

He Will Surely Do It

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[0 : 00] Amen. You may be seated, kids. You are excused to your children's, your King's Kids class. And I would invite you to open up your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

We're at the end of this great book. And so I'm going to read verses 23 through 28. Hear the word of the Lord. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely.

And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it.

Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. I put you under an oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Amen. In the classic hymn by John Newton, Amazing Grace, we sang it. There's a piece of it.

[1 : 08] Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. 'Tis grace that brought me safe this far and grace will lead me home. When John Newton penned that, he's recognizing how God's grace saved him, strengthened him, sustained him to where he was.

And that it would be God's grace that brings him home face to face with Jesus. What Newton is saying in Amazing Grace is he will surely do it.

What he began, he will surely complete. And when we sing it, Amazing Grace or Great is Thy Faithfulness, it stirs our souls.

It gives us strength to continue on. It gives us courage. Anybody in the room in need of courage this morning? Feeling a little flat?

Heading into the holidays? Guys, this morning, I pray that you'll be encouraged by 1 Thessalonians 5, 23-28.

[2 : 18] In this passage, Paul is going to reiterate a couple themes throughout the book in order to do so to encourage you. So, we are to take heart this morning.

And what God will do, he will surely do it. Do what? Take heart. Your God will keep you until Christ comes.

And so, I'm going to focus on verses 23 and 24 and 28 this morning. And in so doing, I want to unpack five encouraging words. And I'm going to have you repeat those words when I say them.

So, I'm going to say the word and I'm going to look to you and you repeat it in a robust fashion. Peace. Sanctify.

Doesn't that come out real nice? Sanctify. Coming. Faithful. Grace. Let's do it one more time. Peace.

[3 : 22] Sanctify. Coming. Faithful. Grace. Take heart. Your God will keep you until Christ comes.

That's going to fill your souls this morning. Surely do it. So, let's look at this first word, peace. In verse 23. Now, may the God of peace.

What we have here in verses 23 and 24 is essentially a benediction. And 1 Thessalonians closes with like a double benediction. And it is the apostle Paul wanting God, wishing God, praying that God would do something in the Thessalonians.

And Paul addresses God as the God of peace. God wants the God, Paul wants the God of peace to do something in the lives of the Thessalonians. And so, what is this peace?

Well, if you're familiar with a little Hebrew, it's the word shalom. Shalom is peace of God's making.

[4 : 28] The God of peace is the God who makes peace. And this peace isn't just an absence of hostility, but a fullness of God's goodness.

If you have kids in the home and they're not fighting, you're like, oh, isn't everything peaceful? Not quite. A peaceful relationship among siblings would be not just them not fighting, but them embracing each other.

Delighting each other. Serving one another. Taking turns. This peace of God's making is a comprehensive peace.

Think along the lines of four relationships. When Adam and Eve sinned, they broke peace with God. And that peace breaking with God resulted in a breaking of peace within them internally.

And it resulted in a breaking of peace between them in their relationship. And it also was a breaking of peace in their relationship with creation. And so, now the God of peace is seeking to make peace on a comprehensive scale and scope.

[5 : 36] So, he's starting by making peace between you and him. And then he's making peace within yourself. And he's seeking to make peace between you and others. And eventually he's going to make peace between you and me and all of creation.

This plan of God, this is a peace plan. It's his plan of salvation. You could call it Operation Forever Peace.

And God makes this peace. He brings this peace about in an extraordinary way. In an amazing way. The God of peace makes comprehensive peace through the death and resurrection of the Prince of Peace.

Remember that great prophecy on Isaiah 9 where unto us a child is given. And he will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father.

Prince of Peace. And that Prince of Peace who died on the cross and was raised from the dead is reigning on high on a throne of grace. And is one day closer to coming back.

[6 : 47] It's by his death and resurrection that God brings about peace. This peace is a gospel peace. It's a blood-bought peace.

Jesus shed his blood unto death to bring God's peace as far as the curse is found.

