

LSB 1 Thess. 5:19 - 28

16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophecies, 21 but examine all things; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

25 Brothers, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. 27 I implore you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Last week we spoke a little bit about imperative commands. Action commands. Absolutes. We could even say ceaseless absolutes. Paul tells us to never cease rejoicing, never cease praying, and never cease in whatever situation you find yourself in to give God thanks.

This week we again have three imperative commands. But this time they are not positives, always do's, they are negatives, never do's. The strength of the imperatives is equal. The difference is the first 3 are positive things to never stop doing and the second three are negatives that we must never be doing.

I had an interesting phone call this week. It was totally a God timing thing. It was late morning on Monday. I had gone up to the electrical job that I'm helping some friends with and wasn't needed so was driving down the hill when the phone rang.

Seeing that it was my grandson Jonah I quickly pulled into that little

parking area between the Smoke BBQ Brewery thing and the VFW building. A nice shady fairly quiet spot.

And Jonah had an excellent question, actually several excellent questions. But one is useful for us. He wanted to know about miracles. Why aren't there miracles now like the old testament miracles?

Are you curious? Have you asked that question or wondered about miracles in the present day. If Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever does that force the issue of miracles to be unchanged? Good questions and important for our topic today.

Jesus referred to the Old Testament as what? (hint) Two general categories that contain all of the revelation in print at the time He lived. The _____ and the _____. Fill in the blanks. The Law, and the Prophets.

We combine the poetic books like the Proverbs and Psalms and some of the other books like those with the Prophets. The Law is the pentateuch. The first 5 books in your Bible, written and attributed to Moses. The birth and separation of the nation Israel from the surrounding nations. God separates Israel and makes it distinctly His during Moses time frame.

The prophets are everything else beginning with Joshua. The histories and poetic writings of the Israelites. The history of the nation while God spoke through His prophets.

The old testament miracles arrived in two distinct time frames. There were miracles when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt. Mighty miracles. And then silence.

The second iteration of miracles began when? Elijah and Elisha, the mold for all of the old testament prophets. So then, the miracles surround new revelation. When God is at work in His vast plan of the ages doing something new with new revealed truths, there are supporting miracles.

The law was brought to us with miracles. The prophets were begun and brought to us with miracles. Can you think of a third time when God was doing something new that involved a lot of new revelation when there were miracles?

Obvious, right? The miracles of Jesus far and away surpassed the miracles of the old testament. A huge amount of miracles that continued beyond Jesus with the apostles during the writing of the New Covenant. The New testament was enveloped with miracles.

Listen to Hebrews chapter 1 vss 1,2 which gives us three distinct periods of revelation. Fathers. Prophets. God's Son.

God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, Hebrews 1:1,2

Your complete canon of scripture then can be summarized as The Law, The Prophets, and the New Covenant. Period. That's all there is. Everything we need is in the completed scriptures. And all three of those stated categories was brought to us supported by miracles.

And the book brought to us, the inspired revelation, the very words of God, tells us in the final chapters of the final book, revelation is complete. No more will come. Finished. Complete. Perfect for all eternity. Bathed in miracles.

History tells us the miracles ceased before some of the new testament writers were even gone. That's history, like it or not. But we see miracles one more time in God's plan of events. Did your ears perk up? Really?

When the anti-christ appears on the scene he will convince the world to follow him into death and perdition with what? Miracles. Anti Christ will have the capability within God's provision and permission to fool and

delude the entire world with miracles.

We're actually going to be studying that in the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians. God allows a deluding influence on all those who rejected His salvation. Miracles will be a delusion into Satan's one world religious system that ultimately worships him. The whole world is going to drink the proverbial kool aid. Miracles are involved.

Sorry, but on my scale, that's very scary stuff. Miracles ceased after the apostles had received the New Covenant, and the next time we see miracles is with God's allowed deluding influence to salvation rejectors done by Satan and the Anti Christ.

So why then did miracles all of a sudden begin to happen in the middle of the last century? Was there more new revelation? More God doing something new? A 4th new new covenant? Or is all of the charismatic miracle phenomenon leading people towards danger? The next recorded occurrence of miracles in the Bible after the new testament period is the anti-christ. Beware.

Why is this relevant to our study this morning you ask? Because 51 years ago, as a very young man still in my teens, barely, a new christian, I was invited by neighbors across the street to go to a "bible study" with them.

I went. There was no real engagement in rational study of the word. What there was in a room with perhaps 40 people was a prayer where most of the people began speaking glossolalia. Unintelligible gibberish. All at the same time. They would claim they were speaking in tongues. But what tongue? No one could translate, nor could that have been possible because everyone was speaking at the same time. la la la la.

