

# 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 Commentary

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JESUS IS COMING AGAIN  
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Chart by Charles Swindoll

1 Thessalonians Overview				
1 Th 1:1-10	1 Th 2:1-20	1 Th 3:1-13	1 Th 4:1-18	1 Th 5:1-28
LOOKING BACK			LOOKING FORWARD	
Personal Reflections History			Practical Instructions Hortatory	
Ministry In Person		Ministry in Absentia (Thru Timothy)	Ministry by Epistle	
Word and Power of the Spirit		Establishing & Comforting	Calling & Conduct	1Th 4:13ff Comfort
				1Th 5:12ff Commands

1 Salvation	2 Service	3 Sanctification	4 Sorrow	5 Sobriety
Paul Commends Spiritual Growth	Paul Finds the Church	Strengthening of the Church	Directions for Spiritual Growth	Holy Living in Light of Day of the Lord
Exemplary Hope of Young Converts	Motivating Hope of Faithful Servants	Purifying Hope of Tried Believers	Comforting Hope of Bereaved Saints	Invigorating Hope of Diligent Christians
Written from Corinth Approximately 51AD				

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For **God** has not **destined** us for **wrath**, but for **obtaining salvation through** our **Lord Jesus Christ**.  
(NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [hoti ouk etheto \(3SAMI\) hemas o theos eis orgen alla eis peripoiesin soterias dia tou kuriou hemon Iesou Christou](#)

**BGT** π ο κ θετο μ ε ς θε ε ς ρ γ ν λ λ ε ς περιπο η σιν σωτη ρ α ς δι το κυ ρ ου μ ν η σο Χ ρ ι σ τ ο

**Amplified:** For God has not appointed us to [incur His] wrath [He did not select us to condemn us], but [that we might] obtain [His] salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** For God decided to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (REVISED)** For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.

**Phillips:** For God did not choose us to condemn us, but that we might secure his salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** because as for us, God did not appoint us to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

**Young's Literal:** because God did not appoint us to anger, but to the acquiring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**KJV** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

**NET** For God did not destine us for wrath but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**CSB** For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**ESV** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**NIV** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**NRS** For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**NJB** God destined us not for his retribution, but to win salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**FOR GOD HAS NOT DESTINED US FOR WRATH: hoti ouk etheto (3SAMI) hemas o theos eis orgen:**

- **God has not destined us** - 1Th 1:10; 3:3; Ex 9:16; Pr 16:4; Eze 38:10-15, 18, 17; Mt 26:24; Acts 1:20,25; Ac 13:48; Ro 9:11-23; 2Ti 2:19,20; 1Pe 2:8; 2Pe 2:3; Jude 1:4
- [1 Thessalonians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## WHAT THE BELIEVER'S DESTINY IS NOT!

How does salvation give us confidence in the face of God's wrath, something that some of the Thessalonian believers were fearful that they might experience? Paul answers in 1Th 5:9, 10.

**Stott** introduces this section recalling that "So far Paul has based how we should behave (awake, alert, self-controlled, well-armed - 1Th 5:8-note) on who we are (children of the day and of the light - 1Th 5:5+). Now he goes on to base who we are on Who God is and on what He has done for us. He makes two great statements (1Th 5:9, 10). (The Message of Thessalonians)

**For** (3754)(*hoti*) means since, because, for (this reason). What is Paul explaining? In the immediate context it would appear that Paul is explaining the believer's **hope of salvation**. **Hope** means absolute assurance that God will do good to us in the future. It is not "hope so" but "hope sure." What's that "*hope sure*" in context? Negatively no wrath. Positively obtaining salvation (most likely our future glorification). It would also be reasonable to say that Paul is amplifying his exhortation "let us be sober" so that this truth of about what our future holds (no wrath but glorification) should motivate us to seek to live out this exhortation. In other words, the future hope here in 1Th 5:9 (and also in 1Th 5:10 = "we will live together with Him") is what I like to call vertical vision which should serve to motivate present or "horizontal" living. What (Who) you are looking for should radically impact what (Who) you are living for. Your "uplook" should impact your "outlook!"

**Not** (*ouk* = absolutely not) **destined** (appointed) **us for wrath** (*orge*) **but** (striking term of contrast) **for obtaining salvation** (*soteria* - deliverance) - There could hardly be a more striking, diametrically opposed contrast than wrath and salvation, the negative and the positive. God's wrath is to be poured out on the Christ rejecting world. Salvation is the gift to the Christ accepting world. Salvation in this context refers to our future tense salvation or glorification, that glorious day when we receive our new immortal, incorruptible bodies and are finally and fully free from the tyranny of that old taskmaster Sin! O glorious day!

**THOUGHT** - If the juxtaposition of these two eternal destinies (wrath...salvation) does not cause you to pause and offer up a doxology, nothing will! Let me encourage you dearly beloved of the Father (1Th 1:4+), pause for just a moment ([Sing The Doxology](#) or [Here](#)) and offer up a **sacrifice of praise** (Heb 13:15+) to the only One worthy to receive our praises, now and throughout eternity. Amen (Rev 4:11+, Rev 5:2+, Rev 5:9+, Rev 5:12+, Col 1:16+, Ro 11:36+).

**NET Note on not destined us for wrath** - In context this refers to the outpouring of God's wrath on the earth in the **day of the Lord** (1 Thess 5:2-4).

**Hiebert** makes the important point that "God wills not our destruction but our **salvation** (**Ed**: This is important to comprehend! cp 2Pe 3:10+). He has no intention that we should become the subjects of His **wrath**, fall under its punitive action, when the day of "sudden destruction" (1Th 5:3+) falls upon the unsaved. He cherishes no angry purposes toward His redeemed children; the divine **wrath** against sin was diverted from us when by faith we were united with "the Son of his love" (Col 1:13+). **Wrath** is the destiny of Christ rejecting souls." ([1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

If indeed the **Day of the Lord** commences at the midpoint of the last 7 years and the Great Tribulation begins with bowl judgments filled with God's **wrath**, it would appear that the **wrath** Paul is referring to here is that described in Revelation (beginning at the 7th Trumpet - See [Day of the Lord](#) and [Day of the Lord charts](#)), although obviously it will be culminated and consummated in the Lake of fire which is the final and full manifestation of God's eternal wrath. Either way this truth by Paul is good news -- we are delivered (the meaning of *soteria*) from the wrath to come (cp 1Th 1:10+, 2Th 1:7, 8, 9+).

