

If Any Man Obey Not Our Word

2 Thessalonians 3:8 – 18

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~ The return of the Lord Jesus Christ – God’s Son, our Holy High Priest in Heaven – the Blessed Hope of the earth – has been the motivating force and purifying hope behind committed, joyful believers in furthering the cause of Christ since the formation of the early church in the first century. Every day brings us one step closer to becoming absent from this body and present with the Lord. That’s when reality really becomes reality – on our death bed. Our Spiritual Safari will have to bid Paul farewell again in this report, as we part ways – again; but we can thank God we’ll see him in the Word of God a few more times in our expedition through the entire Bible; as he writes to three young pastors, and the owner of a runaway slave – and most conservative Bible scholars agree that Paul wrote Hebrews, too. If you really want some safari politics – you’ll get them as we move forward. Some readers’ souls will be blanched.

In our last report, Paul gave the church in Thessalonica more than forty commandments; all very practical, very real practices they were to learn and implement. They were to become established in the Word of God, and kept from evil thereby. If you haven’t read our last several reports, I highly suggest you go back and do so now. They were to separate themselves from every brother that walked disorderly. They were to behave themselves in a way that would bring credit and glory to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to honor and glorify His cause of taking the Gospel to the whole world. Those actions were to, in turn, lead more people to turn to the True and Living God, and believe on the Name of Jesus for salvation of their souls. That happened. Just remember, friends, that although these are the earliest manuscripts Paul composed, he was already experiencing severe persecution; saith the Lord Jesus to Paul on the road to Damascus, *“I shall show you what great things you must suffer for my Names Sake.”*

Well, I need to repeat our standard safari warning: stop reading here; and do not read any of my reports ever again. Whoever you are, wherever you are, however you are. Stop. Go do something else. The church in

Thessalonica was experiencing severe persecution from Rome and the Sanhedrin; both of whom had no compunction murdering Christians. Saul had once been a member of the Sanhedrin. I think God thought it necessary that these people saw Paul undergoing persecution for their comfort; and that's exactly what happened. If you stand for the Lord, it will cost you something, friends; and that something will be everything. Don't kid yourself. This isn't the prosperity gospel on this safari expedition. See, some people think Paul got away with murder. After all, he was never brought to justice for all those brutal Christian slayings. They fail to understand Paul died alone in a Roman Mamertine prison when he was executed at the hands of madman Nero. Paul was not guilty. His execution was a murder. Paul was doing the Lord's work there – alone – IN PRISON. It was no coincidence in Paul's life. Be not deceived. God is NOT mocked, my beloved readers; whatsoever a man shall sow, that shall he also reap.

In this report, we come to the work side of practicality in the service of the Lord. Getting the Word of God out to the entire world in sound doctrine is something we are going to have to become engaged in if we desire to be successful. It isn't glamorous. The world will not love you for your work. You will not be widely received. It will require sacrifice. God's truly chosen men aren't wealthy Pharisees in expensive cars. God's chosen men are dependent upon Him for their next meal. Most people disagree. I already told you to stop reading. The weak and despised men are those God uses today. Saith Jesus, *"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."* Now, I already know that nothing is impossible with God; but – guess what? – there is a *WHOLE LOT* that is impossible with *Y-O-U*...

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

~ Apparently, it was Paul's practice that, when he arrived in whatever place the Lord had led him to, he would not allow the people to pay him, or even support him with sustenance. When Paul arrived in town, he didn't have a reservation at the Hyatt Grand Cypress on the fifteenth floor. There was no stipend. I don't find them *EVER* taking a love-offering for Paul. Yet, they

took his teaching with no problems. Sound familiar? I hope everyone is enjoying their free safari. It isn't cheap, for someone. If that's not familiar to you, then I can assure you that you are not being used by the Lord. You can argue, disagree, call me names, and rail against me all you want to but, my friend, that's what's up. The Bible tells me so.

