

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

July 31, 2016

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is our Shepherd

Matthew 2:3-6: "And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he *began* to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel."'"

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross

Ps. 95:6-7a

+We Adore Him

Hymn #85, "The Lord's My Shepherd"

Psalm 23

We Confess Our Sin

Hymn #486, "God, Be Merciful To Me"

From Psalm 51:1-15

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #88, "With Grateful Heart"

From Psalm 138

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication

Jn. 10:27-28

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #599, "Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship

Ps. 23:1-2

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #585, "Take My Life, And Let It Be"

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

A Biblical Perspective on Church Relationships, *An Introduction*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

Study Notes for July 31, 2016

I. Introduction

Paul's approach to the Thessalonians in this final section was as a father/mother would their children...

Gordon Fee when he described what Paul was doing in this final section, "Any parent who has sent off a first child to university will understand very well this reluctance to let go, on the one hand, and the felt need to cover all the bases, on the other." (*The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICOT, pp. 200–201)

II. A Biblical Perspective on Church Relationships: Peace, 1 Thes. 5:12-22.

A. A Governing Principle, 1 Thes. 5:13b.

The command in v. 13b to "Live in peace with one another" really is NOT part of Paul's instruction regarding the church body's relationship with their leadership (vv. 12-13a). NOR is it part of Paul's instruction to the church regarding their relationship with each other (vv. 14-15). The exhortation stands alone here...

D. Michael Martin wrote, "'Live in peace with each other' (v. 13b) is syntactically independent of the preceding (vv. 12–13a) and the following (vv. 14–15) exhortations..." (*1, 2 Thessalonians*, NAC, pp. 175–176)

What do we do with this command? When we take one step back from this text, we discover that this whole section ultimately is about living in this peace!...

...what we have in v. 13b is what I have called, "The Governing Principle" when it comes to living as a Church Family! And what is that principle? It is the oft-repeated calling throughout Scripture to "live in peace" (cf. Ps. 34:14; Mk. 9:50b; Heb. 12:14a; Rom. 12:18; 14:19; Eph. 2:17; 1 Pet. 3:10-11)...

***Point:** As we examine this final section in 1 Thessalonians, we will be talking about the various and sundry Relationships we have as Churchmen. Yet The Governing Principle in and through it all is that of "Peace"!

B. The Gauge of All Ministry, Jam. 3:13-18.

James 3:13, 17-18

This is an ethical calling in which James exhorts us to consider what we call "godliness." In this regard, James says that the bottom line when it comes to godliness/spiritual maturation is the fruit that comes as a result, specifically a life of peace, gentleness, mercy, and the like!

Accordingly, we are to take a hard look at what we consider to be the godly disciplines in which we engage as Christians. Get this: If our study of the word of God, worship, fellowship, doctrine, principles, or proclivities does NOT end with Peace in the body of Christ, we can conclude that our attempts at godliness are nothing less than σκύβαλον (*skubalon*)- trash!

James 3:14-16

James says here that if your principles, preferences, practices, or convictions compromise the peace of Christ, then it could be concluded that your values, doctrines, or disciplines are demonic for their fruit is that of division and discord!! And while that is strong, in light of the teaching of Scripture, it is an appropriate observation (cf. Gal. 5:16ff)...

Among other things, the fruit of peace is a gauge when it comes to our doctrine, practice, relationships, and the like.

***Point:** From this we learn that Peace is such an important part of the Kingdom of God and so God's program for us that we can evaluate any and all doctrine, spiritual discipline, and private conviction through one lens: Does it promote and/or encourage the peace of Christ? Now in a world which prizes "peace" you'd think that this would be easy... but that is only until we define what Paul means here by "peace"!

C. Peace Defined, 1 Thes. 5:13b.

What Peace is NOT...

What Peace IS...

Kittle wrote, "We constrict the term שְׁלוֹמִים (shalom) when we equate it with 'peace'"

In Scripture שְׁלוֹמִים (shalom) speaks of wellness, completeness, and so wholeness in the context of the Kingdom of God! It is an eschatological term used of the life we someday will enjoy fully in the final state (Zech. 9:10; Is. 9:6; 60:17)! And so...

1. In the Context of a Relationship with Christ, "Peace" speaks of the forgiveness of sin and so the removal of alienation brought about because of our rebellion (Rom. 5:1).
2. In the Context of the Body Life of the Church, "Peace" speaks of healthy kingdom living in which a person reflects in his thinking and living the life for which God redeemed him!

1. The Ground of Peace in the Body Life of a Church, Eph. 2:14-16.

Sign on the Temple Wall

How is it that this sign had been placed there?

When Christ died, what happened to the Ceremonial laws (recall, the Judicial Laws had passed away with the destruction of the OT Theocracy)?

"No Gentile may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."

Now in Christ's day, the epitome of the OT purity laws was bound in The Sign/Placard which kept the Gentile both from fellowshipping with the people of God as well as God's worship! It was this sign that Paul is referencing in Eph. 2:14-15...

...and so because of Christ, any and all *sinful* distinctions that you and I might make when it comes to living with each other in a fallen world is folly! There is no Jew, Gentile, Male, Female, Free, Slave... Christ has taken away any and all *superiority-distinctions* that we might endeavor to make when it comes to the body of Christ!

Peace in the Greco-Roman Culture... a Gift!

2. The Call of Peace in the Body Life of a Church, Eph. 4:3.

The call here is NOT to create peace, BUT to preserve it!!

What about church discipline?

*Where We Live

1. As Paul closes this epistle with a parting exhortation revolving around "peace," he touches upon four very prominent areas when it comes to life in the Kingdom of God: The Relationship between the body of Christ and...

...in fact, it would NOT be an overstatement to say that these four areas combined account for 90% of the unrighteous conflict that is experienced in the church today!!!
2. And so we must understand and adopt the perspective that underlying each of these areas as well as all body-life is the call to "...preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3)- or in the words of our text, "Live in peace with one another." That is what we are after!
3. The Bottom Line: Does my concern/conviction/principle/response preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?