**MacArthur** - Paul assured them that they would face neither temporal **wrath** on the Day of the Lord, nor eternal **wrath** in hell.

**Paul** began this letter with the emphasis that the believers were...

to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is **Jesus, Who rescues** (rhuomai-word study) (present tense = not just the day of our justification by faith, but every day of our sanctification by faith [2Co 5:7+!]) **us from the wrath** (*orge*) **to come**. (More literally = the wrath, the continually coming). (1Th 1:10YLT+)

**Leon Morris** - **Salvation** is salvation from as well as salvation unto.....One of the things that gave salvation so full a meaning for New Testament Christians was that they were sure of the wrath of God and had a deep gratitude to Christ for saving them from it. In modern times some take Christianity lightly because they have emptied the wrath of its content. To banish the wrath of God from the scene is to rob life of a good deal of its serious purpose. (BORROW [Commentary](#))

**Destined** (5087) (*tithemi*) means first to set, to place or to put. Here it is used figuratively to mean **appoint**. Our salvation proceeds from God's appointment and is connected with the past act (Ep 1:4+) and with deliberate purpose of an infinitely merciful, gracious God. The use of the **middle voice** indicates that that God thus acted in His own interest, while the **aorist tense** indicates this event occurred in the past and is to be viewed as a completed event. God, Who acted according to His own will and good pleasure (Ep 1:11+), has **destined** believers to **salvation** as His gracious intention for us. This is a cause for rejoicing because believers do not have an "appointment" with God's wrath! Hallelujah. Thank you Jesus, the Lamb of God Who bore our deserved wrath (Ga 3:13+, Jn 1:29+, 1Pe 2:24+, 1Pe 2:25+, cp Lv 16:22+ [Day of Atonement ~ Yom Kippur!], Nu 21:8,9+, Jn 3:14+ = lifted up on the Cross [Jn

12:32, 33+], He 9:28+, Is 53:4, 5, 6+)

In His message to the church at **Philadelphia** Jesus declared...

'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from (ek = out of) the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. (cf Re 3:10±)

**Comment:** Many commentators take this as a promise that believers will be delivered from the time of the Great Tribulation that will come upon the entire earth Mt 24:15-21+.

Still the small inward voice I hear,  
That whispers all my sins forgiven;  
Still the atoning blood is near,  
That quenched the **wrath** of hostile heaven.

-- from Charles Wesley's

[And Can It Be That I Should Gain?](#)

**Wrath** (3709) (**orge** from **orgaô** = to teem, to swell) from the idea of a swelling which eventually bursts, **orge** then applies more to an anger that proceeds from one's settled nature. In context this wrath speak of God's just condemnation our intractable rebellion and hatred of God (Ro 1:30-note) deserves.

**Orge** in this verse describes God's holy, righteous wrath, which is not an uncontrollable anger His settled opposition to and displeasure with sin. God's wrath is his holy hatred of all that is unholy, His righteous indignation against everything that is unrighteous. The picture of the **orge** of God is an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders.

**Orge** - 36x in 34v in the NAS - Matt. 3:7; Mk. 3:5; Lk. 3:7; 21:23; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4f; Eph. 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col. 3:6, 8; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 3:11; 4:3; Jas. 1:19f; Rev. 6:16f; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15

**Orge** represents God's settled indignation and controlled passionate hostile feeling toward sin in all its various manifestations. "Settled" indignation means that God's holiness cannot and will not coexist with sin in any form whatsoever. Orge is not the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (**thumos**) to which human beings are prone.

**Orge** as used of God refers to His constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while **thumos** (which originally referred to violent movements of air, water, etc., and consequently came to mean "well up" or "boil up") refers more to a passionate outburst of rage. **Thumos** type anger represents an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage!

**Orge** of God describes the strongest kind of anger which builds and builds until it reaches the end of God's patience and tolerance with unregenerate, unrepentant mankind and swells into His final, furious anger which He pours out on all those who have persistently rebelled against Him.

**William Barclay** - The Greeks defined **thumos** as the kind of anger which is like the flame which comes from straw; it quickly blazes up and just as quickly subsides. On the other hand, they described **ogre** as anger which has become habitual... **Orge** is anger which has become inveterate; it is long-lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep it warm... To the Christian the burst of temper and the long-lived anger are both alike forbidden." ([Daily Study Bible](#))

**Larry Richards** in describing God's anger writes that "The OT clearly specifies what human actions provoke God to anger. The NT treats wrath as a basic relational state, showing that the unsaved are under God's wrath. But God never acts capriciously in his anger. He always acts in full harmony with his character as a loving, forgiving, compassionate, and just person." ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Arthur Pink** defined God's wrath as "His eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin" (Arthur W. Pink, The Attributes of God, p83).

**Bishop Trench** defines **orge** as "a wrath of God who would not love good unless He hated evil, the two being inseparable, that He must do both or neither." Trench adds that **orge** is an anger "which righteous men not merely may, but as they are righteous, must feel; nor can there be a surer and sadder token of an utterly prostrate moral condition than the not being able to be angry with sin—and sinners" (Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. Hendrickson Publishers. 2000)

**Orge** is used of our Lord when, after healing the man with the withered hand, He observed the hardness of heart of the Pharisees, and looked upon them with anger (Mk 3:5).