And this peace is an already but not yet peace. Here's what I mean by that. When a sinner recognizes their sinfulness and what God has done for them in Jesus Christ and they believe, at that moment that they believe, they are justified.

Romans 5.1, and therefore at peace with God. At that moment, God thinks of that sinner's, the penalty of their sin as being placed on Christ on the cross, in all of God's wrath, poured out for all of your penalty of your sin for all time.

So you're forgiven. And then simultaneously, God thinks of all of Christ's righteousness as being put into your account. That you've been imputed the righteousness of Christ.

[8 : 05] And so not are you just forgiven of all of your sin. You've been made acceptable to God based upon the righteousness of Christ. And at that moment, you are at peace with God.

Do I have an amen? But it's a partial peace. Because we still sin. Amen. We do things that grieve God. We experience distance in our relationship with God, not because of God, but because of us. And so there's this already aspect of peace. You're justified. But there's a not yet. When your relationship with God is fully, finally, and forever at peace.

We have degrees of peace within ourselves. If you became a Christian, you have a whole new identity. You're a new creation in Christ Jesus. You are a child of the living God.

You're a child of the light. No longer of darkness. But we forget that and we do stupid things in our sinfulness. We struggle with things that have been done to us and we've done to others internally.

[9 : 14] So we experience degrees of peace now. Already not yet. We experience the same in relationship with others. There's an already not yet where we experience conflict in a breaking of peace.

And yet we also experience a degree of fullness. But there's coming a time where there'll be perfect peace in our relationship with one another. And of course, there's creation.

There is the already where we see wonderful sunrises and sunsets. Sunrise, sunset. We have huge snowfalls that some of us love.

But we also feel threat from creation. Tornadoes. Tsunamis. This thing called cancer.

So we are in between the already and not yet peace. God through Christ's blood has begun a comprehensive peace plan.

[10 : 17] Operation Forever Peace. And the cross of Jesus Christ is the living God establishing a beachhead on earth of saying, I am bringing my peace to this planet.

And it's going to culminate when Jesus Christ returns and there's full, final, and forever peace. This is the God of peace Paul addresses in verse 23.

And you want to know something? You're a part of that plan. You're in it. You're in it. Have you experienced this peace of God in Christ Jesus?

This God of peace wants to do something else in us. So we move to word number two. Sanctify. Peace. Sanctify. In between now and the coming of Jesus Christ, God will be doing something in us. It is His holy aim.

[11:20] His holy purpose. As we are waiting on the return of Jesus Christ, God is getting something done in us as we're moving to that day. And this is the first major theme Paul reiterates.

It's the theme of holiness. If you flip back in 1 Thessalonians to chapter 1, in verse 9 we read, For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

You know what that's a picture of? Someone being set apart as holy. Holy. And then we read in a prayer Paul prays in the middle of this letter, chapter 3, verses 11 through 13.

I'll just read 13 for you. Paul prays, So that He may, God may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

So God wants to make us holy. In chapter 4, verse 3, For this is the will of God, your sanctification.

[12:30] Chapter 4, verse 7, For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. And again in chapter 5, we have this, we are no longer of the darkness, we are children of light, and so we don't fear that day of Christ's return.

No, we don't fear it, we're ready for it because we're going to be awake. We're going to walk in the light. That's a picture of holiness. So what God is seeking to do is to make us holy as He is holy.

For us to be pure as He is pure. So when you read in verse 23, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless.

What we're talking about is holiness. Now let me just assure you, this isn't some kind of pie in the sky, abstract, theoretical holiness that God is looking to do in us.

No, this is concrete. Very specific and concrete. He's doing a real work. Have you ever thought of Jesus as holiness incarnate? God in the flesh, living holy life.

[13:45] If you read the Gospels and you watch Jesus through that lens, you get to see a human being, fully God, fully man, living life perfectly unto God.

And that's why when you get to Galatians 5, 22 and 23, where we are described the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, it's a profile of Jesus.

