

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 69 – 1 Thessalonians 4:9-5:28

Day 341: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-14

Verse 9

Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε
γράφειν ὑμῖν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς
θεοδίδακτοὶ ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους·

φιλαδελφια, ας f brotherly love

Outside of the New Testament φιλαδελφια is used only of love between sons of one father. In the New Testament it is used exclusively of the love Christians are to show to each other. Love for fellow members of God's family is a hallmark of vital Christianity, cf. 1 John 3:14.

χρεια, ας f need, want
θεοδιδάκτος, ον taught by God

This word occurs here only in the New Testament, though compare 1 Jn 2:26,27 for the same thought. Cf. also John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:13.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὖς one another

Verse 10

καὶ γὰρ ποιεῖτε αὐτὸ εἰς πάντας τοὺς
ἀδελφούς [τούς] ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ.
παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,
περισσεύειν μᾶλλον,

The present tense ποιεῖτε implies continuous action.

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

We know of two other churches in Macedonia, those at Philippi and Berea. There may well have been others of which we are unaware.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
περισσειν μαλλον see v.1.

Paul will not allow them to rest on their laurels. Though commending them for their conduct, he urges them to abound even more.

Verses 11-12

"This is the first indication we have had in this epistle that some of the Thessalonians were so excited by all the wonderful things in the Christian faith that they were not bothering to earn their living. But there are a number of indications in the Thessalonian correspondence that this was so (cf. especially 2 Thess 3:11). A number of possible reasons for this have been suggested, but it is most likely that it arose out of second advent speculations. The Thessalonian believers had learned very well that the Lord would be returning in mighty power, and evidently some of them felt that it would be very soon. Accordingly there was no point in continuing in some steady job. It was much more realistic, they evidently reasoned, to be about the business of proclaiming the near end of the world. If they had need of this world's goods in the meantime, why, there were others, Christian brothers, who could be relied on to come to their rescue (it may be no accident that verses 11-12 follow a section in which Paul stresses brotherly love). This kind of thing can be done from a sense of serious purpose, but, human nature being what it is, it can easily degenerate into downright laziness and idleness. People can be so taken up with the spectacular, with excitement over the near approach of the Lord, that they pass over the important things of everyday life. So Paul gives attention to such matters, and counsels these brothers to mend their ways." Morris

Verse 11

καὶ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἢ σιγάζειν καὶ πράσσειν
τὰ ἴδια καὶ ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς [ἰδίαις]
χερσὶν ὑμῶν, καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν,
φιλοτιμεομαι make it one's ambition,
endeavour, strive eagerly

The meaning here is 'fix one's aim on.' Cf. Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 5:9.

ἡσυχάζω be silent, cease, live a quiet life

Means tranquility, not inactivity.

πρασσω practice, do
ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

πρασσειν τα ἴδια be occupied in one's own business

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Morris says, "This unashamed advocacy of manual labour in a letter to a community in a Greek city must be remarked. The typical Greek attitude was that slaves did this sort of work, but that freemen would not stoop to it. It was degrading. Here, as in so many other ways, the Christians refused to take their standards from the community in the midst of which they lived. Rather, they held that all things they did should be done as service to Christ (Col 3:17), and they specifically held that manual labour was good (Eph 4:28). Doubtless they remembered that Jesus himself had been a carpenter (Mark 6:3). How could the followers of the Carpenter do other than welcome manual work?" Though he then adds that it probably also indicates that the majority of the believers came from the lower social classes and were poor rather than rich.

παραγγελλω command, instruct

Neil quotes from Patterson Smyth a story from New England "of a day during one of those times of excited expectancy of the end of the world when a sudden darkness at noon interrupted the session of the Assembly. Some cried fearfully: 'It is the coming of Christ: It is the end of the world.' But the old President ordered lights to be produced: 'Bring in candles,' he said, 'and get on with your work. If the Lord is coming, how better can he find us than quietly doing our duty?'"

