

# Pressing On

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Date: 12 January 2025

- [ 0 : 00 ] We begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 25.! Psalm 29 of the Psalm books. Psalm 25.
- We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7.! To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. I trust in you continually. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me.
- Verse 1 to 7, we stand to sing to God's praise. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
- I trust in you continually. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me.
- No one who sets his hope in you will ever suffer such disgrace.
- [ 1 : 26 ] But those who act with treachery, humiliating shame will face.
- O Lord, reveal to me your ways, and all your paths help me to know.
- Direct and guide me in your truth. Instruct me in the way to go.
- You are my Savior and my God.
- All day, I hope in you alone. Remember, Lord, your love and grace, which from past ages you have shown.
- [ 2 : 58 ] Do not recall my sins of youth, or my rebellious evil ways.
- Remember me in your great love. For you, O Lord, are good always.
- Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, as we gather in your name today, we are thankful for the reminder in these words that we have sung, that you are a God who is good always, and you are the one who is worth remembering in your great love.
- And we pray, Lord, that as we worship you today, that we will have you in mind in all things, that we will be able to put away other distractions that so easily come in, that we will be able to just focus on you, upon your word, upon your truth to us, upon your mercy that is new each day, and thankful for all the gracious thoughts that you have towards us.
- We thank you for this day and a time to gather in worship. We thank you for even this morning, seeing the snow having cleared and the ice having cleared so much, and thankful to be able to be out and about more safely as well.
- [ 4 : 37 ] And we just pray that you will continue to watch over us in the week ahead and keep us safe and guide us in it. We thank you for the Sunday school resuming today and the Bible class, and just pray your blessing on all our young people and the teachers to us well, Lord, that you will just be with us in these days and help us together to grow in our knowledge of you, to grow in the wonder of Jesus, the one who came for us, the one who is a savior for his people, and the one who will come again, the one who is with you even now, and we await his coming, not knowing when that will be, Lord, but making ourselves ready for it.
- Help us to do so. Bless us, Lord, we pray, as homes and families and as a community as a whole, look down upon us today and upon all your people who gather in this way, and far and wide, Lord, that your spirit would be poured out upon us.

So, look, be with us now. Go before us. Pardon our sins. And all we ask, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Just a word to the young folks before we go out to Sunday school, Bible class and tweenies.

It's good to be back together after a holiday time. I hope you all enjoyed a good holiday. It's nice to be back together. But it's been quite a strange week for us this week when all of a sudden it turned so cold and the snow and ice came.

So we don't see it very often, but it was there pretty much all of this week. And it can be beautiful to look at in many ways, but it can also be very dangerous. People slip, cars slide in it, so it can be very dangerous as well.

[ 6 : 17 ] And that makes us thankful when there are those who go out to help us in these conditions. And especially this past week, thankful for gritters going out and putting salt on the road to try and keep the ice away.

And I don't know if you've ever seen it, but in the last couple of years, everything seems to go online. And you get this map now that you can see of Scotland. And you can follow gritters around.

You can see where different gritters are, the lorries are, and many of them now have names. I don't know if you've seen this, but many of the gritters have names. I don't think they do it in our own island here in terms of tracking them, but maybe they've given them names as well.

But I was looking at some of the names that you see. And here's a few of them and see what you make of this. And these are all names that you see written on the lorry, on the side or on the front of the lorry.

There was one that was called Control Salt Delete. Another was called Grit and Bear It. Ready Salted was another one.

[ 7 : 22 ] Snowmer Simpson. That was one of them. Salt Disney. Again, you can see how they're just playing on words. Another one had I Want to Break Freeze.

And the last one I saw was Ready Spread Go. And what you see is they're giving them these names. And you see the whole idea behind it isn't just that we have a laugh about it, but what it does is it makes us aware of them.

It sort of shows us the important work that they're doing. And it just makes us show an interest in it because maybe before we just thought nothing of it. The lorries were going out and doing their work and that was it.

But it kind of highlights what they're doing and the importance of it. And it's all for our safety. All the names that you see there, they've got in mind that the work that they're doing is to clear the way for us.

And it got me to thinking as well how many names we see of Jesus. Jesus has many different names in the Bible. And they're all associated with what he's doing for us.