**C H Spurgeon** writes that...The **wrath of God** does not end with death. This is a truth which the preacher cannot mention without trembling, nor without wondering that he does not tremble more. The eternity of punishment is a thought which crushes the heart. You have buried the man, but you have not buried his sins. **His sins live and are immortal.** They have gone before him to judgment, or they will follow after him to bear their witness as to the evil of his heart and the rebellion of his life. The Lord God is slow to anger, but when He is once aroused to it, as He will be against those who finally reject his Son, he will put forth all his omnipotence to crush his enemies." He adds that "I am certain that to preach the wrath of God with a hard heart, a cold lip, a tearless eye, and an unfeeling spirit is to harden men, not benefit them... The conscience of man, when he is really quickened and awakened by the Holy Spirit, speaks the truth. It rings the great alarm bell. And if he turns over in his bed, that great alarm bell rings out again and again, "The **wrath** to come! The **wrath** to come! The **wrath** to come!... There is no trouble like genuine conviction of sin. Racks, scorpions, death—these are troubles to be laughed at, as compared with the weight of guilt pressing on the conscience, the sight of an angry God, and the **fear of the wrath** to come."

**J. I. Packer** sounds a sad note writing that "the subject of **divine wrath** has become taboo in modern society, and Christians by and large have accepted the taboo and conditioned themselves never to raise the matter (Knowing God, p. 149).

**Vine** has an interesting insight writing that..."The subject of the **wrath of God** recurs throughout the first part of the Epistle (Romans 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22). In this Epistle, which treats especially of the gospel, the differing attributes of God are set forth in a manner which reveals His character as a whole. While the gospel reveals Him as infinitely merciful, His mercy is not characterized by leniency toward sin. The Scriptures never reveal one attribute of God at the expense of another. The revelation of His wrath is essential to a right understanding of His ways in grace." ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook** has the following note on "**God's Wrath**" - In Scripture, God's strong and vigorous opposition to everything evil. There is a Greek verb that can be used both of anger and of the swelling of buds as the sap rises. It points to the kind of anger that results from a settled and consistent disposition, and not to a losing of one's temper. God's wrath is like that, rather than like human anger on a grand scale. With us, wrath always has elements of passion, lack of self-control, and irrationality. The wrath of God does not." (The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Ed, Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton , IL; 1984)

The respected expositor **Albert Barnes** writes that ...

It is clear that when we think of the word "**wrath**" as applicable to God, it must be divested of everything that is like human passion, and especially the passion of revenge. It is one of the most obvious rules of interpretation that we are not to apply to God passions and feelings which, among us, have their origin in evil. [God's wrath] is the opposition of the divine character against sin; and the determination of the divine mind to express that opposition in a proper way, by excluding the offender from the favors which He bestows on the righteous. We admire the character of a father who is opposed to disorder, vice, and disobedience in his family, and who expresses his opposition in a proper way. We admire the character of a ruler who is opposed to all crime in the community, and who expresses those feelings in the law. Why shall we not be equally pleased with God, who is opposed to all crime in all parts of the universe, and who determines to express His opposition in the proper way for the sake of preserving order and promoting peace?

**A W Tozer** said that "The holiness of God, the **wrath of God** and the health of the creation are inseparably united. Not only is it right for God to display anger against sin, but I find it impossible to understand how He could do otherwise

One of the great tragedies of modern Christianity, which sadly has crept into much of evangelicalism, is the failure to preach and teach the **wrath of God** and the condemnation it brings upon all with unforgiven sin. Instead how often does one hear a truncated, sentimental gospel that is frequently presented today falls far short of the gospel that Jesus and Paul proclaimed. Examine any 19th century Psalter and you will note that many of the psalms in those hymnals emphasize the wrath of God, just as much of the book of Psalms itself emphasizes His wrath. It is tragic that few hymns or other Christian songs today reflect that important biblical focus. Both the Old and New Testament consistently emphasize God's righteous wrath.

**Ray Pritchard** has the following note on the forgotten doctrine of God's wrath declaring that "It is truly a forgotten doctrine, even in the evangelical church. I'll dare say that many of you have never heard a sermon on God's **wrath**—that is, not a full sermon devoted to this one topic. The reasons for this apparent neglect are not hard to find. Most of us would rather hear about love and grace. I know I would rather preach about God's grace. After all, to speak of the **wrath of God** makes us appear narrow-minded, judgmental, and God help us, fundamentalist... God's **wrath** is difficult to comprehend, so in some ways, this is a doctrine that is easy to overlook. The thought that nice people we know might someday go to eternal hell is so overwhelming—and so disheartening—that we'd much rather not think about it at all." ([Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#)) (Bolding added)

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**J C Philpot** ([Light Affliction and Eternal Glory](#)) From the cradle to the coffin, affliction and sorrow are the appointed lot of man. He comes into the world with a wailing cry, and he often leaves it with an agonizing groan! Rightly is this earth called "a valley of tears," for it is wet with them in infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. In every land, in every climate, scenes of misery and wretchedness everywhere meet the eye, besides those deeper griefs and heart-rending sorrows which lie concealed from all observation. So that we may well say of the life of man that, like Ezekiel's scroll, it is "written with lamentations, and mourning and woe."

But this is not all. The scene does not end here! We see up to death, but we do not see beyond death.

To see a man die without Christ is like standing at a distance, and seeing a man fall from a lofty cliff—we see him fall, but we do not see the crash on the rocks below.

So we see an unsaved man die, but when we gaze upon the lifeless corpse, we do not see how his soul falls with a mighty crash upon the rock of God's eternal justice! When his temporal trials come to a close, his eternal sorrows only begin! After weeks or months of sickness and pain, the pale, cold face may lie in calm repose under the coffin lid; when the soul is only just entering upon an eternity of woe!

But is it all thus dark and gloomy both in life and death? Is heaven always hung with a canopy of black? Are there no beams of light, no rays of gladness, that shine through these dark clouds of affliction, misery, and woe that are spread over the human race?

Yes! there is one point in this dark scene out of which beams of light and rays of glory shine! "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:9

**BUT FOR OBTAINING SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: alla eis peripoiesin soterias dia tou kuriou hemon Iesou Christou:**

- **But for obtaining salvation** - Romans 11:7,30; 2Th 2:13,14; 1Ti 1:13,16; 2Ti 2:10; 1Pe 2:10; 2Pe 1:1
- [1 Thessalonians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## WHAT THE BELIEVER'S DESTINY IS!

