

# 1 Thessalonians (Quality good)

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Date: 01 April 1988

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [ 0 : 00 ] In dependence upon the Lord for all needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to the first epistle to the Thessalonians.
- Chapter 4, verse 17, and the last clause. First epistle to the Thessalonians.
- Chapter 4, verse 17, and the last clause. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- This is the blessed, assured prospect of all the redeemed.
- What a day it will be when time shall be no more.
- [ 1 : 25 ] That last day when he that testifieth these things said, Surely I come quickly when our Lord and Savior comes to gather his jewels to glory, his bride.
- When in a moment his people will be gathered to be with him in glory forever and ever.
- The redemption of the purchased possession. The second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is one of the foundation truths surely believed among us.
- And yet, I feel it is somewhat neglected. Neglect of meditation upon this aspect of divine truth will rob God's children of much comfort.
- I know that there is, and it is right that there should be, a concern, a fear, less one should get out of depth, less one should be left to fanciful interpretation of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- [ 3 : 23 ] But there is that clearly set forth in the word of God, which will be for the comfort, support, and strengthening of our faith, for the enlightening of our hope, and for the confirming of our soul, that the best is yet to be.
- So then, on the one hand, we pray to be kept from vain speculation, and yet to be preserved from neglect.
- Oh, that we might meditate on these things, praying earnestly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit of God.
- We have many, many concerns, many burdens. Truly, the future is unknown. Truly, we know not what a day may bring forth.
- But we are assured of this, that there is coming this great day when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, when time shall be no more.
- [ 4 : 49 ] So then, how stands the case, my soul with thee? For heaven are thy credentials clear. Is Jesus' blood thy only plea?
- Is he thy great forerunner there? Remember this, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?
- And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Remember this, the word of our God, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?
- Remember this, O my soul, that there will come that solemn moment when the Lord of heaven and earth, the great shepherd of the sheep, shall divide the sheep from the goats.

It will be a final division. And to those on his right hand, he will say, Come, thou blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

[ 6 : 02 ] But O to those on the left, depart from me, ye cursing, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

We often speak, and rightly so, to the comfort of the redeemed, of the place that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has gone to prepare for all his dear children.

But may we ever remember also that there is a place prepared for the devil and his angels and all that die out of Christ die in their sin.

Oh, how solemn the thought, how true the word of one of our beloved ministers now in glory, that an eternity in hell will never make an atonement for any of our sin.

And remember this, there is a great golf fix. Oh, think, beloved, of the teaching of Jesus Christ. If ever one preached of hell, so our Lord and Savior did.

[ 7 : 15 ] Men will water down divine truth. But Jesus spate, my friends, so solemnly of that place of banishment, from the very presence of God forever and forever.

Oh, that we may see and I think of the prayer of my boyhood days. Then, oh, my God, prepare my soul for that great day.

Oh, wash me in thy precious blood and take my sins away. in attempting to speak from these solemn yet most blessed words.

And, oh, my friend, I feel in these dark and solemn days when the love of many grows cold, antichrist seems so powerful, when iniquity abounds.

Oh, how it is strengthening and comforting to her soul to look upward and forward with this blessed, assured prospect that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

[ 8 : 26 ] The kingdom is his. Hallelujah. The Lord God, omnipotent, reigneth. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Seeking the help of the Lord, I would first draw your attention to this vital, all-important word, we. Asking ourselves, what evidence have we that we, by the grace of God, are numbered among the people of God in and among those named in our days as the we ever be with the Lord.

Well, brethren, beloved, says the apostle, writing in this epistle, as we have read, knowing your election of God. Election is a solemn mystery.

Election is profound. And yet, when we consider this glorious doctrine, we find that the Lord God, as he speaks of his children, elect and chosen and given to Christ, that he reveals in his word those that are his, chosen in eternity past, loved when lost and ruined in the fall, and for whom Christ died, these that are born again, kept by the power of God, preserved in Jesus, and will be presented fortness at last before his throne.

an example of this, yea, the Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

[ 10 : 24 ] Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee. The evidence of an interest and assured knowledge that our names are in the Lamb's book of life is the drawing power of our Saviour.

Jesus said, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. O thou vile, poor, trembling, hell-deserving sinner, fleeing from the wrath to come, attracted to Jesus Christ, drawn to the Saviour's cross, pleading their precious blood, clinging to Christ, hoping in his mercy, crying out, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, waiting.

And then, we trace out this, that for this people, the Lord Jesus came, for then he died on that cross, their sins are washed away in that precious sin atoning blood.

You see, the wages of sin is death, the soul that sinneth, it shall die. And no man can make an atonement for his own soul.