[ 8 : 28 ] Just like the gritters go out and prepare the way for us to go about safely, Jesus came to go ahead of us and to prepare the way for us.

And he was given more than one name. He was given many names. And I've just written down a few of the names that Jesus has as well. And they all speak to us about his power and his authority.

Christ is one name that he's given. That is the anointed one, the one sent by God. He's given the name Jesus because that means he will save his people from their sins.

He was called Emmanuel, which means God with us. He was called the rock because he's the foundation of the church, of our salvation.

He was called Redeemer because he came paying a price for us. He was called Shepherd because he guides and watches over his people.

[ 9 : 28 ] He was called the Lamb because he came to give himself as a perfect sacrifice. So you see, gritters are given all these different names just to remind us of what they're doing, the importance of them going before us.

But Jesus too is given many names. But they are all reminding us of the importance of remembering him and what he has done for us.

That he is the one who goes before us all, preparing a way for his people, keeping his people safe, and ultimately bringing them safely home.

So we're thankful that in conditions like we had this week, that there are so many people who help to keep us safe and well. We give thanks to God for everyone who helps in these times.

But we thank God too for the reminder that he is the one who goes before us and prepares a way for us. Well, thank you for listening.

[ 10 : 30 ] May God bless these thoughts too. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Amen.

We're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 119 in the Scottish Psalter, page 407 of the psalm books.

Psalm 119. We're singing at verse 89, page 407. Singing the whole of this section together.

Psalm 119 at verse 89. We'll sing from verse 89 down to the end of that section to God's praise.

We stand to sing. Thy word forever is, O Lord, in heaven settled fast, unto all generations.

[ 12 : 32 ] Thy faithfulness at last. The earth thou hast established, and it abides by thee.

This day they stand, as thou ordainst for all thy servants be.

Unless in thy most perfect law my soul's delight have found, I should have perished when as my troubles did abound.

Thy precepts I will ne'er forget, they quickening to me brought.

Lord, I am thine, O save thou me, thy precepts I have sought.

[ 14 : 24 ] For me the wicked have laid weight, me seeking to destroy.

But as I test him all he's true, consider will with joy.

an end of all perfection, here have I seen, O God, O God.

But as for thy commandment, it is exceeding broad.

We'll turn together to read God's word in 1st Thessalonians chapter 5. 1st Thessalonians chapter 5.

[ 15 : 52 ] You'll find it around page 1189. We read the whole of this chapter together. 1st Thessalonians chapter 5 at verse 1.

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

While people are saying, there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

[ 16 : 55 ] But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up just as you are doing. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything.

[ 18 : 12 ] Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. 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 with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. And may God add his blessing to that reading of his word. We'll again engage in a word of prayer. Let us pray.

Father, we do thank you for your word, and we thank you for all the instruction it gives. There is instruction there to discipline in the sense of admonish one another. But there is also the sense of encouraging one another, of being patient with one another.

And we thank you for all the variety that your word reminds us of, that life isn't just a simple black and white in so many ways, but that we have so many differences in life.

[ 19 : 27 ] We are all made in your image, and yet we are all so different in ourselves. We live in parts of the world which are so different in many different ways, when we think of the extreme weathers that we see, and we see the surroundings that we see around us.

And yet, Lord, we know that you are God and Lord of all. And so we thank you for the variety in life, but we thank you for the constancy that there is too, that you are one who does not change, that you are one God, and that there is one Saviour, Christ Jesus, and that there is one Spirit who you have poured out upon your people.

And we thank you that in those we have that unchangeable Trinity. We have God who is one and yet three persons. And we pray, Lord, that we would know your power with us in that way, the power that you are as God and Lord of all, that as you speak, Lord, that you would give us ears to hear.

The Saviour who is Christ Jesus, that we would see him more and more, that we would know him and love him and serve him. And the Holy Spirit who you have given, that we would seek not to quench that Spirit or to grieve it in any way, but indeed to be stirred up by that Spirit, to love and to good works.

And we thank you for all the encouragement that you give us, for every blessing that is ours in Christ, and for your faithfulness towards us, that you are a God who remembers.

[ 20 : 59 ] And we thank you for that each day, Lord, that you are promised to be with us, that you meet us in all our different needs, and that you are one who is faithful always towards us.

And help us, Lord, to live in light of your truth, the truth that we have just read of, that you are a, that the Lord Jesus will come again. And the truth that we have read, that we are to be prepared for that time.

