

Mid Week • 1 Thessalonians 3-5

INTRODUCTION

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians is a window into *primitive Christianity*.

As I mentioned last week, this was the first letter he wrote – the first we have at any rate.

It was written from Corinth just a few months after Paul had first planted the church in Thessalonica on the coast of Macedonia.

In it we find some of the issues those first believers had to grapple with.

We also catch a glimpse of the simple yet powerful difference the gospel made wherever it was preached and accepted.

These early Christians saw the church simply as a new community; a new family that transcended the ties of blood, race, social class or any other man-made distinction.

“Church” wasn't a place they went – it was something they were a *part* of.

Their faith wasn't a religion – it was a brand new relationship with a God who was far more than a disinterested deity who needed to be appeased with elaborate rituals and offerings.

This God they had come to know loved them.

Love was not something their prior gods had offered.

They promised power, wealth, health, influence, security – but not love.

When these first believers met, there was no choir in robes singing well-rehearsed anthems.

There were no stained-glass windows.

There weren't even any bulletins.

Early accounts of the first church meetings tell us they would meet early in the morning before the sun came up, sing a hymn of praise to God, read from the scripture, pray for one another, sing again, and then disperse to their daily duties.

In the evening, they would gather again, this time to share a meal, each bringing what they could share.

As their dessert, they would pass round a loaf and a cup of wine in celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Then they would worship and pray.

This is precisely the kind of thing that was taking place in Thessalonica.

And as the believers met and grew in their faith, they became an example to all those who knew them.

Soon others were being converted – and these led to others, and to others.

And though the opposition to them grew, their ranks continued to grow.

In Chapter 1, as we saw last week – the Thessalonians church had become a sterling example far and wide of love for one another and faithfulness to the Lord.

We have a lot to learn from the Thessalonians.

Today – we tend to gauge the success of a church on how big it is.

We look at it's physical building and the size and number of it's programs.

We look to see how active the members are.

God uses a different criteria to judge a church.

In Revelation 2 we read about the Church at Ephesus – it was the church of the 10 page bulletin – they were busy and they were doctrinally right-on.

But Jesus rebukes them and calls them to task for one simple yet profound failure – they had left their first love.

Their passion for Him had cooled.

Love no longer was the central motivation for all their activity.

They had a well-oiled machine that was chugging along nicely.

But they had forgotten why they even existed – to love and glorify God.

Jesus warned them – return to Me or I will take away your place among My people.

In other words, outwardly the machine called the Church at Ephesus might go on, but from Christ's perspective, it would not longer be a church – just a religious machine.

How many so-called churches today are nothing more than well-oiled religious machines?

God does not want *business* – He doesn't want or *need* our *activity*.

He wants us! He wants our hearts and minds.

He wants us to realize how much He loves us and to let that love kindle in our hearts a love of response.

Then He wants to stoke that love into a roaring fire that burns away anything unworthy of Him.

He wants to stoke that love into a fire that will warm others and draw them to Him like a moth to the light.

To be the church means to be a people of love; love for God and love for others.

The Thessalonians knew and lived that.

May God's Spirit rekindle that truth in the Church today.

CHAPTER 3

¹Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ²and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, ³that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Paul had had to flee Thessalonica just a few weeks after he arrived due to the hostile opposition of the Jews.

It wasn't that Paul was a coward.

If it had been *his* decision alone he would have stayed and fought it out.

But Jason, one of the new converts and a man who emerged as something of a leader in the new church in Thessalonica, had posted a bond with the authorities that Paul would leave and not return to the city for a period of time.

Paul's hands were tied, so he left.

But he didn't feel real confident with the amount of grounding in the faith he had done with them.

So at the earliest opportunity he sent Timothy *back* to do some follow up and to get a report on just how they were faring in the face of persecution.

Paul was in Athens when he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica.

After Athens, Paul moved on to Corinth where he spent some time.

It was from Corinth that he wrote this letter after Timothy had returned to him with his report.

Paul wanted to remind them that suffering persecution for the sake of Christ was to be expected.

