a favored state as a church and people as appears from the report that was brought back to Paul by Timotheus for the apostle Paul in the love that he felt to that church was anxious to know how things were going there and whether they were continuing in the truth of the gospel for love always occasions anxiety more or less and when

Timotheus came again from Thessalonica to Paul at Athens and brought such a good account of things the apostle rejoiced exceedingly for their love one to another abounded and they had grown in grace and they were walking in the truth so that there was no quenching of the Holy Spirit there but did that make this admonition unnecessary quench not the spirit no my friends in a certain way it made it all the more necessary or at least all the more needful and good for them for this reason you know that maxim although it is usually applied to secular and worldly affairs is nevertheless very true prevention is better than cure prevention is better than cure and that's very applicable to these things prevention is better than cure where quenching the spirit of God is concerned in a church because for one thing if this condition of quenching the spirit goes on and the spirit is quenched it may be very long before the spirit of

God returns if he ever does return to a church in which he has been quenched prevention is better than cure now my friends my brethren permit me to speak with affection and faithfulness and tenderness of spirit for I have our case before me in these remarks I'm making this morning I have our case as a church and people before my mind now I hope it may be said that the spirit of God is not quenched amongst us and I think one of the encouraging things that I've occasionally heard said to me by visiting friends who have spiritual discernment and feeling is that they feel the spirit of God is here

I don't think anything could encourage me more than if that truly is so that the spirit of God is here now if the spirit of God is here then this admonition is most necessary quench not the spirit and if you consider my friends how entirely dependent we are as a church and people upon the Holy Spirit you will see the needs be for this admonition quench not the spirit because this is the one thing above all others we need to be very careful of and very watchful about not to quench the spirit there are other things we may be concerned about of much less importance to us as a people than this for instance it's not good to be over anxious as to how we stand in the eyes of men and of other churches and places and the life it's not good to be over anxious about that but it is good to be very anxious about quenching the spirit or not quenching the spirit that is the one thing

[ 20 : 44 ] I fear most of all the quenching of the spirit because consider my friends how everything that is for our spiritual good comfort peace and prosperity and for the Lord's honour and glory in our hearts and in our midst depends upon the Holy Spirit for one thing all real spiritual union depends upon the Holy Spirit there can be no union really where the Holy Spirit is grieved or the bond is weakened for spiritual union doesn't consist merely in an agreement about matters doctrinal or practical or with regard to church order and the like spiritual union doesn't depend on that there may be perfect agreement about such matters and no real spiritual union at all a perfect body with regard to all its parts but as the body without the spirit is dead so the church of God without the spirit of God is dead now spiritual union is a very sweet sacred and tender thing to feel one to another because it's of the Lord it's of the Holy

Spirit it's a flowing together under the influence of the spirit of God of mutual life and love and esteem it's a unity of the heart as well as the mind and that's all that makes the church worth being a church at all it is to be united in spirit now the Holy Spirit unites together those in whose hearts he graciously dwells teaches guides and blesses he unites them together just as the unity of the body lies in the one life that animates every limb so the unity of the church depends on the life of the Holy Spirit that animates every member there are many complaints in these sad days of disunion in the churches and trouble of one kind and another and a lack of love and so forth what's the reason it must be because there's a quenching of the spirit and another thing

I would have you to consider how that all the effect of the preached gospel depends on the Holy Spirit and the effect of the preached gospel is very very solemn and very blessed I mean how much do we depend spiritually upon the benefit of the preached word I've said only living souls that is those who are spiritually alive and therefore have spiritual feelings and spiritual hunger only living souls know what a living ministry means to them and there are three things in a ministry my brethren that make it what the ministry should be in the church of

God and they are these truth power and unction remember that truth power and unction those are the three things that make a ministry a real spiritual profitable and holy ministry and they all depend upon the spirit of God he is a spirit of truth where he is not there's no truth worth talking about he is a spirit of power and where he is not the word has no effect at all he is a spirit of unction and where he is the word is savoury savoury with a holy savoury and sweet with a holy sweetness truth power and unction you say well that's what we want

I hope it is it's what I pray for continually that the ministry may have that character it may be a ministry of truth minded you will say that's what we want that's what we look for that's what we expect in the ministry well now be careful not to quench the spirit of God be careful not to quench the spirit of God quench not the spirit and another thing our worship if it is to be acceptable in the sight of God if it is to be that spiritual worship which the

[ 27:10 ] Lord desireth in them that worship him then we need the Holy Spirit for God is a spirit and they don't worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth for the Father seeketh such to worship him and true worship is glorifying to God honoring to his name it is all that we can ever really offer to him that does glorify him it is to praise and honor and worship him but true worship is spiritual worship it is not just a matter of the form in which it's offered it's the spirit in which it's offered there may be much contentions and always have been about the different forms of worship some this way and some that some feel this is right and some feel that is right but my friends nothing is right in the sight of God that hasn't in it the living influence

I was going to say the living breath of the Holy Spirit God of God for nothing really is more dreary and monotonous than formal worship where the heart is not engaged in it all men feel that natural men who may have some regard naturally for the worship of God all feel that that formal worship is monotonous therefore all sorts of things are introduced into public worship to relieve the monotony and wearisomeness of a mere formal worship all sorts of things to be attractive to make the service attractive to relieve its monotony and to engage the interest of those who gather to it my friends the great thing is what is acceptable in the sight of God now the only thing that can relieve the monotony of formal worship is the influence of the

Holy Spirit upon the soul there's no monotony then then true true devotion rises from the soul as the hymn writer puts it I can remember let incense rising from my soul in prayer and praise surround my hill true worship is a devotion of the soul in faith love humility adoration and affection well that I hope we may worship God in our assembly that from our hearts and from our midst in our plain way there may rise to him acceptable worship in our prayers and in our praises in our thanksgivings and in our desires prayers but it depends upon the

Holy Spirit depends upon the Holy Spirit oh it is good to worship God and it is good to worship God where others worship God too and where the Holy Spirit is really present for the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit of God do create what we may call if we use the word rightly a worshipping atmosphere for there is a worshipping atmosphere and it emanates from the influence and presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the worshippers and in their hearts then we worship God arise glorify his name then it is good to be so engaged that perhaps we hardly ever get nearer to heaven's worship than when the Holy

Spirit unites their hearts in his earthly course oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness come before his presence with thanksgiving glorify his great and his holy name let us exalt his name together so if you consider these things you'll see how important and how needful is this admonition quench not the spirit it was really more upon my mind to speak of this in a personal way but there will be an opportunity to develop that important part of the subject this evening

[ 33:12 ] I hope I've said enough for one sermon this morning now may the Lord give us grace as a people I pray you may give me grace as a pastor and our deacons grace as deacons and our members grace as members and all who worship with us grace as worshippers that we may not quench the spirit amen deacons guerrim you