Verse 12

ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἕξω καὶ μηδενὸς χρεῖαν ἔχητε.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
εὐσχημονως properly, respectably

"Believers must always bear in mind the impact of their conduct on those who are without faith." Morris

ἕξω adv. out, outside, away; ὁ ἕξω
outsider, unbeliever

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

Here either, 'need of nothing' or 'need of no man'

χρεια, ας f need, want

"This whole section on earning one's living is closely connected with the previous one on brotherly love, and that not only in syntax. Those who imposed on the generosity of their fellows were not living in love. Or, to put the same thing the other way around, the exhortation to brotherly love carries with it the necessity for providing for one's own needs, so that undue strain may not be placed on the brother." Morris

Verses 13-18

"The Parousia ... is a difficult topic. Within the short space of the mission it would have been impossible for the apostolic band to have given anything like complete teaching about it. Clearly they had given it a good deal of attention, for the Thessalonian correspondence gives evidence of as lively interest in the whole subject... We get the impression that the Thessalonians had understood Paul to mean that the Parousia would take place within their lifetime. They had become perplexed when some (or even one) of their number died. Did this mean that they had lost their share in the events associated with that great day?"
Morris

Verse 13

Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπήσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα.

θελω wish, will

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die

λυπεω pain, grieve, injure; pass be sad, sorrowful, grieve

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, what is hoped for

Hope is used in an objective sense. Cf Eph 2:12.

"When the apostle counsels the Thessalonians not to sorrow as the pagans do, he is not urging them to endure with a deep Stoic calm the buffetings of fortune that they cannot avoid. Nor is he counselling a callous indifference. Rather, he is rejoicing in the complete victory that Christ has won. Those who have died have simply fallen asleep in Christ, and they will wake with him. Clearly, in the face of this prospect there is no reason for despair." Morris

Verse 14

εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s

ἀποθνησκω die

ἀνέστη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἀνιστημι
rise, come back to life

The δια Ἰησοῦ could belong either with the preceding or following words – either 'those sleeping through Jesus' or 'he will bring through Jesus'. Moffat argues the latter but Morris says that the parallelism of the verse and the awkwardness of 'through Jesus with him' favours the former. Paul is indicating that death has been transformed into sleep *through Jesus*. So also Bruce who writes, "Death 'through Jesus' is but the prelude to resurrection 'with Jesus'."

ἄξει Verb, fut act ind, 3 s ἀγω

"Jesus will bring the faithful departed with him when he comes back. Their death does not mean that they will miss their share in the Parousia." Morris

Day 342: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3

Verse 15

Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας·

The form ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου seems to imply that what follows is based on a saying of Jesus. The closest recorded saying is in Mat 24:31. The various suggestions regarding this verse are that:

- i) It represents an otherwise unrecorded saying of Jesus;
- ii) It represents a prophecy given in the name of Jesus in the early church;
- iii) It reports a direct revelation Paul had received from the Lord;
- iv) It represents the apostle's thinking under the guidance of the Spirit.

Morris thinks the first of these the best solution and cites J Jeremias' work *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*.

ζαω live, be alive

This expression may mean no more than 'those Christians who will be alive at that time.'

περιλειπομαι remain, be left behind

Note the emphatic use of οὐ μὴ

φθάσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl φθανω precede

κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die

Verse 16

ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπὸ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον,

"This verse makes us reflect on the very little that the New Testament has to say about the manner of the Parousia. Nowhere else do we have as full a description of what is to happen as here, but the details are few and do not paint a very full picture for us. The point of it all is that Scripture is intensely practical in this matter, as in others. There are many things that we would like to know, but the Bible was not written to gratify our curiosity. Rather, it is intended to help us in our Christian lives, and for that the important thing is that we should be ready when the Lord comes. Thus we are often warned to prepare, and told that the coming will be unexpected." Morris

κελευσμα, τος f shout of command, command

"The word is found often. It is the cry made by the ship's master to his rowers, or by a military officer to his soldiers, or by a hunter to his hounds, or by a charioteer to his horses. When used of military or naval personnel it was a battle cry. In most places, then, it denotes a loud, authoritative cry, often uttered in the thick of great excitement." Morris O Cullmann thinks of the κελευσμα as pointing to God's sovereignty. He speaks of the time "when God, as in the first creation, will decide in his sovereign act (κελευσμα, 1 Thess 4:16) to constitute the *new creation* by means of the spirit of life."