He knew from personal experience that such opposition and persecution caused some who were weak to go back and he feared this is what might have happened to a large number of the Thessalonians.

As a persecutor of the Church, Paul had seen Christians die as martyrs, while others forsook the faith rather than endure the pain and trial of persecution.

Brothers and sisters, let's not forget that as we follow Christ, we will be persecuted.

We have it pretty easy here in the US but there are places around the world where right now, Christians are being tortured, murdered, and made to suffer all kinds of indignities simply because of their faith.

Despite ill-treatment and threat of death, Christians in Sudan, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and dozens of other places hold fast to their confession.

Yet here in the US there are many believers who moan and weep when they face the barest opposition.

Some hide their faith rather than risk being rejected and called names.

Jesus promised His disciples that following Him meant the hatred and hostility of this world.

Paul repeats that promise and warning here.

Peter said the same thing in 1 Peter 4 (12ff).

What makes persecution easier to endure is when we face it in concert with one another.

What enabled the Thessalonians to brave the opposition and keep growing was their love for one another that bound them together.

Divide and conquer has always been an effective strategy of warfare and Satan uses it often.

We must resist him by maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Peter says the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

Have you ever watched how lions hunt?

They chase a heard and try to separate one from the herd.

By itself, it becomes easy prey but there is safety in remaining with the others.

What happens to a coal that falls away from the rest of the coals?

It's fire dies and goes out.

It needs the heat of the other coals to keep it lit.

Don't let the enemy cut your out of the herd – don't let persecution or trials separate you from the fellowship of those whose hearts burn with holy desire and passion for God.

⁶But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you—⁷therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

Things were not going well for Paul in Corinth.

Just as the Thessalonians were being persecuted, so Paul was facing opposition in Corinth.

It was really eating at him that the work in Thessalonica might have been in vain if everyone had bailed because of the trouble there.

When Tim returned with the news that the church was not only doing fine but was thriving, it excited Paul and brought tremendous courage and strength to him.

Paul knew there were those in Thessalonica among the unbelieving Jews who were trying to defame him.

It seemed no matter where Paul went, there was always a group of guys who would come in after he was gone and try to deny his apostleship.

They called him all kinds of names and tried desperately to discredit him and his ministry.

Tim told Paul that the Thessalonians believers loved him and desired to see him as fervently as he desired to see them.

⁹For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Despite the ban on his return to them, Paul was praying for a way to be made for him to come.

He believed he had more work to do among them and ached to be able to do it.

Though he couldn't go – he could still pray – and pray he did – fervently!

He prayed that their love for one another, already a testimony far and wide, would grow even more!

He prayed for their purity and holiness before God.

I want to encourage you to read Paul's letters and note the content of his prayers for the churches.

His prayer centers on three things:

1) That they would grow in their knowledge of Christ

- 2) He prayed for their love to abound
 - 3) He prayed for their holiness
- He prayed for a *passion* for Christ, one another, purity.

1 THESSALONIANS 4

¹Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

At the end of ch. 3 he tells them he was *praying* they would increase in love and holiness.

Now he turns and exhorts them to make it their aim to abound in the same things.

³For this is the will of God, . . .

Stop right there! How many times have you wanted to now what the Lord's will was in your life?

When I read this, I get excited because here I am going to find out what the Lord's will is.

³For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

Sanctification – that's one of those big bible words that sounds so extremely religious.

"Sanctification" sounds a lot like *sanctimonious*.

The word *sanctification* means to be set apart from common use to a special use.

Many of us have two sets of dishes; the everyday ware and the fine china we only use on special occasions like Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.

That's the sanctified dinner ware; it's set aside from the common for a special use.

In the NT, sanctification refers to the process believers go through in which the old habits of behavior and thinking are changed so that we move from living the mundane common life of the world to live in the Kingdom of God.

It's from this word that we get the word "saint" which refers to someone who is set apart to God.

That's what all believers are – set apart from the world to Jesus.

Sanctification is God's will for you!

Your life is the story of God's Spirit working in you to affect change.

The old habits, the old patterns of living that used to characterize your life, are being replaced by new ones.

