Joyful, Prayerful, Thankful

I Thessalonians 5:16-28

Introduction

How do you measure someone’s spiritual health?

You would look at their:

- Head – Beliefs
- Heart – Attitudes
- Hands – Behaviors and Actions

In I Thessalonians 5:12-28, Paul talks about the qualities that are needed in a healthy church. They are also the signs of a healthy spiritual life.

I. A Joyful Heart. I Thess. 5:16-18

*Be joyful always.*

Joy is not the same as happiness. Joy is deeper and more abiding.

Jesus wasn’t always happy, but he was full of joy.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” John 15:11

What makes Christian joy unique is that it shines brightest under the most adverse circumstances.

*Pray constantly.*

This is the Christian’s heartbeat. Our thoughts are never very far from God and we find ourselves turning to him throughout the day.

How do we learn to do that? By practice.

We learn to pray by praying with others.

*Give thanks in all circumstances.*

A grateful heart is one of the marks of a healthy believer.

We trust in God’s sovereignty and goodness.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28
“This is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” applies to all three instructions.

It is God’s will that we be joyful, prayerful and thankful.

II. A Discerning Mind. I Thess. 5:19-22

There are 5 instructions here that apply to worship, but they are also important for our personal spiritual life.

- Do not put out the Spirit’s fire.
- Do not treat prophecies with contempt.
- Test everything.
- Hold on to the good.
- Avoid every kind of evil.

Worship in the early church was similar and different from what we experience today.

- Similar – They met for worship, prayer, fellowship, communion and teaching.
- Different – They met in house churches. The New Testament was still being written.

We have the whole Bible – Old Testament and New Testament, but we still need discernment.

We need to be teachable and we need to know the Word of God.

III. A Confident Faith. I Thess. 5:23-28

Paul ends this letter with a benediction.

This is our future. This is our great hope.

“The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”

We have hope because the God who called us to himself will never give up on us. He is faithful and he will complete what he has begun.

Conclusion

So how is your spiritual health?

Are you joyful, prayerful and thankful?

Are you listening to the Word and to the Spirit?

Are you growing in wisdom and discernment?

Do you believe that God will do what he has promised?