σάλπιγγι Noun, dat s σαλπιγξ, υγγος f trumpet, trumpet blast

Associated in OT with triumph or the call to festival.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἀναστήσονται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 pl ἀνιστημι rise, come back to life

Verse 17

ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα· καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἔσόμεθα.

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

περιλειπομαι remain, be left behind ἅμα adv. at the same time, together

"There is a minor problem in that the faithful departed will be coming with Jesus (v.14), but the point made here is not so much the order of events as the truth that the Lord's people will be united at the Parousia." Morris

ἀρπαγησόμεθα Verb, fut pass indic, 1 pl
 ἀρπαζω take by force, carry off
 νεβηλη, ης f cloud
 ἀπαντησις, εως f meeting
 ἀηρ, ερος m air, space
 παντοτε always

The description hardly fits a *secret* rapture.

Verse 18

Ὡστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
 παρακαλεω exhort, encourage
 ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὖς one another

What God has revealed is for our encouragement.

Verse 1

Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γραφεσθαι, καιρος, ου m time, appointed/proper time

"With regard to the second advent ... the χρονων are the chronological epochs that must elapse, time considered simply with regard to its duration, while the καιρων focus our attention rather on the nature of the time, on the critical events which will take place heralding the coming of the Lord." Morris

χρεια, ας f need, want
 γραφεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin γραφω

"There is abundant evidence from the two letters that he had spoken a good deal about the Parousia during his initial preaching... It is widely accepted in modern theology that early Christian teaching was thoroughly eschatological." Morris

Verse 2

αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται.

ἀκριβως accurately, completely (in the sense of needing no further instruction)
 οἶδα know, understand

ἡμερα κυριου – a very ancient expression. Cf. Amos 5:18-20.

κλεπτης, ου m thief
 νυξ, νυκτος f night

The event is certain but the timing unfathomable. In this sense it will be totally unheralded.

Verse 3

ὅταν λέγωσιν, Εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος ὡσπερ ἢ ὠδὴν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as
 εἰρηνη, ης f peace
 ἀσφαλεια, ας f security, safety

They imagine their situation unshakable.

τοτε then, at that time
 αἰφνιδιος, ον sudden, unexpected
 ἐφιστημι come up to, approach, appear
 ὄλεθρος, ου m destruction, ruin
 ὡσπερ as, even as
 ὠδιν, ινος f birth-pains, suffering
 γαστρὶ Noun, dat s γαστηρ, τρος f womb; ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχω conceive or be pregnant

The comparison of a woman in labour focusses not merely on the pain but also on suddenness and inevitability.

ἐκθειγω escape

Day 343: 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

Verses 4-11

The themes of night and day continue but are now supplemented by those of darkness and light. "It is not a difficult step from the idea of the day of the Lord to that of walking in the light, from that of the coming of Christ to that of the character of Christian people as 'sons of the light.' The coming of that Day must inspire God's people to live lives appropriate to their calling." Morris

Verse 4

ὕμεις δέ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει, ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτῃς καταλάβῃ,

σκότει Noun, dat s σκοτος, οὖς n
 darkness, evil

κλεπτης see v.2

καταλάβῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
 καταλαμβανω obtain, seize

Not that it will be heralded for them but that they will be prepared.

Verse 5

πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους·

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

φως, φωτος n light

υῖοι φωτος is a Semitic idiom: to be a 'son' of something is for that thing or quality to be characteristic of the person. The added 'sons of the Day' must refer to the Day of the Lord. "Believers find in the Day of the Lord a situation in which they are perfectly at home." Morris A Day in which they live now.

νυξ, νυκτος f night

οὔδε neither, nor

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil

Verse 6

ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποί, ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν.

