

We have read the solemn exhortation regarding quenching the Spirit in the assembly. This differs from grieving the Spirit mentioned in Ephesians 5 in connection with our personal behavior. If we have grieved the Spirit personally will we quench the spirit by our presence in assembly meetings? Well, certainly the presence of one or more believers who have grieved the Spirit will dampen His liberty to move in the midst. Those who come self examined may sense the lack and can pray that it be exposed. If one becomes aware he has sinned against another he is to go to him and settle things before praying, praising or ministering the word there. Self judgement and inter-personal reconciliation is called for by the Lord Himself, Matthew 5:23-24. It applies to sisters as well, even though they do not vocally pray or minister the word. And the corresponding word to one who has been harmed by another is given in Matthew 18:15-18. He is to actively seek to "gain" one who has sinned against him. Tiffs within families, between siblings, between married couples or between parents and children are not exempt either. Feuds between families can destroy the testimony of an assembly of saints, and eventually destroy the local assembly itself. The Lord desires peace between us. And he desires our sanctification. It is His will, 4:3. So Paul prays that He will sanctify them/us wholly. No niche or crevice left un-cleaned. Not only are we to be collectively sanctified we are to be personally blameless.

Not only our outward conduct and demeanor is to be blameless but our whole self, spirit, soul and body. If our inward thoughts were exposed and revealed would they be found blameless? If our inward feeling and desires were revealed would they be found blameless? What if unwanted thoughts come to mind or unwanted feelings arise within? Have we dismissed them or have we entertained them a while, or fantasized, or even carried them out in the body? Come to the Lord and repent, now.

Yet we are told that we will be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Despite our failures and sinful thoughts and acts, held blameless. Blameless, internally and externally, because of the blessed, finished work of Christ on the Cross. When the Lord is publically revealed, and appears before the whole world as its King, He will present us at His side with Him. Our rewards will be presented then, too. The Olympic games gold medal ceremony is a faint picture of that Day. The Day of the Lord! And each of His saints will receive reward, some more than others, but all of His own are winners, 1Corinthians 9, Phil 3, 2Tim 4, Heb 12.

He will be glorified highly when our blameless conduct and faithful service for Him receives public recognition. What grace! He rewards **us** for things **He** enables and empowers us to do! We deserve none of it! But could we

expect less from the God and Father we have come to know? He who gave His only begotten for us? He is faithful! He has called us! He will do it! He will complete what He set out to do when He called us—what He purposed when He planned to call us. Yes, have no fear, no doubts, **HE WILL DO IT!** For He is able. And He is just in doing it.

Paul asked them to pray for him. He is not "Super Saint" or some saintly hero. (Well, maybe he is.) But if He needed prayer we certainly do. And we ought to faithfully honor requests for prayer. Prayer unites us together with the one we are praying for and with one another as well. How can we harm one we are praying for? How can we "succeed" as saints if we do not pray for one another?

Reminding us of earlier chapters, the loving unity of the assembly in Thessalonica is encouraged to the end. An affectionate, holy greeting is appropriate for brothers and sisters in Christ.

Then Paul make a rather unusual, firm request. He insists that this letter be read publically to all the holy brethren. Who are the holy brethren? A special class outstanding among the others? They are simply all the brethren (and sisters) who are in the assembly there. The term "holy" fits us all. He insists that all the assembly hear what he has written, youngest to oldest, weakest to strongest. They must have had quite a series of Bible Readings together over this epistle.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

By Ron Canner, November 3, 2005.

NOTE. Each is a member of the body and entitled to hear and responsible to heed all ministry and communications directed to the assembly. How can the assembly function as one body if a few take it upon themselves to **act** on behalf of the whole without **allowing the hearts and consciences of every member to be engaged?** Such censorship is a dangerous thing. Usurping authority is also. 3 John documents such a case that occurred elsewhere some years after the Thessalonians received this letter. The Thessalonians themselves apparently received a fake letter made out as to be from Paul. He had to write to them again to clarify the truth. Later the Galatians received false teaching also. Paul wrote them and fiercely denounced that "false gospel." **Elders** should provide oversight to prevent needless consternation that might arise among the saints from one thoughtlessly publicizing and spreading unprofitable information in letters (or e-mails) or personal conversations. Let Philippians 4:8 and Hebrews 12:12-15 govern. "Think on these things." R. C.