**But for obtaining** (gaining, acquiring) - This strong contrast introduces the positive aspect of God's intention for believers - **for obtaining salvation**. This could be rendered *but for the purpose of experiencing salvation*. Note that he does not say "attain" but "obtain" for we can do nothing to attain salvation.

**John MacArthur** agrees that by using the phrase **obtaining salvation** "Paul referred to the future dimension of believers' salvation, their glorification."

**Obtaining** ([4047](#)) (**peripoiesis** from **perí** = acquisition + **poiéo** = make) means literally to make around and the idea is the obtaining of something in its completeness. It describes the act of obtaining something or the experience of acquiring something for oneself. The idea in 1Thes 5:9 is of the possessing of salvation as our present property! It refers to the experience of an event or state which has been acquired.

**Peripoiesis** - 5x in 5v in the **NAS** - Eph. 1:14; 1Th 5:9; 2Th 2:14; He 10:39; 1Pe 2:9

**Hiebert** summarizes this section noting that...

The **salvation** He intends for us is described as to its nature (1Th 5:9), its agent (1Th 5:9, 10), and its goal (1Th 5:10)... those who obtain this **salvation** do so according to the appointment and calling of God, but they must make a willing response to the call and exert personal effort toward its realization. The divine calling necessitates a human response. While **salvation** is of God, the actual gaining of our **salvation** as a personal possession demands on our part "a wakeful, soldier like activity, such as will be crowned by the 'winning of salvation,' the glorious end for which 'God destined' them when He first 'called them to His own kingdom and glory' (1Th 2:12)."

Each believer must give diligence to make his calling and election sure (2Pe 1:10+). It seems clear from the hortatory nature of the context that the emphasis here is upon the human activity needed actually to obtain the salvation (ED: BE CAREFUL HERE - YES SALVATION IS SHOWN TO BE VALID BY OUR "HUMAN ACTIVITY" BUT SALVATION IS SOLELY BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, NOT OF HUMAN ACTIVITY THAT

ANY SHOULD BOAST). Our versions accordingly use such terms as acquiring, winning, and to gain salvation." Those who now by faith accept God's salvation and actively endeavor to make it their personal possession will enter into "the full attainment of salvation" (NEB) when the Lord comes.

**While diligent effort on the part of believers is needed, the added phrase "through our Lord Jesus Christ" leaves no uncertainty as to the real Source of all salvation. Salvation can only be obtained through Him.** He is the Mediator of salvation, and through Him, whom we have accepted as "our Lord," our hope of salvation will assuredly be realized. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#)) (Bolding added)

**Leon Morris on obtaining salvation** - Paul is here speaking of salvation in its eschatological aspect (**ED**: I ASSUME HE MEANS "GLORIFICATION") and the point is that that is yet to be 'acquired' (cf. Ro 13:11). This does not mean that it is obtained by human effort, and Paul immediately goes on to say that it is obtained through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever activity be ascribed to the believer, salvation is God's gift through Christ (for the divine and the human in salvation cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12-13). ([BORROW Commentary](#))

**Salvation** (deliverance)([4991](#)) **soteria** from **soter** = Savior in turn from **sozo** = save, rescue, deliver) describes the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril. **Salvation** is a broader term in Greek than we often think of in English. Other concepts that are inherent in **soteria** include restoration to a state of safety, soundness, health and well being as well as preservation from danger of destruction. **Sozo** ([word study](#)) the verb and **soteria** the noun are surely two of the most important words in all of God's Word.

**Salvation** carried tremendous meaning in Paul's day, the most basic being "**deliverance**," and it was applied to personal and national deliverance. The emperor was looked on as a "savior" as was the physician who healed you of illness.

It is interesting that Collin's (secular) dictionary defines "**salvation**" as "the act of preserving or the state of being preserved from harm... deliverance by redemption from the power of sin and from the penalties ensuing from it."!

In short, this "**so great a salvation**" is not just escape from the penalty of sin but includes the ideas of safety, deliverance from slavery and preservation from danger or destruction.

In addition, this "**so great a salvation**" includes the idea of what is often referred to as the [Three Tenses of Salvation](#) (justification = past tense salvation = deliverance from sin's penalty, sanctification = present tense salvation = deliverance from sin's power and glorification = future tense salvation = deliverance from sin's presence). It follows that the discerning student will [check the context](#) to determine which of the three "tenses" a given use of **soteria** is referring to.

**William Barclay** - In classical Greek **soteria** means 'deliverance' or 'preservation'. It can be used for a man's safe return to his own home or his own country after an absence and a journey. It can mean a 'guarantee of safety' or a 'security against danger'. In the papyri by far the commonest meaning of **soteria** is 'bodily health'. For instance, a member of the family writes home, 'Write me a letter about your **soteria**,' or, as we would say, 'Let me know how you are.' ([New Testament Words](#))

Here in 1Th 5:9 **soteria** refers to future tense salvation as well as meaning #3 below.

The meaning of **soteria** can be summarized by the following 3 aspects...

**1) A physical deliverance** - rescue from danger deliverance, preservation, safety. For example the writer of Hebrews records that...