ἄρα οὖν expresses a "logical inference and introduces an inescapable conclusion." Morris

καθευδω sleep, be dead

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

"Unbelievers may well 'sleep'; they are spiritually insensitive. But the believer should not take his standards from them... 'Sleep' is natural enough for the sons of the night, but is entirely out of place in the sons of light."

Morris

γρηγορω be or keep awake, be alert

Cf. Mk 14:38.

νηρω be sober, be self-controlled

The senses not clouded or drowsy through drink.

Verse 7

οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτὸς καθεύδουσιν, καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτὸς μεθύουσιν·

μεθυσκομαι get drunk

μεθω be drunk, drink freely

Sleep and drunkenness are characteristic of the night.

Verse 8

ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες νήφωμεν, ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας·

νηρω see v.6

The stress is not merely on not getting drunk but on the self-control and alertness that should mark a soldier on duty.

ἐνδύω dress, clothe; midd put on, wear

The aorist may suggest the idea of a definitive act. On Christian armour, see Rom 13:12f; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:13f.

θώραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

περικεφαλαια, ας f helmet

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, what is hoped for

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Note here the three 'graces' of faith hope and love occupy a central place in the Christian life as is expressed also in 1:3. Here they are the defensive armour of the Christian.

Verse 9

ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ἔθετο Verb, 2 aor midd indic, 3 s τιθημι midd put place, set, appoint

Cf. Jn 15:16; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; 1 Peter 2:8.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Cf. 1:10. To appreciate the greatness of our salvation we need to appreciate what we have been saved *from* as well as what we are saved to.

περιποιησις, εως f obtaining, gaining

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Verse 10

τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.

ἀποθανόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s

ἀποθνησκω die

εἴτε if, whether

γρηγορω see v.6

καθευδω see v.6

The sense here is 'whether we are living or have died'

ἅμα adv. at the same time, together

ζωω live, be alive

"Paul is maintaining that the death of Jesus has brought about a new relationship between God and sinners. Those who are Christ's live with him. There is the thought of that close union which elsewhere is expressed in the pregnant phrase 'in Christ.' This relationship is not disturbed by even such a final and decisive happening as death." Morris

Verse 11

Διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἰς τὸν ἕνα, καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

The present tense implies continuous action.

ἀλληλων, οισ, ους one another

οικοδομεω build, build up, encourage

Implies growth.

εἰς τον ένα 'one (to) one' is equivalent to ἀλλήλους but emphasises the distributive nature of the task – each one is to do it – and also that it is to be a one-to-one activity as well as communal.

καθως καὶ ποιεῖτε "He knows the way in which the Thessalonians were assisting one another, and he commends them for it. But he urges them to go forward on this way. Christians may never relax on the grounds that they have made sufficient progress." Morris

Day 344: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Verses 12-13

Morris suggests that the first groups of Christians would have been organised on the model of the synagogue (cf. Jas 2:2) and would have included a group of elders exercising oversight. Such elders at Thessalonica may have been unused to responsibilities of leadership – most of the believers seem to have been from the lower strata of society. Yet they were being required to deal with members who, in the heat of apocalyptic fervour, had given up work and were expecting to live off others. In such a situation there may well have been tension between the leaders and some of the congregation.

Verse 12

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, εἰδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ νουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς,

ἐρωτῶ *ask, request, beg, urge*
εἰδέναι *infin οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know*

Here 'know the worth of', respect

κοπιαῶ *work, work hard, labour*

The single definite article indicates a single group – the elders in the church who may not yet have formally borne that title. The following participles may expand and explain the first.

προϊστημι *be a leader, have authority over*

The NT is not shy of speaking of *leadership* within the church, though it does offer a distinctive Christ-centred model.

νουθετεῶ *instruct, teach, warn*

A distinctively Pauline word, cf. Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 4:14. J Behm says that strictly the verb means "to impart understanding (a mind for something)" and further, "It denotes the word of admonition which is designed to correct while not provoking or embittering."