And so when God is seeking to purify you, He's seeking to conform you into the holy image of Jesus. It's very specific and concrete.

And He goes on to say here, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless. If sanctifying is this act of purifying, being kept blameless is this preserving, it's protecting, protecting your holiness, protecting you from sin.

Have you heard of the little phrase, the perseverance of the saints? That goes hand in hand with another phrase, the preservation of the saints.

[15:05] God is preserving His saints as they're persevering all the way to the end. They go hand in hand. God will keep you until the end, take heart.

That word blameless? Does anybody have in their kitchen a non-stick Teflon pan? I've heard bad things about Teflon, but it'll serve the illustration.

Teflon pans are non-stick. Nothing sticks to a Teflon pan. And what God is seeking to do in us as that day of Christ approaches is to make us blameless when it comes to evil.

No non-stick. There's no evil that sticks to your character. There's no evil that sticks to your conduct. God is seeking to do a work in you and keep you blameless.

Teflon-like. He wants to present you to Christ when He comes, blameless. Surely going to do that.

[16:17] God Himself is doing this. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. It's God purifying us. It's God preserving us.

It's a way in which God is loving us into His holiness. Hebrews 12. He wants us to share in His holiness because that's where the greatest joy is. So in between now and Christ's return, God has this holy aim in which He is holy, H-O-L-Y, and holy, W-H-O-L-L-Y, at work in us completely.

So that little phrase, spirit, soul, and body, it's talking about all of who you are. God is wanting to make all of who you are holy, blameless.

He wants to shine you with the glory of Christ. I've used this illustration a lot, so if you're sick of it, you can walk out.

Let's see who walks out. Chip and Joanna Gaines, fixer-upper. It's a show, Chip and Joanna, they restore houses to their original glory.

[17 : 37] Take a dump, make it into glory. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are God's fixer-uppers. He's taken people who have been made or dumps because of sin, and He is restoring glory to us.

And He has purchased the deed of our lives through the blood of Jesus. And between now and Christ's return, He will be restoring each of us one room at a time to reflect the glory of His Son, Jesus.

And more often than not, truth in advertising, this is going to be painful. God's sanctifying holy work is oftentimes painful because God is exposing sin in us that we must die to.

And He's doing it because He loves us. And so we kill the sin by the Spirit, and by the Spirit, we bring to life Christ-likeness. God Himself is at work doing this work of sanctification in us.

Of course, we have responsibility in it, but Paul is closing this letter with the emphasis being on what God is purposed to do in us. And let me just read you this passage from Philippians chapter 2.

[19 : 09] I'm sure it's kind of working through some of your minds right now where both are persevering and God's preserving is stated. Therefore, my beloved, this is Philippians 2.12 and 13.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Persevere, Christian. Pursue holiness. And then in verse 13, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. That is His preserving being kept blameless until that day.

God is at work in you. You can bank on it. Take heart. Let me ask you two questions. Are you welcoming His holy work?

Are you... Have your way. Make me more like Jesus. Are you actively pursuing holiness?

[20 : 20] Do you want to be blameless as God Himself is? These are good moments to reflect upon our lives, aren't they?

Have your way, O God. Have your holy way in us. So we move from that first word, peace, to the second word, sanctify, and now we move to the third word, coming.

As in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the other major theme of the book of 1 Thessalonians. Paul is reiterating these things for a reason.

I mean, in chapter 1, verse 9 and 10, you know, you've been flipped from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for the Son from heaven. That's the coming of Jesus.

Again, if you look at chapter 3, verse 13, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all of His saints.

[21 : 25] Again, it's this focus on holiness and at the coming of Jesus. In 5, 1 through 11, we are to live in the light, awake, as we see that day drawing near.

And we're to encourage one another in that. It's that day, verse 9, at His coming, and here in 23, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a major theme of this book, but there's something even more significant. Paul is intentionally raising these two themes together at the end of the book.

What he wants you to see is the relationship between the two. The relationship of being made holy and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a very important relationship between our holiness and Christ's coming.