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the **salvation** (**soteria**) of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (He 11:7-note)

**2) A religious technical term** describing safety of the soul and so in a spiritual sense referring to salvation

"(The preaching of John the Baptist was) To give to His people the knowledge of **salvation** (**soteria**) by the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:77)

And there is **salvation** (**soteria**) in no one else (other than Messiah); for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved (**sozo**)." (Acts 4:12)

from childhood you (Timothy) have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to **salvation** (**soteria**) through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2Ti 3:15-note)

**3) A Messianic deliverance** at the end of this present age.

"Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for **salvation**

(soteria) without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." (He 9:28-note)

And this do (do what? express agape love which is unconditional), knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now **salvation** (soteria) is nearer to us than when we believed. (Ro 13:11-note) (cf 1Th 5:9-note; He 9:28-note; 1Pe 5:5-note; 1Pe 5:10-note; Re 12:10-note)

(Those "born again to a living hope") are protected by the power of God through faith for **salvation** (soteria) ready to be revealed in the last time." (1Pe 1:5-note)

In summary **soteria** means rescue, preservation safe and sound and includes the idea of the delivering of one who is in danger from destruction or peril or suffering (as will occur to those who do not get rescued or escape from the Day of the Lord). (cf Re 3:10-note)

**Soteria - 45x in 43v - deliverance(2), preservation(1), salvation(42).** Lk. 1:69; Lk. 1:71; Lk. 1:77; Lk. 19:9; Jn. 4:22; Acts 4:12; Acts 7:25; Acts 13:26; Acts 13:47; Acts 16:17; Acts 27:34; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:1; Rom. 10:10; Rom. 11:11; Rom. 13:11; 2 Co. 1:6; 2 Co. 6:2; 2 Co. 7:10; Eph. 1:13; Phil. 1:19; Phil. 1:28; Phil. 2:12; 1 Thess. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 1:14; Heb. 2:3; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 6:9; Heb. 9:28; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:15; Jude 1:3; Rev. 7:10; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 19:1

**F F Bruce** observes that...

The salvation in view here includes salvation from eschatological "wrath" (cf. Ro 5:9-note, quoted in comment on 1Th 1:10-note) but positively it involves being raised to life with Christ. It is that definitive and consummated salvation which, as Paul says in another epistle, "is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Ro 13:11-note, in a context where the same call for vigilance is sounded). Cf. 2Th 2:13, 14; also Heb 10:39-note, where the *peripoiesis psuches* ("gaining of one's soul") through faith is set in contrast with *apoleia* ("perdition") through falling back.

The term **soteria**, occurring in 1Th 5:8, 9 (and in 2Th 2:13), seems to be used by Paul to include **all the blessings of the gospel—present life in Christ and future life with Christ, the indwelling Spirit maintaining the former and guaranteeing the latter; redemption from the mastery of sin, justification by faith, adoption into God's family, progressive conformity to the character of Christ, preservation from the end-time "wrath" and the hope of glory.**

"The conception of Salvation provides both a centre and a framework for all the religious and ethical ideas which have real importance in Christianity as St Paul understood it" (C. A. A. Scott, Christianity according to St Paul, vii). (Bruce, F. F. Vol. 45: Word Biblical Commentary : 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Word Biblical Commentary Dallas: Word, Incorporated)

**Comment:** Notice how Bruce's amplification of the term "gospel" is so much broader than we commonly think of it ... as the good news by which we were first saved. And yet as Bruce so wisely reminds us, the gospel is the good news by which we are saved not just the first time (justification), but every day (progressive sanctification Romans 6-8) and throughout eternity in glory (glorification).

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ - Through** = by means of (instrumental means). Paul specifies the Source of all salvation which can only be obtained through Jesus Christ and amplifies this with (1Th 5:10) explaining that the Christ "opened" the door to paradise by His death and His resurrection (clearly implied by the phrase "that ... we will live together with Him" for He would have to have experienced resurrection after His death for us to live with Him) . He is the Mediator of salvation (1Ti 2:5+, He 8:6+, He 9:15+, He 12:24+), and **through Him**, Whom we have accepted as "our Lord," our hope of salvation will assuredly be realized.

## A Simple Study... Through Him

Consider the following simple study - observe and record the wonderful truths that accrue through Him - this would make an edifying, easy to prepare Sunday School lesson - then take some time to give thanks for these great truths by offering up a sacrifice of praise... through Him.

Jn 1:3 [NIV reads "through Him"], Jn 1:7, John 1:10, Jn 3:17, Jn 14:6, Acts 2:22, 3:16, Acts 7:25, Acts 10:43, Acts 13:38, 39, Ro 5:9 [note], Ro 8:37 [note], Ro 11:36 [note]; 1Co 8:6, Ep 2:18 [note], Php 4:13 [note], Col 1:20 [note], Col 2:15 [note], Col 3:17 [note], Heb 7:25 [note], Heb 13:15 [note], 1Pe 1:21 [note], 1John 4:9



Would you like more study on the wonderful topic of through Him? Study also the NT uses of the parallel phrase through Jesus (or similar phrases - "through Whom", "through our Lord", etc) - John 1:17, Acts 10:36, Ro 1:4, 5-note; Ro 1:8-note, Ro 2:16-note, Ro 5:1-note; Ro 5:2-note Ro 5:11-note, Ro 5:21-note, Ro 7:25-note, Ro 16:27-note, 1Cor 15:57, 2Cor 1:5, 3:4, 5:18, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:5-note, Php 1:11-note, 1Th 5:9-note; Titus 3:6-note, He 1:2-note; He 2:10-note, Heb 13:21-note, 1Pe 2:5-note, 1Pe 4:11-note, Jude 1:25)

All things are from Him, through Him and to Him. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

**Spurgeon** notes that...

In making us children of light, he gave evidence that our appointment was for the light — that his eternal ordinances were that through the light of gospel grace we should enter into the light of eternal glory by and by.

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**Our Daily Walk - F B Meyer- The Assurance of Salvation** - "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."-- Ro 10:9-note.

Salvation is a great word. It is conjugated in three tenses:

**The Past Tense** - We were saved at the moment when we first trusted Christ. This salvation is a distinct and definite matter, which is ours at the moment we exercise simple faith in Jesus. "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (see note Romans 5:9).

**The Present Tense** - "To us who are being saved, Christ is the power of God," such is the accurate rendering of 1Co 1:18. We are being saved perpetually from the love and power of sin. The disinfectant of Christ's Presence is ever warding off the germs of deadly temptation. The mighty arm of the Divine Keeper is always holding the door against the attempts of the adversary. The water is always flowing over the eye to remove the tiny grit or mote that may alight. "We are being saved by His life" (Ro 5:10-note).

