

## **Church Instructions Required, part 2**

(1 Thessaloninas 5:12-28)

4/10/19; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

In 1980 as I prepared to enter 1st grade, my parents purchased me a Peanuts lunch box.

It was my first introduction to Charlie Brown and his friends along with his pet dog Snoopy.

And though I was young, that lunchbox connected me to Charlie Brown forever.

I grew up reading the funny paper and Peanuts was always on the bottom of the front page.

Now if you aren't familiar with the comic strip, it essentially revolves around the lives of a group of children.

Though the kids obviously have parents and live in an adult world, their exploits as kids dominate the stories and themes..

But what makes the comic strip so successful is that we ourselves in some of the characters.

First, there is Charlie Brown who is your typical boy.

Not overly gifted with any skill.

In fact, he isn't good at baseball and he can't fly a kite, but he is determined to succeed at both.

Then there is Linus, who always needs his security blanket.

Then there is Schroeder, the talented piano player with incredible.

Then there is Sally, the one who can't function due to her love for Linus.

You have Peppermint Patty, the tomboy who tries to toughen Charlie Brown.

And then everyone's favorite Lucy, who runs everyone's life, but especially loves bossy Charlie Brown around.

Not to mention Snoopy and Woodstock, who have problems and personalities of their own.

The show is essentially a commentary on the oddness of human behavior.

You have the boss, the tomboy, the in-love, the gifted, the frustrated, and then everyone in between.

Therefore, it is no wonder that the backside of the my lunchbox contained this famous peanuts scene...

PSYCHIATRIC HELP 5 cents.

And obviously, Lucy is the one in charge of telling everyone else what is wrong with them..

Charles Schultz, the creator of Peanuts, was asked about the appeal of Charlie Brown and his cast of characters.

His response was simple.

People love Peanuts because they can always find themselves in one of the characters on any given day.

For Schulz, the comic strip was a picture of a world filled with all sorts of people and the problems they deal with.

The church has a lot in common with the world of Peanuts.

Yes, we are redeemed.

Yes, we have been made new.

But our sanctification is not immediate.

We are people in process, and the result is that the church becomes a potpourri of sorts in terms of personal issues and struggles.

We are still people in unredeemed flesh, and we bring our issues to the church.

And that isn't a bad thing necessarily.

You see, the church exists to take the gospel to the world, but the church also exists to edify the saints.

To help believers grow in the faith.

To spur one another on to good works.

That is how the book of Hebrews puts it.

The church is to help the characters that come to it with all sorts of issues.

The church ministers to the misfits of society who come to Christ in faith and repentance and we minister to their souls.

We are the hospital for sinners to have their life saved and then begin the process of healing.

The church is at its best when people are coming to Christ and growing in their faith.

While the church is at worst when it never reaches the lost and never helps believers progress in their sanctification.

We may be like the kids in Peanuts in the early stages of our walk with the Lord, but the goal of the church is to grow up.

To mature.

To leave behind our insecurities, our failures, and our desires for power..

WE don't want to be a comic strip for 50 years.

We want to eventually kick the football and win the baseball game..

Well, Paul had the same idea for the church at Thessalonica.

They were also a group of misfits that God had saved out of Judaism.

Yes, they had been forgiven.

Yes, they were given new hearts and new minds with new desires as all Christians are at salvation.

Yes, they had even excelled as a young church with little to no mature leadership over them.

But despite all these accomplishments, there was room for growth...

And chapters 4 and 5 of Paul's first letter to this church lay out those areas of growth in detail

We saw last week that the relationship between the sheep and shepherds were strained in Thessalonica..

So God told the church leaders and the church members to seek peace...

The leaders needed to work, to lead, and to care for the church and the church needed to appreciate and esteem those leaders..

But the church at Thesslaonica also needed to mature in other areas of their faith..

So tonight, we move from the relationship between a church and its leadership to the relationship between the people in the church..

And one clear expectation of the church is that believers will help other believers on the road to sanctification.

One glaring weakness in today's church is a lack of involvement in other believer's lives.

That may be a symptom of a busier world.

That may be a consequence of even a busy church.

But the Bible is clear, - believers are the agents of change in a church.

It is not but the pastors job to get people in line.

It is not the deacons job to get people in line.

It is the entire church's responsibility to push one another to Christlikeness.

As Southerners, our manners often work against us.

Sometimes we resist helping others in the church for fear of offending them.

But let me assure you church that there are always people in the church who need your help.

In fact, the Lord has given you a unique experience as a believer that often serves in helping you minister to others..

With that said, let's dive into the text tonight in verses 14 and 15..

We have seen the relationship between the people and their leaders, but now let us see the relationship among all the people in the church...



## **I. The People and Church Leadership (12-13)**

## **II. The People within the Church (14-15)**

Let's begin by reading 1 Thess 5:14-15

***14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the [k]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.***

In these, we meet the Peanuts gang of the church, and before we look around and try to identify who belongs in each group, I would simply say that each of us could find ourselves tempted in all these areas..

So be careful as you point fingers, that there are 3 pointing back at you for every 1 you shoot in someone else's direction.