It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, that cleanseth us from all sin. Oh, you may say, and rightly too, I believe it, I'm assured of it, there's no salvation outside Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 02 ] I believe the power of that blood does cleanse from all sin. I believe a poor sinner is washed and made whiter than snow, but are my sins washed away?

Am I one for whom the dear Saviour died? Is it well with my soul? As we read and have read tonight, for God hath not appointed us to roar, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Now what saith the word? Oh, we read, if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Oh, but you will say, that tries me, that troubles me, do I confess my sin? Because you may say, and rightly so, there were those in the word of God that said with their lip, I have sinned and yet sunk into hell.

No repentance, no turning to God, no faith in the Lord, no plea for mercy, but my friend, if we confess our sin, if we acknowledge our guilt, if we come to that throne of grace, pleading mercy through blood, I make my plea, if we come praying for a broken heart, a contrite spirit, with sorrow for our sin, love to the Lord Jesus, drawn to the dear Redeemer, then I say, oh beloved, here is the word of God, if we confess our sin, he is faithful, he will never go against his word, blessed be his name, this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, so he is faithful and just, you see the justice of God, you see that the wicked are cast into hell, you see the solemn judgment of

[ 14 : 10 ] God upon those that are outside Christ, you see justice, you see judgment, but beloved, you will behold that God is just in the pardon of all his dear children, that it is his justice as well as his mercy, that opens the door of heaven, that receives poor sinners, for he is the just and justifier of them that believe in Jesus.

Further, when we consider the finished work of Christ, there is this word of sweet encouragement, pointing out the way of those blessed with an interest in the finished work of Christ, the way of the text, in this, and you hath he delivered, and that from, let me just quote the word exactly, it is in the epistle to the Colossians, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, what a power, darkness, darkness, no light, no knowledge of our sin, that is, there might be an acknowledgement of it, but never leading us to Christ, in darkness, in the power of

Satan, dead in trespasses and sin, without God, without Christ, without hope, who delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son, that word translate means take out of and bring into, now this is known by the power of the spirit in the new birth, here is a new creature in Christ Jesus, here is one that is brought out of and into, here is a newborn babe in Christ, here is that lamb as we were speaking of this morning of the fold, now what does the scripture say, who delivered us from the power of darkness and had translated us into the kingdom of his dear son, in whom, in this Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, brethren, what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder, those delivered from the power of darkness, translated in the kingdom of his dear son, born again, quickened by the spirit, are even such, the word of God declares, who are redeemed with that precious blood of Christ, and with the forgiveness of their sin, we.

Now further, we seek the clear testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit in our heart. We are assured that those that shall be brought to glory at last are these that are born again here on this earth, that are blessed with this spiritual light, and this spiritual life.

You see, death is a solemn reality. We may put it off, we may think, oh that won't be me, none of us know.

[ 18 : 00 ] And death has a most grateful sting, and that sting is sin, and that sting is very, very strong, because the strength of that is the law, the law of God that demands absolute holiness, sinlessness, spotlessness, a breaking of the law, a departure from the word of God, a broken law, and the law pronounces cursing.

The law cannot make an atonement for soul, but my friend, there is one. Jesus Christ, in his death, on that cross, has unstained death for his dear people, because sin is removed, law is satisfied, then what can death do?

It is the porter to glory, and if you observe here in the context, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus.

Now do mark what this says. It speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, and such a cruel death he died, he was hung up and crucified, and those kind hands that did such good, they nailed them to the cross of wood, they did, my brethren.

But what of the redeemed? It says they fall asleep, because death is unsteamed, death is the porter to glory.

[ 19 : 40 ] So then, are we in this precious word, we? Now let us just spend another moment in the examination of this word.

The apostle here, as he speaks to this, and writes to these Thessalonians, he says this, that the word of God, it came not to you, our gospel, came not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, with much assurance.

How many sermons have you heard? I could not name the number I've heard or attempted in my poor way to preach, but my friend, the vital point, is it word only?

Is it just a mere word that is spoken, a mere word that is read? Has it come with power? Have we been convinced of our sin? Now you may say, but what is the, I get so tried about that.

I believe I'm a sinner, but is this conviction real? The evidence of real Holy Ghost conviction of sin will be this, the strip one of all hope in self and lead a poor destitute, naked, hell deserving, wretched, filthy sinner to Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 02 ] It will lead that poor sinner to the cross, it will lead that poor sinner to plead the blood, it will lead that poor sinner to cry, God be merciful, and to me a sinner, it will indeed.

So it came in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance, assurance, yes that what the word says is true, assurance that I'm a sinner, yet the assurance that Christ died for the ungodly, assured of this that he won't cast out a coming sinner.

