

3-Life Changing Verses – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – February 16th, 2020

- I want to talk with you about what I would suggest are three verses here in God's Word, that can powerfully change our lives.
- While I realize that this is a rather bold and even provocative title for a sermon, the truth is, if applied, this can alter how we live.
- I'll take it a step further and say, not only can this change how we live our life, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for our life.

These three life changing verses have been referred to as "principles for the inner life," "standing orders of the Christian Church," and "diamond drops of the Christian experience in its higher levels."

1. Relentlessly Joyful (Verse 16)

16 Rejoice always,

- It's important to understand the Thessalonian Christians were suffering greatly due to the unrelenting persecution of that day.
- It's for this reason that Paul encourages, even exhorts them to rejoice always despite the hardships of their daily Christian life.
- The question becomes one of how we as believers can actually rejoice no matter what may be happening to us and around us.

James 1:2-4 - 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

2. Continually Prayerful (Verse 17)

17 pray continually,

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the best simplifications concerning our complication of prayer, this would be it.
- This because, verse 17 changes prayer from being an activity to an attitude, such that we're continually in an attitude of prayer.
- In so doing, we are, as one so aptly said it, "in constant conscious communion with God," because we continually talk to God.

Romans 12:12 - Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

3. Constantly Thankful (Verse 18)

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- Notice what Paul is not saying here, he doesn't say, give thanks for all circumstances, rather give thanks in all circumstances.
- In other words, we don't thank God for everything; rather, we thank God for being in everything as He works it out for our good.
- What's striking to me about these three verses is that an attitude of gratitude, is birthed from being both joyful and prayerful.

Charles Spurgeon said it best, "When joy and prayer are married their first born child is gratitude."

Philippians 4:6-7 - 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Bible Prophecy Update – February 16th, 2020

- I want to talk to you about what I see as the 3 most significant prophetic developments to watch in the days and weeks ahead.
- The first is the spread of the Coronavirus, second, the third election in Israel, and third, the move toward a one world religion.
- I'm hoping that at the conclusion of our time together today, we will all have a better understanding of what this all means to us.

We'll start with this Guardian report about how if unchecked; the Coronavirus could infect 60% of global population. The coronavirus epidemic could spread to about two-thirds of the world's population if it cannot be controlled, according to Hong Kong's leading public health epidemiologist. His warning came after the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said recent cases of coronavirus patients who had never visited China could be the "tip of the iceberg". Prof Gabriel Leung, the chair of public health medicine at Hong Kong University, said the overriding question was to figure out the size and shape of the iceberg. Most experts thought that each person infected would go on to transmit the virus to about 2.5 other people. That gave an "attack rate" of 60-80%. "Sixty per cent of the world's population is an awfully big number," Leung told the Guardian...

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/11/coronavirus-expert-warns-infection-could-reach-60-of-worlds-population>

- This is happening in concert with a locust invasion in Africa, which experts say is the most devastating plague in living memory.
- The reason I point this out is because the Bible says that these kinds of plagues and pestilences will increase in the last days.
- In Matthew 24:4-8, Jesus likens wars, rumors of wars, national uprisings, famines, pestilences and earthquakes to birth pains.

Revelation 6:7-8 - 7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

- John describes what some believe to be biological by virtue of the words in the original language of the Greek New Testament.
- Here's why, the Greek word for pale is "chloros" where we get "chlorine," which in its context may describe a microscopic virus.
- As such, these noxious beasts "therion" in Greek may refer to this terrifying and frightening illness killing over ¼ the population.

I found this Israel Hayom report very interesting having to do with extremists using the coronavirus outbreak to stoke hatred against Jews. The Anti-Defamation League warned that, "Extremists hope the virus kills Jews, but they are also using its emergence to advance anti-Semitic theories that Jews are responsible for creating the virus, spreading it to increase their control over a decimated population, or they are profiting off it..." Neo-Nazi and white supremacists are using fears of the deadly coronavirus to stoke hatred against Jews and spread conspiracy theories on social-media platforms, according to a new report released by the Anti-Defamation League. *(I suppose this should come as no surprise given that the Jews were blamed for The Black Death in Europe from 1348 to 1351, leading to a series of violent attacks and massacres on Jewish communities.)*

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/02/09/adl-extremists-using-coronavirus-outbreak-to-stoke-hatred-against-jews/>

This brings us to the second one to watch and this Jerusalem Post article about Israel's voter fatigue setting in ahead of third round of elections. Quoting the Post, "This is, without doubt, the most boring election campaign in living memory. With three weeks to go before polling day, the stormy weather, coronavirus and recent upsurge in violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the main stories capturing the nation's attention. Election news hardly merits a mention." No one is generating any excitement. The shocking fact that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is no longer just a suspect in a criminal investigation but has finally been accused of bribery, fraud and breach of trust and is awaiting trial has been met with a collective yawn. Not even US President Donald Trump's "Deal of the Century" has made an impact, except in a negative way on the Palestinian street.

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Voter-fatigue-has-set-in-ahead-of-third-round-of-elections-617042>

For this third one I would like to draw your attention to this Breaking Israel News article about the Pope pushing a One World Religion on Israel's Independence Day. Here's what they had to say, "Historically, the Vatican was no friend to the Jews but its new initiative aligns the Catholic Church with Islam in a one-world religion that may be the biggest threat ever to the Jewish People. A major event to advance the project will take place on the anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel which, according to one rabbi, is fitting since Judaism is the last bastion, entirely incompatible with a New World Order. At an address to Vatican diplomats last month, Pope Francis announced that the Vatican will be hosting a global event with titled, "Reinventing the Global Compact on Education." "A global educational pact is needed to educate us in universal solidarity and a new humanism," the Pope said when he first proposed the summit. <https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/145012/pope-pushes-one-world-religion-on-israels-independence-day/>

- The common denominator with all three is that all of them, along with many others, will be fulfilled during the 7-year tribulation.
- Namely, that of one who will generate excitement as a charismatic savior, aka the antichrist who rules this New World Order.

- This is why we do these weekly prophecy updates and end with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the simple ABC's of Salvation.
- The Gospel, or good news is that Jesus was crucified, buried, rose again on the third day, and is coming back for us one day.

The ABC's of Salvation

- The A is for Admit you're a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).
- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).