Verse 13

καὶ ἠγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν. εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

ἠγεομαι *think, regard, consider, esteem*
ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ *adv. exceedingly*

"Hold them in special esteem and affection" Moffatt

εἰρηνεῶ *live or be at peace*
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον *reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself*

Both leaders and followers are to be peacemakers (cf. Mk 9:50; Rom 12:18; 2 Cor 13:11).

Verse 14

παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους, παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν, μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας.

"The address 'brothers' shows that these words are addressed to the whole of the membership and not simply to the leaders... The content of this charge is to look to the needs of certain people in the church. While this would be in a special measure the responsibility of those holding office, it was also something that lay on the shoulders of all (perhaps it was something the leaders should lead others to do). It was (and is) characteristic of the Christian understanding of life that the entire brotherhood is charged with responsibility for all. For Christians care for others is not to be left to any special class of believers." Morris

παρακαλεῶ *see v.11*

νουθετεῶ *see v.12*

ἀτακτος, ον *idle, unruly*

The word is a military term meaning a soldier who is out of step. It came then to mean one who is idle – a slacker.

παραμυθεομαι *comfort, console*
ὀλιγοψυχος, ον *fainthearted, discouraged*

"The word is well adapted to expressing a tender concern, quite in the spirit of 'a bruised reed he will not break' (Is 42:3)." Morris

ἀντεχομαι *be loyal to, support*
ἀσθενης, ες *sick, weak, helpless*

On the responsibility of the strong towards the weak, see esp Rom 14 and 1 Cor 8.

μακροθυμew be patient, wait patiently

Verse 15

ὁρᾶτε μὴ τις κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ τιμὴ ἀποδῶ, ἀλλὰ πάντοτε τὸ ἀγαθὸν διώκετε [καὶ] εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας.

ὁραω trans see, observe; intrans make sure, see to

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of

ἀποδῶ Verb, 2 aor act subj, 3 s ἀποδιδωμι give back, repay

Cf. Matt 5:44-45; Rom 12:17. "Revenge is the most natural and instinctive of vices." Denny

παντοτε always

διωκω seek after, pursue, follow

ἀλληλων, ος, ος one another

"Our Master, for our salvation, endured patiently the insults and injuries of wicked men. He, the Just, died for the unjust. In both these ways his example is important for his people. As the servant is not greater than his Lord, we must expect the same kind of treatment, and therefore we must expect to be called on to show the same kind of patience under provocation. And since he came to die for sinful people, we must expect that our meekness is to be by way of ministering to the needs of the sinful also." Morris

Verse 16

Πάντοτε χαίρετε,

"The New Testament does not give us a picture of believers as people who are always screwing themselves up to the point of doing unpleasant things in the service of their God but rather those who are glad to live out the implications of their faith... He is not writing about a joy that Christians produce by their own efforts. It is natural for people to be happy when things go well for them. But it is not this natural joy, dependent on circumstances, that is the special characteristic of Christians. It is the joy that comes from being 'in Christ.' Thus it is that the New Testament contains so many exhortations to joyful living – startlingly many, if we fix our attention on the outward circumstances of the early Christian communities. Persecution was always threatening and often actual. Believers were usually in straitened circumstances and compelled to work hard for their living. Their lot can rarely have been other than hard. But if we fasten our attention on these things, we put our emphasis in the wrong place. They thought more of their Lord than of their difficulties, more of their spiritual riches in Christ than of their poverty on earth, more of their glorious future when their Lord should come again than of their unhappy past. So the note of joy rings through the New Testament, and so Paul, who himself knew what it was to rejoice in difficult circumstances (Acts 16:25; Rom 5:3; Col 1:24), can say 'Be joyful always' (cf. Phil 4:4), and speak of Christians as 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (2 Cor 6:10)." Morris

Verse 17

ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε,

ἀδιαλειπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing
προσευχομαι pray