And that you would indeed bless us by your word and by your Spirit today, that we would be encouraged all the more to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.

And we do thank you, Lord, for your church that you are building. Even as we have reflected on the names given to Jesus, the one who prepares the way for us, the rock was there, the one who is the cornerstone upon which the church is built.

And we thank you that you are indeed building your church. And we pray for your kingdom to come in power. For the church that you are building here in our own midst and in our town, Lord, that you will continue to be the one who guides and who helps, and who builds it to your glory.

[ 22 : 11 ] That you would call people to yourself. That sinners should be saved. That your people will be built up here. And we do pray, Lord, even in the week ahead, that you will show us your Spirit and your will for us.

And we do pray for the meeting of the Vacancy Committee to that end and this coming week on Tuesday evening as they gather. And for all of us as a congregation that we would have that prayerfully in our minds at all times.

Seeking your will for us, Lord. Seeking one who would come and minister, who would be called by you and shown to us by you. That you would give us a united spirit to that end.

And that we would know the will of God in all of these things. We do thank you, Lord, for all who help with preaching. Not just here, but throughout our islands at this time.

Especially with the many vacancies that we are experiencing just now. We thank you for all who are out proclaiming the gospel even at this time. Many who have served you over many years in congregations and who are now retired and yet still so willing to serve you.

[ 23 : 21 ] We thank you for each one. We thank you for those who are lay preachers too. For those who have other work during the week and who give time to prepare and to preach on the Lord's Day.

We thank you for everyone who you equip to that. And we pray, Lord, that you will indeed build up others. Call others to come and proclaim the glorious riches of Christ. And to serve you even in the ministry, whether it be part-time or full-time.

That we would see your hand upon us, Lord, providing for us. So remember our congregations. Remember our people. Remember our land at this time. We do commit all our ways to you.

And just pray guidance and help and wisdom towards us as a people. Remember all ends of the earth. We see so much going on around us. We see the wildfires in America and Los Angeles there just now.

And the devastation that's brought. So many lives lost there as well. And, Lord, it's hard for us just to imagine these circumstances and how quickly it changes.

[ 24 : 28 ] Lord, we pray for the fires to be quenched there and for lives to be rebuilt in the midst of it all. We think too of lands where there is war in the Middle East and the Ukraine.

In many parts of the world, Lord, we know there are tensions and conflicts. So many even hidden from us. So many losing their lives day by day in the midst of it. Not just those who are soldiers, but innocent people too.

Young people. We do pray for peace in our world. Thankful that you are a God who is able to do so much more than all that we ask or imagine. Thankful that we have that power in prayer to come to you.

And to know that you are one who is able. So, Lord, we pray that as your church, as your people, far and wide, that you would hear our pleas towards you and have mercy upon us.

[ 25 : 31 ] Remember those who are going through all kinds of trials and difficulties. Lord, we know the needs are so many around us. And we just pray, Lord, for your spirit, for your grace upon us, for your mercy to be with us.

Even as we think of Thomas of old, as he said, unless he would see your hands and your side, that he would not believe. And yet when he saw, he was so humbled. And all he could say was, my Lord and my God.

So may your will be done in all things. And may you hear our prayers. And may you pardon us for all our sins. That's all we ask. We ask in the precious name of Jesus and for his glory.

The tune is Wetherby. We're singing from verse 5 down to verse 9, the end of the Psalm. But God will surely bring you down to ruin and disgrace.

But I am like an olive plant in God's house growing free. I trust in God's unfailing love to all eternity. We'll sing from verse 5 down to the end of the Psalm to God's praise.

He trusted in his wealth and power to raise himself on high.

I'll praise you ever for your deeds.

My hope is in your name And in the presence of your saints I will extol your fame Well, we can turn back to our reading in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

We can read again at verse 19. We're going to look at really verse 12 down to verse 22.

[ 31 : 20 ] We can read again at verse 19. Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies. But test everything. Hold fast to what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil. We looked at the first part of this chapter a couple of weeks ago, just before Christmas, and we were looking at how it speaks of the coming of the Lord.

It was a time when so many were thinking of counting down to something significant. Counting down how we often do to different events that go on in our life. Whether we're thinking of Christmas or something else in life, we have a countdown towards that day.