Glossolalia is an Onomatopoeic word. That's a word made up partly with the sounds it's describing. Like zoom. Or catastrophe. Catastrophe sounds like plates falling out of a cupboard. Zoom sounds like a jet flying by. Barbaric is an Onomatopoeic word that describes the languages of peoples

foreign to us. Bar bar bar bar bar. Barbaric. Glossolalia sounds like what I heard all around me. la la la la.

Suddenly there was a prophecy. *Someone in the room is terribly uncomfortable with what we are doing. That person should just say hallelujah over and over.* They started back up. la la la lal la. I'm going hallelujah with my eyes rolled back in my head in typical jim style while I'm thinking to myself these people are wack a doodle. hallelujah.

Another prophecy. *That person is still feeling very uneasy, and they would be welcome to wait and pray in the foyer.* Sounded like a good idea to me. Suddenly yet a third prophecy. *No, we are all in unison now. That person is in spiritual unison with us. We are all as one.*

Folks, I was only 6 months old in the Lord, but I said to myself, "There's only one Holy Spirit, but you folks are getting messages from two different spirits who don't even agree with each other! I'm out of here!" And I went out in the foyer and waited for my friends to give me a ride back home.

I told them they were lunatics. The Holy Spirit doesn't disagree with Himself and give two opposing messages. You guys are nuts. And I'll let you tell me what they told me. Right. I don't even have to go there.

Caution Jim. You are on shaky ground. You are quenching the Holy Spirit, at best, and you are getting dangerously close to perhaps blaspheming the Holy Spirit which is the unforgivable sin.

50 + years later I'm still on fire with the indwelling Holy Spirit who has given me an insatiable appetite for this book we hold, and not one of my four neighbors, as far as I know, would claim to be a christian. At all. One of them is in assisted living for the mentally unstable. I fear she might have demons. I've lost track of the others honestly.

Was I quenching the Holy Spirit? Before a week had gone by it was the Holy Spirit who led me to this verse. 23 *Therefore if the whole church*

assembles together and all speak in tongues, and uninformed men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 1 Cor. 14:23

It was the Holy Spirit who helped me sort the situation while I was in it. Multiple spirits with multiple messages that don't even agree??? Are you kidding me. Count me out. That was the Holy Spirit helping me with truths from the written word that are non negotiable.

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Eph. 4:1 - 6

I had already read that. The Holy Spirit brought it to my memory in the midst of the event. One One One One One. You've got at least two spirits (small "s"). Probably more. Maybe everyone in that room had their own "spirit" (small s) Count me out.

Not only was I not quenching the Spirit, it was the Spirit who protected me from harm by calling to memory the words of the book, already firmly in place, in a 6 month old baby christian.

What does it mean then, when Paul says; *19 Do not quench the Spirit;*

I had to laugh the other day when I was looking for a you tube and all those little title pages are on the screen trying to get you to click. Click bate. One of them was Whoopi Goldberg on the view claiming the reason abortion isn't sin is because God gave us free will. That's on one side of the picture and John MacArthur is on the other side saying . . . "You're free to sin."

I have choices. I can sin if I want to. Except for the indwelling Holy Spirit

who is quenched when I do make those wrong choices and then makes me miserable until I repent and ask for forgiveness and cleansing and restoration.

Quench is a good word. It's the word for when you're camping in California and those folks are twitterpated about camp fires and if they do allow one they ask you to what. Quench the fire unless you're physically present. If you're turning in and going to bed, don't leave the hot coals for the morning, quench it. Put it out.

That's what we do to our friend, our helper, the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in my heart, when I tell God, no, sorry, I've made up my mind to sin. It's like you've told the Spirit please go in a different room and close the door for a while.

Well, He has other methods to get your attention. Like a spouse or a best friend who you've angered and hurt, and they've turned their backs towards you, standing separated, and you miss them and want that open line of love restored.

That's why John's letters are pretty black and white. Christians ultimately won't be able to live in a lifestyle of continuous sin. That's why folks who do break God's laws and that's their continuing life style, I have my doubts about their salvation. 1 John just says, they aren't christians.

When my best friend leaves the room and says, you can have me or you can have sin, but you can't have both . . . sooner or later the indwelling Spirit wins. I can't live without His constant presence. And people who can, I doubt their relationship with God after some time.

Choosing sin puts water on the fire of the Holy Spirit. Don't do that. In Ephesians 4:30 Paul says; *30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Perhaps there are stages. Quench the Spirit when you make up your mind

to sin. Grieve the Spirit by ignoring His will and continuing in sin over a period of time? Maybe. We cause the Holy Spirit sorrow and grief in the deadness of our disobedient sin.

We grieve over our children when they make bad choices that we know are going to bring disaster. The Holy Spirit is grieved when those who He loves choose death and not life. We go scraping damp mud out of empty cisterns and try to squeeze one drop of water out of it while rivers of living waters are at our finger tips, ready to quench our thirst and we forsake that.