"Continuing prayer is the continuing expression ... of dependence... Again and again in Paul's letters (and especially in these two letters to the Thessalonians) the apostle interjects little prayers into his argument. Prayer was as natural to Paul as breathing. At any time he was likely to break off his argument or to sum it up by a prayer. In the same way he looks for the Thessalonians to live lives with such an attitude of dependence on God that they will easily and naturally move into the words of prayer on all sorts of occasions, great and small, grave and festive" Morris

Verse 18

ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε· τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks

"When we come to realise that God's hand is in all things, we learn to give thanks for all things." Morris

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Cf. 4:3. "'For this is the will of God ...' almost certainly refers to the three injunctions" [of vv 16-18] Morris

Day 345: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-28**Verse 19**

τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε,

σβεννυμι extinguish, put out

"The use of the Greek negative μὴ with the present imperative here denotes a command to cease from doing something already in process and not simply a warning to avoid this kind of thing in the future." Morris
Morris suggests that the reference is to the behaviour Paul has written to them about, which quenches the Spirit and results in loss of spiritual power and joy.

Verse 20

προφητείας μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε·

προφητεια, ας f prophecy, preaching, the gift of prophecy

ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt

Verse 21

πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε,

δοκιμαζω test, examine, prove

κατεχω hold fast, keep, restrain

"The point of this injunction, then, is that the Thessalonians are asked to apply tests. There are things that appear on the surface to be good. There are manifestations that claim to come from God. Such are not simply to be accepted at their face value, for it is not part of Christian simplicity to be credulous. All things must be tested. And not simply tested, but accepted wholeheartedly or rejected decisively as a result of the test. 'Hold on to' denotes the firm acceptance of the good. There must be no half measures." Morris

Verse 22

ἀπὸ παντὸς εἶδους πονηροῦ ἀπέχεσθε.

εἶδος, ους n visible form, appearance

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

πονηρου here can be either a noun or an adjective, the phrase meaning either 'every appearance of evil' or 'every evil appearance'. In either case the meaning is the same.

ἀπεχω midd. abstain from, avoid

Verse 23

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

ἀγιάσαι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s ἀγιαζω

sanctify, make holy

ὀλοτελης, ες wholly, in every part

The work carries the sense of completeness, 'to perfection'.

ὀλοκληρος, ον sound, whole, complete
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul'
σωμα, τος n body

Sanctification involves the whole person.

ἀμέμπτως Adv (from ἀμεμπτος)

blamelessly

παρουσια, ας see 2:19

τηρηθείη Verb, aor pass opt, 3 s τηρεω
keep, observe, maintain

Verse 24

πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, reliable

Paul is confident that his prayer will be answered. "Because he is the faithful One, and because he is the One who has called them, the Thessalonians may know that he will do perfectly all that is involved in their call. It is profoundly satisfying to the believer that in the last resort what matters is not his feeble hold on God, but God's strong grip on him (cf. John 10:28-29)." Morris

Verse 25

Ἀδελφοί, προσεύχεσθε [καὶ] περὶ ἡμῶν.

προσευχομαι pray

Paul needed their prayer as much as they needed his.

Verse 26

Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφούς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.

ἀσπαζομαι greet, welcome

φιλημα, τος n kiss

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

The meaning is 'give everyone a kiss from me.'

Verse 27

Ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι
τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

ἐνορκίζω place (someone) under a
solemn charge (in the name of)

Morris links this strong term to such passages as 2:17-18. "Apparently some of the Thessalonians had said that he had no real love for them, and if he had wished to do so, he would have been able to return. That he had not done so showed him to have his affections elsewhere. In this situation the ideal thing would have been for Paul to have returned. But his circumstances made this impossible; he had to use this letter as a substitute. Accordingly it was important not only that it should come before the notice of all, but also that it be seen plainly to be intended to come before the notice of all. In this way his care for them all would be manifest." Morris
The first person singular may suggest that this is the point where Paul himself took up the pen.

ἀναγνωσθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
ἀναγιγνωσκω read, read in public
worship
ἐπιστολῆ, ἡς f letter

Verse 28

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
μεθ' ὑμῶν.

χάρις, ἰτος f grace, unmerited favour