Group #1 is found in the first part of verse 14..

And this is a group of people in the church that are simply unruly.

The Greek word for unruly is often used in conjunction with the military to describe a soldier who was out of line..

He was either falling behind other troops or he was disrespectful to the chain of command..

He was as the Greeks say, “ATAK-TOS”.

He was acting in defiance to orders.

May have been laziness or something, but the man was unruly.

Some translations uses the word idle here or disruptive or lazy or even irresponsible..

And look, we know people like this in the church, right?

As the church aims in this direction, the want to go in the opposite direction.

The can never get in step with the body of Christ.

They are contrary for the sake of being argumentative.

The church wants to give our apples for Christmas and they complain to everyone that it should be oranges..

So what is God’s instruction on how to deal with unruly people?

Well, Paul tells us in verse 14.

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly.

Now, a couple of things to take note of here.

First, this is a command to the church.

Paul isn't telling just the shepherds to admonish unruly people.

Paul isn't telling just the pastor or just the deacons or just the elders to address unruly people.

He is telling the entire church.

The word "brethren" implies all believers, all brothers and sisters in the Lord or to admonish the unruly.

And that leads to the second important note here..

Admonish is a key word in the passage.

The Greek word is Nou-Theto..

And it most often translated "warn".

My translations uses admonish, and it is the idea of warning people who are out of step with the Lord.

In other words, if you see someone lagging behind or falling off in their affection for the Lord and His church, you are to warn them of what God will do if they don't repent and get back in step.

In fact, to see unruly people and do nothing is to disobey this verse.

To be an obedient believer, we have to warn others of their disobedience.

Now, let me be the first to say that we should warn or admonish the unruly in a loving way.

You aren't called to beat people over the head.

Peter denied Jesus, but Jesus did not go to Peter with a sword.

Instead, he cooked breakfast for him, called for his repentance, and then restored him.

Maybe we be just as gracious and kind as we admonish the unruly..

The second group of people that we need to offer our help to in the church is who Paul calls the faint-hearted.

In the middle of verse 14, we read..

***14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the [k]unruly, encourage the fainthearted,***

The Greek word for faint-hearted is oligopsychous.

Some translations use the word discouraged here or disheartened.

The King James uses the word feeble minded.

But this is the person who is simply overcome with life all time.

Anything can be a motivation for a nervous breakdown in their life.

Life is just too big for them at times.

We can call these this group, the overwhelmed.

Everything is just a big roadblock to them.

They worry, they are anxious.

If you break the Greek word down into its parts, it means the small souled.

In tother words, they are like the burdened camel and everything in life becomes the straw that is going to break their back..

Unruly people push the limits of everything, but the fainthearted let everything push them to the limit.

You know people like this as well in the church.

They are often depressed.

They are filled with despair.

They worry about everything.

Change scares them.

They love predictability and routine.

But God tells us here to not let the fainthearted stay fainthearted..

Unruly people harm the church obviously by getting out of line and not representing Christ...

But the fainthearted also harm the church by keeping it shackled in fear and worry.

Look, the church must be courageous.

Paul even tells Timothy that God did not make him timid and fearful..

And the same is true of the church.

WE must be courageous as we take the gospel to the world.

WE must be courageous as we live as light in the midst of darkness.

WE must courageous as we offer truth in a world of lies.

So how do we minister to the fainthearted?

Very simple.

Encourage the fainthearted.

The greek word for encourage is para-mutheo-mai, and the beginning of that word is key to understanding..

Para simply means side..

Mutheo sounds like mouth and it is idea of speaking..

So, encouragement is the picture of speaking to speaking beside you..

Great encouragers don't stand over you, they stand beside you.

I always picture the idea of putting your arm around someone and simply speaking to them..

You see, fainthearted people need relationships, but not just any relationship.

They need other believers to come along side them not as authority figures to intimidate them to being happy..

They people to come alongside them as friends.

And they need that early and often in their walk with the Lord..

If you see a discouraged person or person in despair in the church, come alongside them and simply remind them to repent of their anxiety by trusting in the Lord.

The feeble-minded...

The fainthearted...

Simply need a faith life frequently..

Look, the Thessalonians had plenty of reason to fret and worry and to be anxious.

They left all they knew to follow Christ.



They left the synagogue, their families, their jobs, probably their homes to start a church.

Such drastic changes had probably filled their heart with worry and doubt.

Their small souls were probably overwhelmed with the persecution.

So Paul told the other believers who weren't tempted to worry and doubt to come alongside the faint-hearted and simply speak encouraging words to them.

A 3rd group of problem people in the church are the weak.

Look back at verse 14..

***14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the [k]unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak,***

In this context, the weak are those who seem to be very susceptible to sin.

They may have health issues that tempt to them to sin by not trusting in the Lord.

They may have really difficult past lives of sin that make them susceptible to all sorts of sins even though they are saved.

Whatever the cause, there are people in every church who are weak and easily tempted to sin.

And what is the Lord's command to us regard the weak?

Once, it is very simple.

Help the weak.

The Greek word for help suggests a holding up of the weak or even a holding tight to the weak.