When we make choices that limit the good things God wants to give us, the Spirit who dwells in us is quenched like water on a fire, and grieved like a loving parent watching their child suffer. Don't do that.

20 do not despise prophecies, 21 but examine all things; hold fast to that which is good;

We will look at the word translated prophecy in our work to grasp what Paul is commanding here. But first we need to look at the word despise. Do not despise. exoutheneó (ex-oo-then-eh'-o) a compound word. eks and outheneo

The greek dictionary says; ek, "completely out from," which intensifies outheneō, "bring to naught, reduce to nothing") – properly, cast out as nothing; set at naught; "to count as nothing, to treat with utter contempt, i.e. as zero"

We do this, right. We are a polarized society. And when I read things on facebook that are in complete and utter denial of natural truth that any child could comprehend, I dismiss that stuff. But I not only dismiss it, sometimes I have to go so far as to unfriend some person because the constant barrage of nonsense sort of triggers me. Easier to not even know what some person has said, is saying, or will say in the future because it's coming from a lunatic and it's nonsense. exoutheneo

Do people do that with preachers who are teaching the crystal clear words of this book? Oh, you bet they do. In fact we've already looked at this very phenomenon in this very letter.

Paul tells the Thessalonians in chapter 4 in the discussion of acceptable morality these words which absolutely describe our word here;

7 For God did not call us to impurity, but in sanctification. 8 Consequently, he who sets this aside is not setting aside man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

Dare I say that the evangelical church in America is setting aside God's clear teaching about zero sexual encounter except for one man one woman in the bonds and confines of a single marriage for life.

The church set aside divorce in the 1960's. We set aside fornication between heterosexual couples in the 1980's. And now we're beside ourselves trying to set God's clear words aside and find room for homosexual couples and transgender who knows what sexuality. We set the crystal clear words of the book aside. Ultimately the church has set SIN aside. No one wants to talk about sin. Why?

Chapter 5 vs. 20 is exactly why. *20 do not despise prophecies,*

The reason this room is empty of a lot of the so-called christians who used to come is because they don't like what I've said. We have options. When we despise what the preacher is teaching, that's our word *prophecies*, by the way, we have options.

We can go to a different church. Or we can not go to church at all and make excuses about how that preacher mistreated our ears. Who can listen to that guy! Or, we can flip on Joel Osteen and let him make us feel good.

We don't need this crunchy old preacher who teaches exactly what the words in a book he claims is words from God's mouth tell us we shouldn't

be accepting and doing.

Do not despise prophecies. The word *to prophecy* is forth telling. Speaking. It has both meanings, at least it did when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. In the first century church there were gifts of prophecy. Sign gifts. Healings and miracles and prophecies from God.

The age of sign gifts, speaking in tongues, prophecies direct from God, and miracles ceased before the apostles were completely gone. The job they were to be a sign for, was finished. The church was ushered in. Judaism was set aside. The church age had begun. The sign gifts ceased.

But preaching has never ceased. That part of Paul's command has not ceased. Do not dismiss and ignore the preacher. Do not dismiss him and his task as nothing, as unnecessary. God has ordained preachers and preaching for the duration of the church age until Jesus receives His bride, the church, in the air, at the rapture.

The old testament prophets had one task to accomplish. Call the people to repentance and out of sin and into Godliness. The remaining gift of preaching has that same exact purpose. Exhortations from the written revelation of God to Holy living and a pure conscience.

The only thing that has changed is the book is complete and God is neither giving new revelation through His prophets nor is He giving proof of new revelation with miracles. We have the book. The prophets job is the same.

Paul says, do not despise the preacher and dismiss what he says. Is that always true? What about bad preachers teaching bad stuff?

My little story that I opened with when I went to the prayer meeting with all the glossalalia also works to illustrate what Paul says next. Discernment. I was only a baby christian but even then I was able to use discernment by comparing what I was seeing with my very early grasp of the word of God.

Paul says, Do not despise preaching . . . but; vs. 21
21 but examine all things; hold fast to that which is good;

Satan isn't stupid. Over the past 200 years, the word of God has been in a vacuum it seems. Until the internet, good preaching was both rare, and hard to find. Most preaching I heard in my youth was vacuous. Like the preacher wrote his sermon on a match book cover while he walked from the parsonage to the church house. About that deep.

Some platitudes and a salvation call, week in week out. Sometimes combined with emotional manipulations. About the 47th time you sing some verse from Just As I Am Without One Plea, you might go up yourself and be saved all over again just so you can get the service out of stall and go get some lunch.

That's gone on for 200 years in this land, with the result that when the gallup pole folks go out poling, they find out the gay community in San Francisco and the Church of Satan know more about the Bible than the so-called christians. It's shocking what those poles tell us about ourselves. We are apallingly ignorant. Of this book.