But as we think of what it speaks of in the beginning of this chapter and the second coming of the Lord, it's not a day we can just count down to in that way because it's not a day we know when it will be.

And so there was the importance of preparing ourselves each day for that coming of the Lord. And we looked at it under three headings. We had the awareness, I think of being aware of the situation, aware of the seasons, and aware of the solution in terms of making ourselves ready.

[ 32 : 35 ] But it leads on to that, another question, in light of that, when we think of the coming of the Lord and not knowing when that day will be. And the question would be, well, what do we do in the meantime?

How do we live in the meantime? And that is what Paul addresses as he goes on in this chapter. He continues, in light of the Lord's return, as you see it, as it goes on towards the end of the chapter, in verse 23, it says, 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 the Lord Jesus.

So, at the end of what we're looking at today, it's speaking there about the coming of the Lord again. And it's what we do in the meantime, how we prepare ourselves. So, Paul gives instructions to us in this section in between verse 12 down to verse 22, how we are to live, how we are to press on, how we are to go forward.

So, there are instructions for our lives now, but also instructions in light of eternity. And I read somewhere this week just how people live their lives differently in light of life and in light of eternity.

Some people will live with that, well, life is short, enjoy it, that kind of attitude towards things. Life is short, enjoy it. Whereas, more importantly, we should look at it this way, eternity is long, prepare for it.

[ 34 : 14 ] It's not just a case of life now. Make the most of it, enjoy it as you want to please yourself, but in light of eternity, which is long, which is endless, prepare for that.

So, live your life in that way. But, these two ideas remind us how often we are pulled in different directions. How often we have so many things affecting us and speaking to us around us that are pulling us in these two different directions, especially.

It is that sense of life is short, just enjoy it. One way we're being pulled in that direction or other times we're thinking of eternity, it is long, prepare for that.

What's more important to us? Surely, it is eternity, but we're pulled in different directions so often. Just look back over the last week for yourself.

Beginning on Monday, I'm sure we all had plans for different things that we were going to do. But how did these plans work out?

[ 35 : 26 ] Maybe you had a list of things you wanted to achieve between Monday and Saturday, a to-do list as we so often have. And yet, if you look back, I'm sure, like me, you find that there were many things that you'd planned to do at the start of the week that are still there to be done because something has taken you away.

Your attention has been taken away to something else. And sometimes these things happen. Interruptions come. Distractions come. There's nothing we can do about them. They're legitimate.

But other times, we're distracted just for the wrong reasons. We think, well, this is important, but I can go and just procrastinate and do something else in the meantime.

I'll just put that away. It's often the case for us. It can be like that for things during the week, but what about when we think back to the last Lord's Day?

What you heard last Lord's Day was in the morning or the evening. Perhaps there was something that spoke to you, something that pricked your conscience. and made you think, there's something I need to address here in my life.

[ 36 : 30 ] I need to prayerfully look at this situation in my life and think, how are things going to change? How are things going to be different? But did it happen?

Perhaps you're left here with that sense of, I need to look at this seriously, prayerfully. But then there's distractions. You're pulled in different directions. Interruptions come, distractions come.

And so it goes on, the important things are left aside. And you become, well, life is short, let me get this done. And you forget, eternity is long.

I need to prepare for that. The church at Thessalonica was a young church, young believers, young in the faith. And as you read through it, you find there were people who were pulled in different directions themselves as well.

They knew what they needed ultimately was Christ. And yet at the same time, there were those around them who were pulling them away from that and pulling them in different directions.

[ 37 : 34 ] And so as Paul is writing to them, it's to encourage them to have that focus. And how to live in light of the Lord's return, how to live in light of eternity, is to have a focus always on Christ, to look to him, because we're so easily pulled in different directions.

And so I want us to look at three things from this passage today, just to help us to live in light of the Lord's return, enabling us to live in light of what our priorities should be with a focus always on Christ.

The hymn in Christ alone it speaks at one point, it says this, as he stands in victory, since curse has lost its grip on me, for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

It speaks here of since curse has lost its grip on me as we're trusting in him. But sin is still there. And that's the challenge for us as we live our lives.

Sin is still there. And how do we seek to live a more Christ-glorifying life? Well, in verse 19 into verse 21, there's three things there that we want to see that helps us.