Let me use an analogy.

If you use ATM's you know that every so often you find an ATM monitor that has an image "burned" into it.

Even when you go to a different screen, there's this residual image etched in to the coating on the back of the glass.

Our bodies are like that ATM monitor.

For years we lived a certain way that etched an image on to the screen of our lives.

When we were born again, God put a new light source in us that now shines on the screen of our lives.

Problem is, the old image is still there.

The source that originally created it is gone, but the habits, the image is still there.

Sanctification and the process of spiritual growth is one in which God, through the Power of the Holy Spirit, erases that old image and burns a new one into us – one of holiness and Christ-likeness.

Paul moves on to deal with a specific issue of sanctification the Thessalonians needed to be reminded of.

³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who^o has also

given us His Holy Spirit.

The specific issue of sanctification Paul addresses is sex.

Apparently something in Timothy's report moved Paul to write about this.

It's not hard to understand why – for history tells us that the Greek world of this time was extremely loose in regards to sexual morality.

If you want to get an idea of what kind of things were taking place just think of New Orleans during Mardi Gras or San Francisco during Gay & Lesbian Pride Week.

The boundaries of sexual morality were down and purity was considered prudish and unsophisticated.

The gospel of Jesus Christ and life in the Kingdom of God lives by a different standard than the world, and Paul reminds them that it was God's will that they be sexually pure.

Note what he says . . .

you should abstain from sexual immorality;

The word *immorality* refers to all sex that's outside the boundaries proscribed by God.

Those boundaries are given in Hebrews 13:4 as well as a host of other passages.

God created and intends sex for the union of one man and one woman in marriage.

Anything outside this is immorality.

While there is great freedom and latitude within the context of marriage, anything outside these boundaries is sin.

It doesn't matter what the world says.

Nor does it matter how a person feels or how in love they are.

Morality is not determined by hormones or the moment, it's determined by God.

God says – abstain from sex outside of marriage.

⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, our bodies are the vessels of the Holy Spirit.

And that when we engage in sexual sin, we are sinning against our own bodies which are temples of the Spirit.

This simply ought not be!

Instead of defiling the temple of our bodies, we need to know how to take possession of this gift God has given and use it for Him rather than sin.

⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Lust is a powerful hunger that if not controlled can turn into a passion that will move us to sin.

Lust is simply another word for desire – but it's desire that seeks satisfaction in that which is prohibited.

The Christian is someone who is supposed to realize that the lusts that once dominated our lives did not truly satisfy.

If they did, then we would not have become believers at all.

Lust didn't satisfy – that's why we came to Christ.

As believers, God wants to turn those inner desires from the things the world offers to the source that can truly satisfy – Him.

⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

Defrauding a brother meant having an affair with his wife.

Adultery, though officially considered wrong and immoral was in fact widely practiced in the Greek world.

Here Paul tells them that though adultery may be acceptable among their peers in Thessalonica, it was not to be tolerated among them.

God honors marriage. It is a sacred and holy institution.

And when someone violates that sanctity through adultery, God will intervene with judgment.

According to modern polls, it seems we've returned to the days we're reading about here.

If we can trust the numbers, some 40% of American men say they've had an affair while over 30% of women say they've committed adultery.

In many work places, having a fling with a co-worker has become almost normal.

With our culture's growing pre-occupation with sex, and the redefining of the role of women, sex has been divorced from relationships and the commitment of love and made a mere biological urge not to be resisted.

This kind of mind-set has become pervasive and results in people engaging in affairs that they know will go no where.

Paul tells believers adultery is taking advantage of a brother – and that God will intervene with judgment.

⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

To be a Christian means to make a break with the bankrupt lies and deceitful practices of this world.

It means to be holy and pure before the Lord.

Paul knew there would be those who would reject this call to purity.

They would base their arguments on *feelings* and the wisdom of the world.

They would bend and twist scripture, mangling them in the pursuit of their own desires rather than the desire of God.

I'm amazed how many times I've been talking with someone who's involved in a relationship with someone, they're not married, but they're having sex.