Oh, blessed be his dear name, all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Now a further evidence of the work of grace named by the Holy Spirit in this epistle is this, as we have read in your hearing tonight, for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, how ye turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

You see, beloved, spiritual light and spiritual light draws a sinner to Jesus Christ, to the cross, to the blood, to the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness.

[ 22 : 38 ] It turns us about. That is conversion, real conversion. But first is regeneration. Spiritual light, there can be no conversion without regeneration.

regeneration. And that's the solemn, sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. And the evidence of regeneration is spiritual life. And spiritual life is that turning of the soul to God, is the breath of prayer, and is crying out for mercy, is that hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

We, and then further, the apostle says that ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction and of the Holy Ghost, tried and tempted by Satan, scorned by the world, and yet fighting against the power of unbelief, receiving with much affection and yet with joy, sorrow, and yet at times sweet joy filling the soul, as the Lord is made precious to your soul, the word of God made very sweet to your heart, and reviving sweet hope in your soul.

And so, we, just one more word, your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope. You see, the we are believers in Jesus, they love the Lord Jesus, they have a good hope through grace.

It is not just a dry doctrine held in the head. It is a powerful truth wrought out in the soul and life of every true child of God.

[ 24 : 29 ] And it is the work of faith. Not that we go to heaven on our works, but it is that, as I have sometimes tried to describe it, precious faith in that new creature, is such as, for example, the ear of faith, the eye of faith, and the hand of faith, and the feet of faith, and the heart of faith, then is, there is an activity because of spiritual life.

There is the ear fastened, nailed to the doorposts, there is the eye looking to Christ, there is the hand reaching out after Christ, there is the feet that are running to Christ, there is the affections that love Christ, and this is the work of faith, it is the exercise of faith, it is the activity of faith, it is not just some dead thing known in the brain without any gracious effect and change what in the heart, but my friend, I say, it is a work, and it is a labor of love.

Many will profess in sentimental tones of love, but my friend, if our love is real, it will be a labor, it will be sacrificial love, it will be a seeking grace to deny self, to take up the cross, and to follow him, and to love one another, and to seek the honor and glory of God in all things, and good hope through grace.

It is not just something in the head, it is something that is wrought out in the soul, a sure foundation, a good resting place. It is the anchor of the soul, an anchor won't stop the wind blowing or the waves rising, but it holds the ship, and that is such a mercy, it is the patience of hope, we, and these are they who are kept by the power of God, never separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, to them there is no condemnation, for them that are in Christ Jesus, who is he that condemn it, it is Christ that died, yea, rather there is risen, who liveth that are made intercession for us.

Now, it says, so shall we ever be with the Lord. I want to look at this little word, so, in this way, now, as I said, we desire ever to be kept from vain speculation, and yet, to search the scriptures, to pray for the opening of the word to our understanding, and to pray for a clear knowledge of these blessed doctrines, and so, now, the apostle here speaks to these Thessalonian believers, their hearts were bowed down with sorrow because some of those dear saints had died, and they thought that was the end.

[ 27 : 32 ] You must remember that there was very little knowledge, let alone faith, or thought of a resurrection of the body, and you remember that Paul said to think it incredible that God should raise the dead.

So, the apostle is writing to comfort these believers, and to tell them that though there are these saints that have died, though their body has been laid in the grave, yet there is a blessed prospect, an assured change that will await them, and all the church of God.

And I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that they sorrow not even as others which have no hope.

This is the sleep of the redeemed at death, waiting the glorious resurrection, how solemn to die out of Christ, living without hope, and dying as we have here, as those which have no hope.

Now, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that he died on the cross and made an atonement for sin, we believe that he rose again on the third day, that the grave could not hold him, he conquered the power of death, and his resurrection from the dead was the full assurance and pledge of the satisfaction of the sufferings of Christ on the cross, the finished work of the dear Redeemer, that he is the firstfruits of them that sleep in Jesus, and that he is the captain of our salvation, that he has gone before into glory.

[ 29 : 20 ] Even so, them also which sleep in, that Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, not by vain thought, not by fanciful dreams, but by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Now this word prevent, as you will well know, is an old English word. It means they shall not have priority of, shall not go in front of.

So then, we are told very clearly here, and without, getting out of depth in understanding of the scripture, that when the Lord Jesus comes, there will be some of his own dear children alive on this earth.

It could not be otherwise, because the very presence of the redeemed on this earth, the light of the world, they are the salt of the earth.

But when God's purposes in his grace are fulfilled, when every vessel of mercy is prepared for glory, he will come, and there will be some alive, but they will not gain any preference over those whose bodies have lain in the grave, reduced to ashes, known alone to almighty God, precious in the eyes of the Lord, the death of his saints, and they shall not, these that remain shall not gain advantage, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, with a trump of God.