[ 38 : 58 ] And Paul, putting it in three I's, if you like, we have inflame, ingest, and inspect. Three things that we want to do in life that will help us live a life that's more focused on Christ.

And the first is this inflame. In verse 19, it says, do not quench the Spirit. So the opposite in terms of don't quench it would be to make sure that the Spirit is giving life.

The Spirit is the fire in your soul. The one that is guiding you in life. There is to be obedience to the Holy Spirit. And that's the first thing that we want to see here.

When we're pulled in different directions, it can be that quenching effect on the Spirit because we know the Spirit is working. When the Spirit is speaking to us, and yet we can grieve the Spirit, we can quench the Spirit by being disobedient.

And when you look at how Paul and Silvanus or Silas is another translation and Timothy, how did they end up in Thessalonica? Was this where they were going to?

[ 40 : 10 ] Was this where they were aiming for? No. But they were led there by the Holy Spirit. When you go back to the book of Acts, it shows us more of how Paul came to Thessalonica and other places.

And when he came to Thessalonica, it was in this way, in Acts 16, verse 7. They were on their journey, they were making their way, but it says, when they had come to Mysia, they attempted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

You see, the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So passing by Mysia, they went down to throw us. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

A man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, come over to Macedonia and help us. The Spirit was prompting. The Spirit was moving.

And they could have just said, well, no, we're going this way. But they knew that would be quenching the Spirit, being disobedient to the will of God. And so they put themselves into the Lord's hands.

[ 41 : 19 ] They followed the prompting of the Spirit. Otherwise, they would have been disobedient. They would have been grieving the Holy Spirit. And so we, in our own lives, we so often quench the Spirit, I'm sure.

We all do it at some point. Because the Spirit is working, and yet we're disobedient. We go in a different direction. We're pulled in different directions. And we follow our own feelings.

We follow our own emotions. We follow our own desires. All of these things. And we're quenching the Spirit. Because the work of the Spirit is to fan into flame the life that is in us.

the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, as you see in the book of Acts. It's the power of the church. We are alive in Christ through the Spirit.

It is the fire that is not there when we are dead in our trespasses and sins, as Ephesians speaks about. But by grace we are made alive. That fire comes into our soul.

[ 42 : 27 ] And the Lord puts this fire in us. But we are not to quench that Spirit. We are to keep it alive and flame it in our lives and our hearts.

Somebody spoke of it as the wick that burns in oil in this way. Imagine a wick that is placed in oil and then lit. If the oil runs out the wick burns.

But as long as there is oil the wick doesn't burn. See, when you watch the wick in the oil, it's the oil that's burning. It's not the wick. But as soon as the oil is gone, the wick will soon burn out.

So the person said, as long as we are living in dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, we do not burn out. But the question is, what's burning?

What's burning? And that's the question that the people in Thessalonica had to face up to. What was burning in their lives? What were they feeding into their souls?

[ 43 : 31 ] What fire were they feeding? In terms of what direction they were being pulled in. And being pulled in different ways, different directions.

It's pulled away from the Word of God just like pouring cold water on the fire and it goes out. And we can experience that. We can experience it in our own lives.

We go away from church. We go away from a place where we enjoyed good fellowship or good preaching or just a good spirit. We go away and yet so soon afterwards we quench that.

The fire just seems to go out. And sometimes it's by our own choosing, our own making the wrong decisions. We don't feed that flame the way that we should.

See, there's two types of fires in life. There's one we could say it's the essential fire. The fire for our boilers. The fire in our fireplace.

[ 44 : 30 ] The one that gives off warmth and heat and keeps us well and happy at home in that sense and keeps things moving along. But there's another fire that we see that's destruction.

It's full of destruction. And we see it in this past week in Los Angeles, the devastation that a wildfire can bring. How these homes, it's a horrendous picture to see.

Hard to comprehend the destruction, the devastation. Places just wiped out in no time. And that's the danger with the fires that we have in life as well.

The fire of sin that can so easily just devastate our lives. Or the fire of the spirit that just keeps us going. But which one is it that we're feeding? And which one are you extinguishing?

So Paul is saying here, do not quench the spirit. When the spirit is working, you know yourself when it is. Don't quench it.