When I try to share this passage with them – they do the very thing v. 8 says – they reject it.

They think that they are an exception.

They think that this is old fashioned council for a time when it was easy to obey this.

They don't realize that this was written in a culture and against a backdrop that was very much like today.

So let me say this and say it clearly . . .

Sex is a wonderful gift God created for a husband and a wife to enjoy within the context of their marriage.

Within marriage there is great freedom and blessing in the sexual union and it's God's desire that a husband and wife enjoy this part of their relationship.

Read 1 Corinthians 7 and the Song of Solomon and see for yourself.

But outside these boundaries – sex is a sin.

Before you say, "I do" DON'T!

⁹But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; ¹⁰and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

Here again we see Paul's exhortation that they abound in love for one another.

Let's just pause at this point for a moment and let that settle in.

From Paul's perspective – you could never love enough.

He would say that no matter how much you love another, you could always love more.

May the Lord fill us with the Holy Spirit to the end that we might have more power to love one another.

¹¹that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹²that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Paul calls them to aspire to live quietly. That's an interesting command.

The word "aspire" means to be *ambitious*.

We could translate this, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life."

Ambition – Quiet life = this seems like a paradox.

Ambition usually conveys the idea of striving and fervent activity, not quiet!

Paul is using this connotation as a kind of play on words.

The world is all about ambition and getting ahead.

As the followers of Jesus we are to be ambitious to live a life marked not by fevered striving but a quietness of mind and heart that finds its sufficiency through faith in Christ.

Paul didn't want the saints running around creating problems.

They were to live at peace and be at peace with one another.

That's why he told them to mind their own business.

Friends – this is a lesson we all need to take to heart.

It's so easy to get caught up in the intrigues of everyone else's life.

Our ears bend toward gossip like a sail gathering wind.

When someone comes to us with a juicy morsel of scandal we need to remember Paul's word here and mind our own business.

Ask the one who's sharing the news – “Is this my business?”

Next Paul says,

Work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹²that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Generally, the Greeks despised manual labor.

Most of the work was done by slaves.

Paul, of course, was a tentmaker; and he was careful in Thessalonica to set the example of hard work as we saw last week in 2.

It seems from what Paul writes here and in 2 Thess. 3:11 that the teaching of the imminent return of Christ had led to a few unstable folks quitting their jobs and living off the generosity of others.

These indigent and idle members then became busy-bodies, running around and making trouble.

Paul exhorts them to get a job and support themselves.

Running up a tab and becoming immersed under a sea of credit is a bad witness toward those who may see nothing else of our witness than the bill we owe.

Paul's overarching exhortation in all this is to abound in our love for one another.

If we love one another, then we certainly won't defraud each other sexually.

If we love one another, we'll guard each other's dignity and squelch gossip and rumor.

If we love one another, we be diligent in our work to provide, not only for the needs of ourselves and our family but for the needs of others.

Imagine what Calvary Chapel would LOOK like if we genuinely loved one another as Paul describes here and as the Lord desires for us.

Let me tell you what I see:

I see people who are being totally honest with each other.

I see people who are so committed to the Lord and the work that He is doing in them that there is complete transparency.

Where a man can admit his weaknesses before others and know that he isn't going to be asked to leave.

Where a woman can admit her failures and know no one is going to go running to someone else making a big deal about it.

Where we can admit we aren't perfect while striving to be perfect and where the knowledge of our imperfections is never going to be used as a club to beat us over the head.

I see people so in love with God and one another that there is genuine growth in being conformed to the image of Christ.

I see safety.

I see grace being more than just a theological concept to describe how we are saved.

I see grace in a hug, a firm handshake, a smile and a greeting.

Now we come to the passage we looked at on Sunday . . .

¹³But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

What Paul refers to here we call the Rapture.

It was a teaching that was meant to bring comfort as it speaks of Christ's ultimate victory over death.

But the Thessalonians were a bit confused.

They thought a Christian had to be alive when Christ came or they would miss out on the Rapture.

Even though Paul had only spent a few weeks in Thessalonica, he had taught them about this important promise.