IT is the picture of a mother holding her helpless infant.

There are some people who literally have to be held back from sin.

Just like you would pick up a baby crawling for a busy highway, you have to help some weak people.

You have to support them.

Hold them up. Hold them tight.

There is no doubt that some Thessalonians struggled with weakness.

They had lived in a very immoral culture, and now they were living in the church.

But the surrounding corruption was a constant source of temptation to them.

In cases like this, the strong in the church are called to protect the weak.

A 4th group in this passage is what can call the frustrating..

There are unruly people in the church that we warn.

There are fainthearted people in the church that we encourage.

There are weak people in the church that we help.

But there are also people in the church that frustrate us.

And what Paul speaks of here is not a clash of personalities..

It the person in the church who just can't seem to get in tougher..

No matter how much you counsel them.

No mater how much you correct them.

They are going to fall back into the same sins and habits for years on end.

They are like the little kid that keeps turning over the glass of milk no matter how many times you tell him no..

So how do we deal with the frustrating?

Easy.

Verse 14..

***14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the [k]unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.***

As you live with others in the church, two actions needs to define you..

Love.

Patience.

In fact, God commands everyone in the church to be patient with everyone else in the church.

The end of verse 14 is all encompassing.

Be patient with everyone is a command that goes to everyone in the church.

And the command is to be patient with everyone.

In other words, the entire church is to be patient with the entire church.

There are no exceptions to this command of the Lord.

The church should be filled with patient people who show patience with one another.

Sadly, believers ignore this command all the time, and the fault is often in pulpits where shepherds lose patience with sheep.

And when the leaders can't be patient, it quickly spreads to the rest of the flock.

And you end up with a church where every flies off the handle about everything..

The greek word for patience is MACKRO - THUMEO.

Macro means large, distant, far off..

Thumeo is a word for passion and emotion, even anger..

In other words, patient people are those who keep their emotions and anger and passions far away.

In other words, it takes a long time for their emotions to rise.

Let me remind you of something that will of great help when you are tempted to lose your patience with frustrating people.

God is incredibly more patient with you.

In case you didn't realize it, we are incredibly frustrating to God.

Talk about hard headed people.

WE are the epitome of hard headed.

Yet God withholds his anger and wrath in our lives.

You deserved wrath the first time you sinned against God.

Yet God is patient..

Long suffering..

And this is exactly what He expects us to be as His people.

Christians ought to have the longest fuses imaginable.

WE ought to all have the patience of Job, who lost his entire way of life but never cursed God.

And in case anyone in Thessalonica was tempted that patience wasn't required in every case and extended to everyone,....

Paul adds this in verse 15..

***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.***

People are always looking for loopholes to sin..

In the context of this passage, it seems that a reason to not be patient with people would be a case of someone doing evil to you.

Surely, God would understand our anger and hostility to people who sinned against us...

Yet, the Lords tells us through Paul that we aren't allowed to lost our patience and seek revenge even when evil people do evil things to us..

And in case, you are wondering.

Believers are very capable of evil things to other people in the church.

Sadly, believers sin against others with slander.

With lust.

With anger.

With greed.

Tragically, the church can be a place to experience evil in a very real way.

But even then, patience is still the right response.

And look, that is hard.

No one wants to be sinned against.

It is hurtful and harmful.

But when our brothers and sisters in the Lord sin against us, it is the worst offense imaginable.

Yet, evil offered to you is not a reason for you to offer the evil of impatience back to them.

Even as the recipients of evil, we are to be the givers of good..



## **Conclusion**

So what are we to take from this tonight?

### ***#1 - Church is not a spectator sport.***

You don't come to church to look at the back of someone's head and then go home.

Church is not a ballgame.

You can't sit on the sidelines, eat a hotdog, and leave when you feel like it.

Church is being on the field, wallowing in the mud, sweating in the heat, and learning to love your teammates.

Church done right is messy because it requires you to pour your life into other people.

IT requires you to give up your comfort in order to comfort others..

Church is not a place for you to shout instructions to the players on the field and criticize the coach.

Church is a place for you to block for others.

To carry the injured off the field.

To tell your teammates to pay attention and get their heads in the game.

Church is not a spectator sport.

It requires your full participation.

In fact, your teammates are depending on you.

***#2 - Church is not a place for stagnation.***

One of my favorite ponds as a kid had an incredible fish kill one summer..

There were huge bass that began floating to the surface.

And the reason for the fish kill was the stagnation of the pond.

A lack of moving water upstream from the pond caused the waters in the pond to stop moving and therefore oxygen stopped mixing in and the fish died.

Look, churches die when believers get stagnant and stop growing.

And the reason for stagnation is that other believers stop caring for people in the church.

They stop encouraging and warning and helping and showing patience with others..

And the end result is that no one in the church grows a progresses and the church dies a slow death.

God has designed the church to be filled with growing Christians who constantly stir the waters of sanctification in their own life and in the lives of others..

Pine Grove, let us continue to warn the unruly, to encourage the faint hearted. to help the weak, and to be patient and loving to all..

Let us pray..

III. The People and the Lord of the Church (16-28)