**The Future Tense** - We are being kept by the power of God unto a salvation which waits to be revealed in the last time (1Pe 1:5-note). Salvation is a great word. It includes the forgiveness that remembers our sin no more; deliverance from the curse and penalty of our evil ways; emancipation from the thrall of evil habit; the growing conformity of the soul to the image of Christ, and the final resurrection of the body in spiritual beauty and energy, to be for ever the companion and vehicle of the redeemed spirit.

**PRAYER:** Oh blessed Spirit of God, we pray Thee to give us the assurance of being the children of God, the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and so prepare us for the glory to be revealed to us, and for that great hour when the whole creation, which now groans and travails in pain, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. AMEN. (See related discussion on **Three Tenses of Salvation**)

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**Devotional by Octavius Winslow** - For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, - 1Th 5:9

Salvation is God's greatest work; in nothing has He so manifested forth His glory as in this. He embarked all His infinite resources, and staked all His Divine honor, in the accomplishment of this work so dear to His heart-the salvation of His church. The universe is full of His beauty, but myriads of worlds, on a scale infinitely more vast and magnificent than this, could give no such idea of God as the salvation of a single sinner. Salvation required the revelation and the harmony of all the Divine perfections. Creation affords only a partial view of God. It displays His natural but not His moral attributes. It portrays His wisdom, His goodness, His power; but it gives no idea of His holiness, His justice, His truth, His love. It is but the alphabet, the shadow of God. These are parts of His ways, and how little of Him is known! But in the person of Immanuel, in the cross of Christ, in the finished work of redemption, God appears in full-orbed majesty. And when the believing soul surveys this wondrous expedient of reconciling all the interests of heaven, of uniting all the perfection of Jehovah in the salvation of sinners by the blood of the cross-"Mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other"-it exclaims in full satisfaction with the salvation of God-"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

The anxious question of an awakened soul, as it bears its weight of sin to the cross, is, "Is the salvation of the Lord Jesus a work commensurate with my case? Will it meet my individual condition as a sinner? May I, in a deep conviction of my guiltiness, venture my soul upon Jesus? Am I warranted, without a work of my own, apart from all my merit or my demerit, to believe in Christ and indulge the hope that I shall be saved?" The Bible, in brief but emphatic sentences, answers these inquiries. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." "Him that comes unto me I will in no wise cast out." "By grace are you saved." "If by grace, then it is no more of works." "You are complete in Him." The Holy Spirit giving the inquirer a possession of these declarations, working the faith that receives the Lord Jesus into the heart, the believing soul is enabled to say, "I see that it is a salvation for

sinner-for the vilest, the poorest, the most unworthy. I came to Christ, and was received; I believed in Him, rested in Him, and I am saved. Christ is mine, His salvation is mine, His promises are mine, His advocacy is mine, His heaven is mine."

Dear Reader, is your soul saved? Are you converted by the Spirit of God? Everything else in comparison is but as the bubble that floats down the stream. This busy life will soon cease; its last thought, and care, and anxiety will yield to the great, the solemn realities of eternity. Are you ready for the result? Are you in a state of pardon, of justification, of peace with God through Christ? How is it with your soul? Will it be well with you in death, well with you after death, well with you at the judgment-seat of Christ? Have you come to the Lord Jesus as a Savior-to His blood for cleansing, to His righteousness for acceptance, to His cross for shelter, to Himself for rest? Have you fled as a sinner to Jesus as the Savior? Look these questions, I beseech you, fairly, fully in the face, and answer them in your own conscience, and as in view of that dread tribunal at whose bar you will soon be cited. What if you should prosper in temporal and be lean in spiritual?! What if you should pamper the body, and starve the soul! What if you should gain the world-its riches, its honors, its pleasures-and be yourself through eternity a castaway! To die in your sins, to die without union to Christ, to die un-reconciled to God, tremendous will be the consequences; so dire will be your condition, so fearful and interminable your sufferings from the wrath of a holy and righteous God, it would have been good for you never to have been born. The unrighteous will be "punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

But there is hope! Does this page meet the eye of a penitent mourner-one whose heart is smitten with godly grief for sin? Be it known you that the sacrifice of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit God will not despise. Despise it! Oh, no! It is the precious, holy fruit of His Spirit in your soul, and in His eye it is too holy, too costly and too dear to be despised. Bring to Him that broken heart and Jesus will bind it up, heal and fill it with joy, and peace, and hope. It was His mission to receive and save sinners-it is His office to receive and save sinners-it is His delight and glory to receive and save sinners; and if you will but approach Him, exactly as you are, He will receive and save you.

**1 Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [tou apothanontos](#) (AAPMSG) [huper emon hina eite gregoromen](#) (1PPAS) [eite katheudomen](#) (1PPAS) [ama sun auto zesomen.](#) (1PAAS)

**Amplified:** Who died for us so that whether we are still alive or are dead [at Christ's appearing], we might live together with Him and share His life. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** He died for us so that we can live with him forever, whether we are dead or alive at the time of his return. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** He died for us, so that whether we are "awake" or "asleep" we share his life. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** who died for us in order that whether we are awake [alive] or asleep [dead] we might live together with Him.

**Young's Literal:** who did die for us, that whether we wake -- whether we sleep -- together with him we may live

**WHO DIED FOR US THAT WHETHER WE ARE AWAKE OR ASLEEP WE MAY LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM: [tou apothanontos](#) (AAPMSG) [huper hemon hina eite gregoromen](#) (1PPAS) [eite katheudomen](#) (1PPAS) [hama sun auto zesomen.](#) (1PAAS):**

- **Who died for us** - Mt 20:28; Jn 10:11,15,17; 15:13; Ro 5:6, 7, 8; 8:34; 14:8,9; 1Co 15:3; 2Cor 5:15,21; Ep 5:2; 1Ti 2:6; Titus 2:14; 1Pe 2:24; 3:18
- **Awake or asleep** - 1Th 4:13,17
- [1 Thessalonians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## HE DIED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE

**Who died for us that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with Him-** Paul is explaining our salvation **through our Lord Jesus Christ**, how it was made available to us in the past and what it holds for us in the future ("future hope").