[ 45 : 31 ] Don't turn away from it. Don't let yourself be pulled away in a different direction. Seek the Lord. Pour out your heart to him. Pray to him to help you along the way and to keep that fire aflame.

to keep that fire burning in your heart. So do not quench the spirit. You see then in verse 20, immediately Paul says then, do not despise prophecies.

So again we think here, what's he saying to us? Do not quench the spirit. Keep that fire going. But here we think of what we ingest, how we ingest something.

Do not despise the prophecies. How do we feed the fire? Well we feed it by giving it fuel. If you cut the fuel, the fire goes out.

Simple as that. And so we need to fuel the fire of our souls as well. And what he says here is do not despise the prophecies.

[ 46 : 37 ] What were the prophecies that he was speaking about here? Well the people would be familiar with the prophets of the Old Testament such as we are too. Prophets role was to proclaim the word of God that was given to them.

And it didn't matter what was given, they had to tell the people what they needed to hear. But what so often happened was as they proclaimed these words, they were hard words for the people and the people just pushed it away.

They despised the prophecies, they despised the word of God, they despised the prophets themselves for bringing this word to them. And again we see what Paul is saying here, he's saying do not despise prophecies, do not despise the word of God because it's so important for you.

God spoke in the Old Testament through his prophets. as we come into the New Testament we see that in the days gone past he spoke through the prophets but now he has spoken through his son Jesus Christ.

And so as he's saying do not despise prophecies, he's talking here not just about the prophets of old but he's talking about Jesus Christ as well. Do not despise his word, do not despise him.

[ 47 : 59 ] this is the word that has been given for you. This is the word that has been given to the church, to the people of God.

And we are to hear what the word of God says. But so many people just want to push this word away, despise the word, despise Jesus who is the word that became flesh.

Push him away. But there's a warning, do not despise it. Don't live your life in that way. Life is short, enjoy it.

Push this away because God has given his word to us that we might prepare for eternity. We have the word of God but so many people only hear part of this word.

They focus on just maybe parts of the text. What does Jesus say to his people? What did people so often hear from him? Words like, in this world you will have troubles and they stop listening.

[ 49 : 11 ] Stop listening at that point. Troubles. I don't want troubles. I just want to do things my own way. Blessed are the persecuted.

Again, stop listening at that point. Persecution. I'm going to have to suffer that to follow Jesus. I want nothing of that. Push it away. Despise it.

Take up your cross. Again, it's just like stop listening at that point. There's going to be hardship. There's going to be trials. That's not for me. I despise these things.

So instead of ingesting it, instead of taking it in, they're just pushing it away. But by doing this, they're not seeing what God has given to us.

The full word of God, the full prophecy as it were, because we stop listening when we hear the hard bits. But when Jesus says, blessed are those who are persecuted, it doesn't stop there.

[ 50 : 12 ] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for my sake. And he says, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And you miss out. You listen to the first part and think, I don't want that, but then you miss out on the second part.

Miss out on the kingdom of God. In this world you will have many troubles, Jesus said. Oh, I don't want to know that, I don't want to hear that.

But Jesus says, but be of good courage, for I have overcome the world. So by just listening to parts, by pushing it away, by not ingesting it, we are seeing just half the story, half the truth.

And we're not listening, we're despising the prophecies, and despising the one who is the word himself. But when it's proclaimed, we need to hear it in all its fullness.

When you think of Romans 8, that wonderful passage, it speaks of so many of the trials of life, but yet nothing shall separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

[ 51 : 26 ] There are difficulties along the way, and do not despise the fact that there is, do not despise the word of God that says there is, but instead ingest it, receive it, be thankful to God for it, because it is a wider, a whole truth to be seen, that he has overcome, that nothing shall separate us from that love of God in Christ Jesus.

So we need to hear the word of God. That is what prepares us for eternity. God the third and final thing I want us to see here is it says in verse 21, but test everything.

Inspect, look for yourself at this truth. As with the Old Testament into the New, there was a problem, same problem that exists today.

How do we know what to believe? How do we know what is right? Because we are indeed pulled in all kinds of different directions. But Paul says but test everything and hold fast to what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil. In Thessalonica, as in many cities of Paul's day, there was the place at the gate or the marketplace where information was shared, where people gathered and everybody had all kinds of different opinions that they would hear this is what you are to believe.