He had taught them that the Rapture could occur at any moment and they were waiting expectantly for it.

Was Paul wrong to teach the imminence of Christ's return?

No – Jesus Himself had taught it.

He said, "Watch and be ready for in the hour you think not the Son of Man comes."

Paul tells the Thessalonians that those who sleep, meaning those who have died in faith, will not be left out in the Rapture.

Their spirits will return with Christ and their bodies which are in the earth will be raised.

Then, believers who are alive at that time will be caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds.

We covered these verses in more depth on Sunday so I'd encourage you to get a copy of the tape if you weren't here.

1 THESSALONIANS 5

¹But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

The Day of the Lord is a technical term referring to that period of history yet to come when Christ moves to take possession of Planet Earth.

The OT has dozens of references to the Day of the Lord.

It begins with a period of judgment and great trouble as God's pours out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world. We call this the Tribulation.

Then there is the Second Coming when Jesus appears visibly and takes control of all the nations of the Earth.

The Day of the Lord is a lot like a labor and delivery.

There's a short period of increasingly intense trouble, which ends with the emergence of a new order.

Here Paul says that the Day of the Lord comes quickly and unexpected.

People will think that everything is going to be hunky-dory, but then a nightmare time descends on them.

The people who are living when it comes will not escape.

In contrast to those who live at that time are the followers of Christ whom Paul now turns to address in v. 4 . . .

⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Paul very clearly contrasts believers with those who are appointed for the Day of the Lord.

The implication is clear – Christians will not be here for the Tribulation which begins the Day of the Lord. They will have been raptured prior to the Tribulation because the Tribulation is just that, the time of God's wrath and believers are not appointed to wrath.

The Rapture can only be a comforting thought if it occurred before the Tribulation.

If I told you you had to endure the Tribulation to get to the Rapture – would that be comfort to you?
No!

The blessed hope of the church is that the Rapture is God's rescue of His own from the time of His wrath and the vindication of their faith before the eyes of a mocking world.

¹²And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

We live in a culture that seems to delight in the defiance of authority.

One of the popular slogan of the 60's that you still see on an occasional bumper sticker is "Question Authority."

But Paul is very clear in Romans 13 and other passages that God has established levels of authority in civil government, the home, and in the church.

Honoring and submitting to those the Lord has placed in authority over us is an important part of the Christian life.

Then again, Paul enjoins us to be at peace with one another.

He repeats this again and again because he knew how difficult yet how necessary unity is in the church. With the repeated call to be at peace, we need to realize that the pursuit of peace cannot be something passive.

We cannot sit back and hope peace happens – we must work for peace when it's missing and then when we have it, we must actively protect it.

¹⁴Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. ¹⁵See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

Since we're going to be covering vs. 14-22 on Sunday, I'll leave further comment till then.

²³Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Earlier Paul had said that it was God's will that we be sanctified.

Then he launched into a call for sexual purity and love manifested toward one another in practical ways. Here he commends them to the Lord, that HE may sanctify them entirely, in all three dimensions of what it means to be human; body, soul, and spirit.

So which is it – is sanctification something God does to us or is it something we do?

The answer is = both.

The Spirit of God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We cooperate with this leading and empowering of the Spirit by yielding to His promptings.

V. 24 is important . . .

²⁴He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

When we stand in glory and have a chance to look back over our lives and see things from that heavenly perspective – whose hand do you think we'll see shaping us?

Whose strength and faithfulness will our lives be a testimony to – Ourselves?

Will we think that we got to heaven by our own merit?

Will our reward be a thing of our own goodness?

Hardly! We'll see that from beginning to end, it was all about God's faithfulness!

²⁵Brethren, pray for us.

Yes, pray!

Pray for pastors – prayer for missionaries – pray for those who are on the front lines in the cause of the Kingdom.

²⁶Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

This is something we need to get back to – heart-felt greetings in Christ.

²⁷I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Biracree, Tom & Nancy; *Almanac of the American People*, pg. 199 – The figure lies between 30% and 48%

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“Feed My Sheep”

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