**The Cross** supremely and eternally manifests **God's infinite mercy and grace** to we who were lost in Adam (Ro 5:12-note, 1Co 15:22) and were destined for a Christless eternity (cp 2Th 1:9, Mt 7:23-note; Sin always separates = Ge 3:8, 9, 4:14, 16, Mt 22:13)... amazing grace...

Ro 5:6-note For while we were still **helpless**, at the right time Christ died for the **ungodly**.

Ro 5:8-note But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet **sinner**s, Christ died for us.

Ro 8:34-note who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also **intercedes** (entugchano-word study) (present tense = continually! Even as you are reading this great truth our the King is pleading with His Father on our behalf! cp He 7:25-note) for us.

1Co 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except **Jesus Christ, and Him crucified**.

1Co 15:3-note For I delivered to you **as of first importance** what I also received, that Christ died for (as our personal substitute) our sins (substitutionary atonement) according to the Scriptures (i.e., this was prophesied in the Old Testament - Isa 53:3, 4, 5,6)

1Peter 3:18-note For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, **so that He might bring us to God**, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

**Who died** (599) (**apothnesko** from **apo** = intensifies meaning, away from + **thnesko** = die) means literally to die off. It means to die a natural death, applied to both men and animals stronger than thnesko. Jesus did not "swoon" but the Greek word is clear - He ceased breathing and His heart ceased beating!

The **aorist tense** points back to Calvary as a historical fact. It asserts that He "experienced death" (Berkeley Version) in all the grim reality of the term. Furthermore the **active voice** points out that this Christ's choice to die for us. As **Hiebert** aptly comments "He was not "killed" but was willing to die of His own accord." ([1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

The **Cross of Christ** is now and forever the source of power for our supernatural life...

For the **word of the Cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are **being saved** ("Present Tense" Salvation- See Three Tenses of Salvation) it is the **power of God**. (1Co 1:18)

The **Cross of Christ** provides not only the **power** but the **motivation** to live for Christ...

He died for all, so that they who live **might no longer live for themselves**, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. (2Co 5:15)

The **Cross of Christ** means we are now the personal property of the King of kings (!)...

Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself **a people for His own possession** (1Co 6:20, 7:23, 1Pe 2:9-note, cp Lv 20:26, Dt 26:18, 19, Ex 19:6KJV), zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:14-note)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What is the Swoon Theory? Did Jesus survive the crucifixion?](#)
- [What is the Hallucination Theory?](#)

**For** (5228) (**huper**) in this context means on our behalf, in our place, as our substitute. It refers to truth of the vicarious death of Christ and His substitutionary atonement. His substitutionary death was foreshadowed in the OT where sin was pictured as a burden to be placed upon the head of an animal prior to sacrificing, the animal's death representing the just penalty for sin. In other words, the animal died in place of the sinner who confessed his sins by placing his hands on the animal's head, which symbolized the transfer of his sin to the substitute. (Cp Lv 4:4, 15, Col 2:17-note, He 10:1, 2, 3, 4) The sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificed animal on the altar depicted atonement indicating that the penalty of sin had been paid - Lv 17:11,12, 13, 14, Ge 9:4, 5, 6, Dt 12:23). Christ died the death we should have died, paying the penalty we should have paid that we might in Him live the life He lives. As Irenaeus said "Christ became what we are, in order that we might become what He is".

## **CHRIST'S DEATH**

## FOR US

The idea of Christ dying on behalf of or **for** others is frequently expressed in the NT with a number of phrases - the purpose of the death, Ro 14:9, He died, 2Co 5:15, He tasted death, He 2:9, He suffered, 1Pe 2:21, He became a curse, Ga 3:13, He offered Himself, Hebrews 9:14, He offered His body, Hebrews 10:10, He laid down His life, 1Jn 3:16, cp. Jn 10:18, He gave His life a ransom, Mt 20:28, He gave Himself, Ga 1:4, He gave Himself as a ransom, 1Ti 2:6, He gave Himself up, Ga 2:20.

**Green** observes that "This is one of the few texts in the Thessalonian letters where the author mentions the cross of Christ (see 1Th 2.15; 4.14), and the only place in these books where the purpose of Christ's death is explained (cf. Ro 14.9; 2Co 5.15, 21; Ga 1.4)... The absence of a fuller elaboration of the theology of the cross at this point implies that the first readers already understood the teaching about the death of Christ. This was part of the initial instruction the church had received (see Acts 17.3), and it became the foundation of the church's confession (1Th. 4.14). (Green, G. L. The Letters to the Thessalonians. The Pillar New Testament commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leicester, England: W. B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos)

**John MacArthur** adds "The simple, yet profound phrase **who died for** ([huper](#); "on our behalf"; "with reference to us"; "in our place"; "as our substitute") **us** (cf. Ro. 5:8) expresses the sole basis for believers' salvation. God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21); "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24; cf. John 10:11; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 5:2; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2). The glorious message of the gospel is that Christ's substitutionary death paid in full the penalty for believers' sins and therefore believers will not face God's judgment. In John 5:24 Jesus declared, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." Nor will they face His condemnation, because "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro. 8:1). Christ's death on their behalf sets all day people—both those who are **awake** (alive) and those who are **asleep** (dead; cf. 1Th 4:13–15)—apart from night people. The marvelous reality is that all believers will live together with Him, as Jesus Himself promised (Jn 14:1-3+).

**So that** (2443) ([hina](#)) is a conjunction introducing a purpose clause, in this case explaining the purpose of His death - that believers might live in Him (see in Christ and in Christ Jesus and in Christ)!

**Awake** (1127) ([gregoreuo](#) from [egeiro](#) = to waken, to raise up, to rouse from sleep) means to arouse from sleep and in context refers to those who are still alive at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Asleep** (2518) ([katheudo](#) from [katá](#) = an intensifies meaning + [heúdo](#) = to sleep) to sleep, fall asleep, be fast asleep and here is a figurative reference to death.

Paul's point again was that there was no advantage or disadvantage for one class of believer (living) over another (dead).

