

PAUL'S SALUTATION

--1st Thessalonians 5:23-28--

INTRODUCTION:

Paul's salutation is made up of three parts. It begins with a closing prayer that points the Thessalonians and us to the only source of power that we can rely upon to obey the exhortations that Paul has given us in this final chapter of his letter. That power is found in God, who sanctifies the obedient believer. Saving faith and sanctification are two inseparable acts of God, because those whom God justifies, He also sanctifies. Paul had already acknowledged in this letter that the Thessalonians had responded in saving faith to his preaching of the gospel and had been justified by God, and now as we come to the conclusion of his letter he prays for their complete sanctification. As we look at this prayer, we will learn several key things about sanctification. The second part of Paul's salutation is three personal requests that he asks the Thessalonians to do for him. The third and final part of this letter is his closing benediction.

- I. PAUL'S PRAYER (1st Thessalonians 5:23-24)
 - a. Paul begins his conclusion with a prayer for God to _____ the believers entirely.
 - b. This aspect is called "positional sanctification" which God does at the moment in which He _____ each person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:10, 14: 2 Corinthians 2:17)
 - c. The second element of sanctification is the future aspect, which is called _____ or complete sanctification. (Philippians 3:20-21)
 - d. The third element of sanctification is the present reality, or what is called _____ or experiential sanctification. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
 - e. God is the _____ of sanctification. (Colossians 1:28-29)
 - f. In this prayer Paul identifies God as the God of _____ because it is peace that is found in salvation.

- g. Paul goes on in this prayer praying that the _____, soul, and _____ of each believer would be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- h. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the _____ of God. (Philippians 1:6; Titus 2:14)

II. PAUL'S REQUESTS (1st Thessalonians 5:25-27)

- a. After praying for the believers of Thessalonica, Paul puts before them three personal _____.
- b. Paul first asks the Thessalonians to _____ for himself, Silas, and Timothy.
- c. Paul's second request was that the Thessalonians display loving _____ to one another.
- d. Paul's third request was delivered by Paul in the strongest of terms, and that request was that they would _____ to God's Word.

III. PAUL'S BENEDICTION (1st Thessalonians 5:28)

- a. Paul closed his first letter to the Thessalonians with a benediction, praying that the Thessalonian believers would experience the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Paul begins and ends each of his epistles with a mention of the _____ that is available to all through Jesus Christ.
- c. He does this because _____ is at the heart of Christian theology.

CONCLUSION:

Paul closes his first letter by praying for the Thessalonians' complete sanctification. Paul then requested that they pray for him, that they demonstrate their love for one another. Then he requested that they submit to the Word of God. Then Paul closed praying that they would experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's apply what Paul has said to our own lives. Praying for our sanctification, praying for our pastor, showing loving affection to one another, and submitting to the Word of God all the while experiencing God's grace in our life daily through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.