[ 31 : 08 ] When Jesus Christ laid down his life at the cross, he cried triumphantly, it is finished. When he comes to gather his people, it will be with a voice of triumph, he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

He comes to gather his jewels, he comes for his bride, and he himself shall come. He loves his dear people so, that he shall descend from the glory, and will gather his dear children to be with him.

It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment, man, so Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many, that unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

He came the first time without sin, that is, he was sinless, that holy thing, but sin was charged to him, sin was laid upon him, and there on the cross, he made that atonement for sin, but he'll come the second time not to make any atonement, that is done, is a finished one, without sin, that is, not to be made sin, not to bear any burden of sin made upon him, it's all washed away in his blood, but my friend, it means this, he'll come without sin unto salvation, this is to bring his children into the blessing of eternal salvation, the home that he's gone to prepare, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, this is not fanciful interpretation of the word, it is clear, what the scriptures declare, what a sight, what a prospect, my friend, when all those that die in

Christ, and those that are his, when he shall come, that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed, we shall be like him, or as the apostle writes to the Philippian church, and says, who should change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, again, we shall not all sleep, that is, some of God's children will be alive, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the last drum, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory, now we read this wonderful word called up together, not one shall be missing, it's the bride of

[ 34 : 44 ] Christ, it's the redeemed of the Lord, it's the redemption of the purchased possession, the possession, his children, the purchased possession, redeemed by the blood of Christ at Calvary, the redemption of that purchased possession, that body, dear to the Lord, that time, that sacred moment, when the redeemed spirit will be united again to that body, but where on this earth, the soul grown under the burden of this body, said, oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, now the soul will be united to that body, that body that is to be glorified, and oh my friend, to be found in the presence of the Lord, and you see, without this, no man could stand a moment in glory, but in a body like his, we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,

I shall be satisfied, says the psalmist, when I awaken thy likeness, oh to be more in his likeness, where whilst we are here on the low lands of earth, earth, and he's together, oh my friend, what a prospect, what a family, what a great number, what are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb, and together with them in the clouds, we read of the devil, we read of the prince of the power of the air, but our lord comes as a sovereign king of kings, and the lord of lords triumphing over the powers of death, and of all evil, to meet the lord in the air, so, in this way, shall, it will be, because god has spoken it, we, ever, it is forever, and forever, be with the lord, lord, at calvary, we hear one say, lord, remember me, when thou comest, into thy kingdom, jesus said, verily, i say unto thee, today, shalt thou be with me, in paradise, thou shalt see my glory, so, when the work of grace is done, partner of my throne shall be, say, poor sinner, love soundly, we read in that solemn parable of the lord jesus, in the, of the wise and the foolish version, and they that were ready, went in with him, to the marriage supper, with this dear jesus, we read this, father,

I will that these also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also, and so shall we ever be with the lord, wherefore, comfort one another with these words, when your faith is tried, when the way is rough, when temptations are hurled against you, when my friend you may be cast down, may the lord help thee dear fellow pilgrim, to look up, the best is yet to be, it cannot be so very, very long now, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, our lord will never fail us, never forsake us, never forget us, oh for faith and patience, oh for grace to endure unto the end, oh to look unto him, and to see him as the author and finisher of our faith, to trust him for all things I know, whom I have believed and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, and this word comfort also means exhort, when one may be cast down and weary and ready to give up, encourage one another, and this word also exhort means this, that we should pray that we may abound yet more and more, that faith may be increased, love may be deepened, hope may be confirmed, we pray that we may walk worthy in this world, that we may walk and live and speak and act as though any moment the Lord is about to come, would we be happy in what we've said, where we're found, what we're doing, if he should find us there, now the

Lord knows that we are in the world, we have our place to fulfill, but what a mercy not to be of the world, and what care we should take on how we should speak, the spirit we should utter, pray brethren that there be no thorns in your pillow when you come to die, or seek that you might die in peace with God and with man, that you may not be left with not forgiving someone, or confessing your fault and seeking forgiveness of others, exhort one another, encourage one another, and we are bound here as the word of God says to warn them that are unruly, that break the rank, comfort the feeble-minded, don't despise them, encourage them, support the weak, be patient toward all men, and see that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men, for the coming of the Lord who draweth nigh, in everything give thanks, pray without ceasing, prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from the very appearance of

Eden. So, shall we ever be with the Lord, the Lord grant us grace to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, and oh, to come to the end, and to be able to sweetly sing with the witness of the Spirit in our soul, in peace, let me resign my breath, and thy salvation see, my sins deserve eternal death, but Jesus died for me.

[ 42 : 13 ]    Amen. Amen.