Paul established the churches God gave him on the wages of being a tent maker. I don't think we have to argue that Paul wasn't becoming rich making tents. No, Paul didn't have any money, friends. Everything he earned went directly towards continuing his missionary journey's. He had the Word of the Lord that God Himself had given him out there on the Arabian Desert for three years, living like an I-don't-know what – but it wasn't good. Paul's treasure was in Heaven – not on earth. I know he told the Galatians to give, and he thanked the Philippians for the gift they sent him in prison, and on his third missionary journey, he did take up an offering – but that was for the saints in Jerusalem. That was the policy of giving with Paul, in a nutshell.

The great truth of the coming of Christ was not some revelation that caused Paul to become an unreasonable fanatic. Paul was realistic, to be sure. There was a cult of yesteryear that ordered all members up on the roof one night, waiting for the Lord to come and, when He didn't, they all committed suicide. My question would have been, *"why are we getting on the roof?"* I mean, can't God reach us from the sofa? If we had to get up high, then why not a skyscraper – or a mountaintop – just to make sure we get close enough to God that He can reach us? Someone says, *"Andrew, that's absurd."* Well, it sure is, friends; it's as absurd as some of the so-called Bible teachers I see teaching their self-serving and self-righteous philosophy of religion, who know *NOTHING* about the Word of God in any capacity, shape, form or way....

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

~ Some people do some absurd things while claiming to be looking for the soon coming of Christ. Most people choose “*religion*,” and want to be paid “*leaders*” because they’re really just lazy. Well, friends, nothing will make you work as hard and tirelessly as the anticipation of that great prophetic truth. Now, this ministry is called the Spiritual Safari for a reason – the meanings are spiritual. Even so, in our modern society, Americans like to live by the standards of work hard, save money – all very good and noble aspirations; and if God has blessed you that way – great! Unfortunately, in this present world situation – particularly in the United States – there are not enough jobs for everybody. With automation, population explosion, politics, and long healthy lives combined, we have a recipe for disaster in global society right now.

So, because Paul was writing into a local situation in this letter, the only spiritual aspect I can find is that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us now by Paul’s pen regarding our WORK FOR THE LORD IN THE WORD OF GOD – because I cannot interpret this section of Scripture into my local situation. I can only apply it *spiritually* to my life. If you believe the Bible is the Word of God, then you’re going to be busy – very busy working – taking the entire Word of God to the entire world in sound doctrine. That means you’re going to have to learn, trust and *OBEY* the commandments Paul gave. It is impossible to have the mind of Christ and be ignorant of the Word of God, my beloved. *I-M-P-O-S-S-I-B-L-E!* If you are “*spiritual*” but ignorant of Scriptural truth, you may be certain that the spirits you are in contact with are not from above. If that’s you, then you’re going to be a fanatic-religious nutcase whom the world loves and readily accepts. They will even pay you well if you try real hard. There is literally *NO OTHER WAY*, my friends. That’s what’s real. You may want to turn this all over in your minds eye a few times, after praying about it, and see what you come up with....

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

~ I am sure there are some who wonder why I don’t present myself and get under a reputable mission board. That would help raise up support that I don’t get for the Spiritual Safari; perhaps I should try harder to get people interested in what I am doing. Well, “*missionaries*” who raise a bunch of

money always seem to love to fly around the world to fulfill dreams of saving it; usually by singing to it. They ultimately have to raise money to get them home from a disastrous wreck in the mission field. You wouldn't believe some of the true horror stories I know from the mission field. Seriously, body bags are everywhere. Most of them lose their faith altogether, or go into a tail-spin until they hit the ground and burst into flames. There are many foolish ways to say, "I trust the Lord" – and a whole lot of people do it that way. The wrong way. Paul worked as an example – and, as a result, we're studying some of the greatest literature known to mankind – Paul's epistles. Our Spiritual Safari continues in the Book of Jeremiah in our next report ~

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens) ~

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