

“Sincerely Yours, Paul”

1 Thessalonians 5.23-28

Paul loved the believers in Thessalonica; he couldn't return to visit them, so he wrote this letter. He has exhorted and encouraged them; now he 'farewells' them with a prayer, a few final thoughts, ending with a reminder for them to never lose sight of God's grace.

A Parting Prayer (23-24)

May the God of peace (the God who gives peace)...

...sanctify you entirely (may you be spiritually complete)...

...and may your spirit, soul, and body (every part of you)...

...be preserved complete, without blame (pure and holy)...

...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (one day soon!).

Our faithful God will never fail us!

Final Considerations (25-28)

- *Pray for us*
- *Greet all from us, and read this letter to everyone*
- *Never lose sight of God's grace!*



1. Paul ends his first epistle to the Thessalonians with a prayer, a few personal comments, and a reminder of God's grace. Focus on the prayer first (5.23-24). Paul often referred to God in this way (Rom. 15.33; 16.20; 2 Cor. 13.11; Phil. 4.9; 2 Thess. 3.16; cf. Heb. 13.20). What facets of God's peace can you discern in these different epistles? What peace does God give?
2. Paul prays that God will *sanctify entirely* the Thessalonians and *preserve them complete, without blame*. While perfect holiness is God's absolute standard (cf. Matt. 5.48), that is impossible this side of heaven. In your own words, what is Paul asking God to do for us? What part do trials play in us becoming *mature and complete* in our Christian lives (cf. James 1.2-4)? What part did trials play in the Thessalonians believers' spiritual growth?
3. Paul prays that the Thessalonians' *spirit and soul and body* will be kept blameless till Jesus comes back. This probably refers to three areas which affect our spiritual lives. Our *spirit* enables us to communicate with God. Our *soul* (Greek ψυχή – *psyche*) is our introspective thoughts and feelings. Our *body*, of course, is what others see, and that by which we relate to them. What is Paul's practical desire for us in each of these areas?
4. When Paul says, *Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass*, what does He mean? On what basis and at what time will believers be presented blameless? See John 10.28-29 and Jude 24-25. Leon Morris writes: *It is profoundly satisfying to the believer that in the last resort what matters is not his feeble hold on God, but God's strong grip on him!*
5. Reflect on Paul's closing thoughts. What does his request for prayer show? Although Paul severely warned some who were sexually immoral or lazy, what do verses 26-27 show about his heart for them? Verse 28 ends the epistle emphasizing the same thing the opening verse did: Grace. Reflect on how that word sums up the essence of the Christian life.