It makes me think of what scientists call a symbiotic relationship. When two living creatures are in mutually beneficial, coexisting relationship with one another, think of a great white shark and a sucker fish, a remora.

[22 : 41] Have you seen pictures of those? Big fish, big shark, and there are these little like suction cup fish on the bottom of it. It's a symbiotic relationship.

The great white benefits from the remora. It's regularly cleaning off parasites for the shark. It's like spa remora for the shark.

And the remora benefits from the shark, gets free ride, protection with a lot of teeth, and it gets food scraps. There's this working together for the good of both and that's how we need to think about our holiness and Christ's coming.

Here's how it works. You start thinking about Christ's return. Oh, maybe he's coming back this afternoon or next week. And that stirs into motion, sparks something in you.

It's like, how do I want the risen Lord returning to find me? Do I want him to find me doing stupid things? Grievous things?

[23 : 49] Or do I want him to find me living for him as my controlling center and seeking to actively kill sin and bring to life that which pleases him?

It's the idea of Matthew 24 and the parable of the talents. And so, as I think about Christ's return, it motivates me to welcome his holy work in my life.

And then, as I'm experiencing his holy work in my life, do you know what that's going to do? Oh, come Lord Jesus, come. I'm ready for my resurrected body.

Come Lord Jesus, come. I am ready for this full, final, and forever peace that you have promised and that surely you will bring it about. And on that day when Christ's return, we will be completely wholly sanctified, kept blameless.

He will do this. We will be at full, final, and forever peace with God. You will experience full, final, and forever peace within yourself. Let it be. You will experience full, final, and forever peace between one another.

[25 : 02] And then we will experience full, and final, and forever peace with creation because when he comes back he's going to recreate the heavens and the earth. No more let sins and sorrows grow.

No, no more. God's sanctifying work in us is moving towards that day. He wants to present you. He's purposed to present you blameless. You've been justified now. You're being sanctified, and on that day you will be glorified.

You can say amen. When we synchronize our watches to Christ's time, Mark, Christ is one day closer.

We also synchronize our lives to the holy work of God in us. We welcome it. Sanctify us.

[26 : 08] Peace. Sanctify. At his coming. The fourth word is, oh, it's such a good word. It's going to be wind in your sails.

It's the word faithful. 524. In English, we read, he who calls you is faithful, that first clause. In the original language in Greek, you know how it rolls out?

It starts with the word faithful. Faithful is the one who is calling you. And in the original language, that means it's putting it forward first.

It's emphasizing it. He will be faithful in finishing what he starts in us. I know there's a bunch of you who've memorized Philippians 1, 6, and Paul writes to this church.

And can you imagine the apostle writing to you and writing this? He says, and I am sure of this, he writes to the Philippians. I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 19] God's faithfulness is his character. It's who he is. He always does what he says he will do. He always follows through on his promises.

And that's why following this faithfulness, you have this next phrase, he will surely do it because he's faithful. He will surely do it.

He will finish what he starts. He will surely do it. What is the it? What is he going to do? He will sanctify us completely.

He will keep us blameless. And Christ will return in glory. He will surely do it because he's faithful.

In other words, nobody on the planet can stop it. Nobody can stop him. He's faithful. Before I preach here, just the song we sang beforehand is, Great is thy faithfulness.

[28 : 24] Third stanza, Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth. Thine own dear presence and cheer, to cheer and to guide. What a great line. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

Blessings all mine and 10,000 besides. Why? Because God's faithful. Surely he will do it. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

Hope! Hope! He will surely do it. That puts hope in you. Think about this. Think about this.

Think about God's faithfulness. You hearing that and that hitting the sails of your soul and filling them up.

It's like, Oh yes, you are faithful. Surely you will do it. It fills your soul with hope. It drives you forward.

[29 : 25] It makes you courageous. It renews your motivation. It gets you from sitting into walking. Action. Steve opened up our service with Lamentations 3 in verses 19 through 24.