You know what the most often quoted and most known verse in the entire Bible is? It's not John 3:16. It's Matthew 7:1 “*Do not judge, so that you will not be judged.*” And the world throws that around to mean, if you claim this book has authority over people and what people do, shame on you.

Everybody on earth knows that verse, except maybe the evangelicals who don't seem to know any verses at all.

Paul tells the Thessalonians, *21 but **examine** all things; hold fast to that which is good;*

Beloved, we are commanded to **examine** all things. We don't dismiss and despise the preacher, but the next words out of Pauls mouth are to examine

what the prophet is telling you.

Six months old in Christ and I was effectively doing that. You've got multiple spirits in this room saying multiple things that don't even agree with each other . . . See Ya. Out I went.

We are to have enough of this book living in our veins to be able to discern truth from falsehood. My kids will call me on the phone and say, I heard something and I don't know where it says it, but it just doesn't sound right. That's entry level discernment folks. It doesn't sound right? Find someone who is trustworthy and find out why. Call me up. If I can't remember where it's at, it'll take me about 5 minutes to find it and I'll call you back. It's not that hard. Discernment.

And the church is so battered by the "Judge not" crowd that we have abandoned this principle that Paul defines and commands us to do here. Judge Not is not a king's X folks. Paul commands us to judge everything! What do you think *examine all things* means.

Does it mean that the Bible contradicts itself? First it says Judge Not, and then it says *examine all things*. If that's a contradiction, guess what, we can burn our Bibles and be done with it. We are commanded to first KNOW our Bibles. Ignorance is NOT an option. Then we are commanded to examine all things in accordance to the truths of this book.

This book isn't that difficult folks. Don't get caught up in the baloney of the false teachers who tremble with bogus false humility and say it's beyond anyone's comprehension to understand these things. Anyone who says they do is a boaster, a prideful person. The humble person admits the book cannot be understood. By anyone.

Bollucks as they say on the British TV programs me and Pam seem to love. Nonsense. The book is a gift. From God. Read it. 98% of it is written for people at fool level, like me. It's not that tough.

Isaiah 35:8 compares it to a highway. *the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*” Let me tell you what that means. It means if you get to heaven and tell God you couldn't understand His book, so you ignored it, He's going to say Bollocks. Nonsense. *the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*”

The other 2% we can talk about. My brain is in fact too small to fully comprehend election. Some things God tells me just to remind me, you'll just have to trust me and wait a while. You don't have the faculties to understand some things that are perfectly clear in the mind of God.

I love that. I love that the book has depths that no human mind could have invented. It has things beyond the most brilliant mind that tell me, men didn't invent this stuff. This is from the mind of God. It's OK to not fully understand some things. Some things we just stand in awe and wait.

But the rest, the 98% we are to know and be able to examine all things. Discern what is biblical and what is nonsense. God gives us that responsibility, for ourselves and for each other.

Hosea 4:6 comes to mind. *For lack of knowledge my people are destroyed.* Beloved we have the responsibility to know this book enough for our own preservation, and to help with the protection and preservation of those we love. We have a stewardship.

1 Peter 5:8 *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* That's pretty clear. If you don't want to be eaten, you had better know what this book says. That pre-supposes and is requisite to Paul's command to us to *"examine all things."* *Cling to what is good.*

Good? Are we supposed to make a value judgement?? What is **good**? Mercy Paul. Haven't you read Matthew 7:1. We can't make judgement calls on what is good, or bad, or nonsense. We just have to swallow it all.

Wrong. Study the manual. B I B L E Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth. Stolen from Skip. I like it. Study it. Examine what you hear. Cling to what is . . . shall we say, correct? Cling to what is biblical. I like that.

Vs. 22 abstain from every form of evil.

And you thought we were almost done. Ha. Now we need to go through the entire book and remind ourselves of everything possible in this book that is recognized as evil. Fasten your seat belts. NOT.

I don't have to do that because every christian has the responsibility to know what this book says is acceptable and pleasing to God, and what is abominable to God.

You keep coming to these preaching sessions and you're going to fill in the blanks. But 40 minutes a week doesn't get you out of the responsibility of serious study on your own. You *can* comprehend MOST of it. It isn't rocket science. But we are warned of both destruction and getting eaten up by lions if we are ignorant. So read the manual.

We DO NOT abandon preaching, listening to prophecy. But we examine the words. Compare it to the word. Keep what is good. Discard what is bad. We DO abstain from evil. Good preaching will help you in that effort.

Next week we will close out this letter. I promise. There are exciting things to learn in Paul's second letter to the christians at Thessalonica. And there are still useful lessons for us even in Paul's final closing words.