[ 53 : 03 ] No, this is what you are to believe. And that's very often where you would find Paul himself going to the midst of the marketplace, to the city gate where the people were gathered.

He would hear what they were thinking but also speak to them the truth of God's word. And the people then had to test for themselves inspect messages that we hear.

An abundance of voices speaking to us opinions being put across. Said last week, we're drowning in information but lacking in wisdom.

And if you want to believe something from God's word that suits any position in this world, you will find someone who will tell you, here's a text. But so often it's twisted.

So often it's not truth. It's just something that's a truth that is a half truth. And it's not the full word of God. So what are we to do? Well Paul's advice for us here is test everything.

[ 54 : 11 ] What do we test it against? We test it against the whole word of God. What does the Bible say in its entirety? Thessalonica was a place that was pulled in different directions.

But in the place where Paul and Silas went to after being in Thessalonica a place called Berea. You read of this in Acts chapter 17.

Again you see just that missionary journey continuing and what it says of the people in Berea was this now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica they received the word with all eagerness examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so it's what Paul is saying here to Thessalonica they were doing in Berea test everything so they received the word with eagerness examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so so it's a case of being immersed in the word of God testing the truth inspecting it for ourselves we see so many fake products in the markets today something that looks so good and so like the real thing but the price is so much cheaper you think well I'll take it but it's fake and it's dangerous and so it is with the word of

God we inspect it to make sure it meets the standard and what we hear we are to hear and examine for ourselves and see if these things are so and we thank God that we have the whole word of truth for this and that we have the spirit who prompts us in this way and it's this word that tells us the need to be together in this you see back in verse 12 he begins this section by saying we ask you brothers there's this togetherness in all of it and as he goes on you see in verse 13 and 14 how he speaks of being at peace among yourselves and then he says we urge you brothers admonish the idle encourage the faint hearted help the weak be patient with them all as you read through this passage and read through it in its whole in this whole section and just see how we are to live our lives in light of the

Lord's coming it's in this togetherness inflaming the spirit and not quenching us ingesting taking in the word of God and inspecting it in that way where it leads to a more God glorifying life not just individually but collectively so when it says admonish discipline it's always with the love of Christ in mind for people's good and when it speaks about encourage the faint hearted again it's that sense of doing it for the glory of God not looking down on people but encouraging people help the weak again it just goes on be patient with them all we're pulled in different directions we go away from here with the spirit stirring in our heart but no sooner are we out the door and something takes us away and instead of encouraging we're putting down instead of being patient we're impatient!

[ 58 : 00 ] All of these things can so quickly be taken from us and so as Paul is saying here live your life not just in the short time life is short enjoy it but in light of eternity preparing for that and to do so is to take heed of the word of God what it is saying to us do not quench the spirit inflame it feed that in your soul not despise the prophecies don't turn away from the word of God because some of the things are hard for us to see or hear but see the fullness of the word the one who has overcome the world and test everything look to yourself but look to God and see Lord your word is truth help me to understand and to know you're not alone but that we do this together even when we think of our

Bible study once a month these truths alone it's so good to gather and share together around these important truths to inspect them to test them and to share them together and see here is the word of God that fans the flame of faith in our life that feeds our soul through the word of God that keeps us going in life and prepares us for eternity so may we hear God's word today and may it be blessed to us and help us to live in light of the Lord's return preparing ourselves even now let us pray our father in heaven we do thank you for your word and help us even today as we go out of here that we would not quench the spirit that we would not despise the prophecies that we would even go home and test everything that we have heard and hold fast to what is good and abstain from every form of evil

Lord we thank you for your spirit that helps us and we pray to know the power even in our midst today of you ministering to us as we ask all seeking your glory amen we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 146 verse 5 page 446 of the psalm books psalm 146 at verse 5 oh happy is that man and blessed whom Jacob's God doth aid whose hope upon the Lord doth rest and on his God is stayed we're going to sing verse 5 to 7 the tune of Stroud Water and we stand to sing O happy is that man and blessed whom

Jacob's God doth hate whose hope upon the heart doth rest and on his goddess stay who made the earth and heaven spy who made the swelling deep and all that is within the same who truth doth ever keep who righteous judgment executes for those oppressed that be who to the hungry giveth food

God sets the prisoners free free after the benediction I'll go to the door to my right we'll close with the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forever more amen to