I'm going to read 21 and 24, but I just want you to pay attention to the word hope. Hope surrounds God's character. But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore, I will hope in Him.

God's faithfulness. This peacemaking God is faithful. And that should put hope into our souls. Take heart. Our God will keep us until Christ's coming. His faithfulness is the divine wind that fills our souls and helps us to press on.

[30 : 36] Peace. Sanctify. Coming. Faithful. And now the fifth word. Grace. If you skip down to verse 28.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. This letter ends with grace. It's like the second prayerful benediction.

It's like Paul is saying, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, be at work among you, be palpable among you, transforming you into the image of Jesus.

Did you know that Paul ends every one of his letters with grace in the New Testament? And interestingly enough, 1 Thessalonians begins with grace and peace.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 1. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians and God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you in peace.

[31 : 38] And here, at the very end of 1 Thessalonians, verse 23, now may the God of peace sanctify you completely. And verse 28, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

That is not just random. The Apostle Paul is framing the whole book with God's grace and peace. God's grace is commonly defined as God's unmerited favor.

And what favor is getting at is God's posture towards you. And there's nothing that we have done or can do to earn God's favorable posture towards us.

You can't win God's favor because you're so sinful. Not just you, me too. We are sinful rebels deserving God's wrath.

He doesn't love us because we're lovable. He loves us because He's loving. And instead of being on the receiving end of an eternity of wrath, Christians, by God's grace, are on the receiving end of God's eternal peace.

[32 : 56] God's grace is not limited to His favorable posture towards us. It also includes His unlimited power for us. Ephesians 2.8, for by grace, you have been saved through faith.

God's grace is what saves us. God's grace is His power to save. It's His gospel power. It's grace incarnate was the appearing of Jesus Christ.

And so Jesus Christ is God's grace. His death and resurrection is His power to save, to deliver us from the domain of darkness and to transfer us into His kingdom of His beloved Son, the kingdom of peace, the kingdom of light.

And one day, because we're living in the already and not yet, that kingdom that He has beached head will one day culminate in perfect peace with God, ourselves, others, and creation.

Our salvation, this Operation Forever Peace is a working of God's powerful grace from beginning to end. Think about it this way, Christian.

[34 : 12] Think about it this way. You're an object of God's grace. He graces you. Amazing grace goes like this.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. His grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home. Grace will lead me home.

Grace alone. So I'll stand in faith by grace and grace alone. I will run this race by grace and grace alone. I will slay my sin by grace and grace alone. That's talking about our role in sanctification.

I will reach the end by grace and grace alone. That's God's role in our salvation. And did you notice whose grace?

In verse 28, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our God, our Savior, the controlling center of our lives, the coming King.

[35 : 15] He sits upon a throne of grace to help those in time of need. Anybody you need? I'm always in need. Take heart.

Your God will keep you by His grace until Christ comes. As we get closer to that day, we should have more and more hope.

Because this God of peace, this God who is faithful, surely He will do it, this God of grace who will sanctify us until that day, we have reason to hope.

Hope in that our pursuit of Christ-like holiness is not in vain. Our efforts to slay our sin, that's not in vain.

You're one day closer. hope in that hope that on the day of Christ, when He returns in glory, we will not dread His appearing in shame, but we will delight when He returns.

[36 : 31] And we want to hear those words, well done, good and faithful servant. Hope in light of all that we've given up, in light of all that we've endeavored to do, given ourselves to do, in order to help people follow Jesus, to disciple, because we've been given the Great Commission.

On that day, when Christ's return, we have hope, we have reasonable hope to say it was worth it all for the glory of His name.

Because He is worthy. And to that end, we are bound up together. We're one day closer to seeing our Lord and Savior face to face.

Let me pray. Lord Jesus, we take our cues from the end of the book of Revelation. You say, surely I'm coming soon.

And we say, come now, Lord Jesus. Amen and amen. God, would you receive our praise and would you stir our hearts to be faithful, even if it's just for the balance of today.

[37 : 50] Amen.