The outcome for us will not be determined whether we are "waking in life or sleeping in death" (Moffatt). When our Lord returns, both the living and the dead believers will receive their glorified bodies (1Co 15:51, 52, 53, 54; 1Th 4:16,17) and the grand purpose of God for us will be realized, "that ... we may live together with him." Then both groups will enter into life in all its fullness.

**Barnes** notes that "This was designed to calm their minds in their trials, and to correct an error which seems to have prevailed in the belief that those who were found alive when he should return, would have some priority over those who were dead.

**Live together with Him** - Observe how this statement clearly implies Jesus did not just die on the Cross but was resurrected from the grave. Williams renders this clause to "live in fellowship with Him". The idea is to live in intimate (sun/syn speaks of intimacy, of one mixed with another so that no one can tell the difference from the other) fellowship with the very One Who Himself is the very essence of eternal life. This is simply incomprehensible and it will take an eternity to even begin to fathom this great truth! This blessed eternal life is realized now in this present life, but will be fully realized when the Bridegroom returns for His Bride, the church (see The Jewish Wedding Analogy), and we receive our glorified bodies (1Co 15:51, 52, 53, 54+, 1Th 4:16+; 1Th 4:17+)

We see parallel thoughts of Christ as our life in

Col 3:4+ "When **Christ, who [is] our life**, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and **that believing you may have life in His name**.

1 John 5:12+ He who has the Son **has the life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

**Peter** explains that the Lamb of God, the only begotten Son of God...

Himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross, so that we might die to **Sin** (Justification - cp Ro 6:11- note) and live (Progressive sanctification - cp Gal 2:20- note) to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

(1Pe 2:24- note)

**Comment:** In this passage Peter sums up the very heart of the Gospel of God. Be careful here - What is the context? [Remembering context is king for accurate interpretation]? "Sins... sin... righteousness" - so clearly Peter is not referring to physical healing but to spiritual "healing" from the ravages of the "sin virus".

**Hiebert** - Forever to "live in fellowship with Him" (Williams) is the highest description of our apocalyptic salvation in the Scriptures. This will be the very essence of eternal life. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

In Romans **Paul** explains our inextricably intertwined lives as believers writing that...

For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. (Ro 14:7, 8, 9-note)

**Live** ([2198](#)) ([zao](#)) in this usage refers to the supernatural, spiritual, eternal life available in union with Christ. This is our Savior's desire for us, that we might have life, and have it abundantly. (Jn 10:10+)

The verb **live** is in the **ao** **rist tense** which Robertson states is in the "First aorist active subjunctive constative aorist covering all life (now and hereafter) together with (hama sun as in 1Thes 4:17) Jesus."

**Together** ([260](#)) ([hama](#)) is a marker of simultaneous occurrence, at the same time, denoting the coincidence of two actions in time. Here it refers to those who are alive and those who are dead. There would be no priority or precedence.

**Together with Him** ([hama sun auto](#)) is a strong statement indicating that not only will believers livewith their Lord but also that both the **awake** (living) and the **asleep** (dead) **together** will be living with Him. The same idea of "togetherness" has seen in the discussion of the rapture where Paul used hama to specify that both living and dead **will be caught up together** (1Th 4:17+). Here Paul is saying that both the living and the dead, will be living together, united with Him.

**With** ([4862](#))([sun/syn](#)) speaks of intimacy in contrast to the other Greek preposition for with,[meta](#), which speaks of nearness without the idea of intimacy. An excellent illustration of this difference is the two thieves on the Cross. The believing thief was crucified (physically but more importantly spiritually) **with (sun)** Christ (see word study on crucified with = sustauroo) while the other thief was crucified (physically next to) **with (meta)** Christ. The first thief experienced intimate union with Christ, while the second experienced only close proximity to Christ, the result of which was eternal separation from Christ.

**Spurgeon** reiterates that "They who have served their day and generation, when they sleep are not parted from their Lord. They become not the children of the darkness by that fact, for he died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him. Whether we are living here or living there, we shall still live together with him.

1Thessalonians 5:11 **Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Dio parakaleite \(2PPAM\) allelous kai oikodomeite \(2PPAM\) eis ton ena, kathos kai poieite. \(2PPAI\)](#)

**Amplified:** Therefore encourage (admonish, exhort) one another and edify (strengthen and build up) one another, just as you are doing. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** So go on cheering and strengthening each other with thoughts like these, as I have no doubt you have been doing. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Wherefore, be encouraging one another and be building one another up, one believer the other believer, even as also you are doing.

**Young's Literal:** wherefore, comfort ye one another, and build ye up, one the one, as also ye do.

**THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD UP ONE ANOTHER JUST AS YOU ALSO ARE DOING: Dio parakaleite (2PPAM) allelous kai oikodomeite (2PPAM) eis ton ena, kathos kai poieite. (2PPAI):**

■ **Therefore** - 1Th 4:18

- **Encourage one another** - Hebrews 3:13; 10:25
- **Build up one another** - Ro 14:19; 15:2; 1Co 10:23; 14:5,12,29; 2Co 12:19; Ep 4:12,16,29; 1Ti 1:4; Jude 1:20
- **Just as you have been doing** - 1Th 4:10; Ro 15:14; 2Pe 1:12
- [1 Thessalonians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## A LOGICAL CONCLUSION

**Therefore** (**dio**) is a conjunction meaning on account of such a thing (see term of conclusion), for this reason or for this purpose. **Therefore** because of the foundational truth regarding our blessed **hope** just explained, Paul now issues a two part exhortation. Doctrine always precedes duty. Our belief is the foundation for our behavior

Both verbs in this exhortation are in the **present imperative** signaling that they are both **commands** to **continually carry out the tasks** of **encouraging** and **edifying** (see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obeying these commands](#)) Both are always needed by **day people** who are surrounded by **night people** and who live in a world of ever increasing spiritual darkness.

**Thomas Watson** - In other races, many times, one hinders another; but, in the race to heaven, one Christian helps another. 1Th 5:11, "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." One Christian helps by his prayer, advice, and example—to confirm another. What is the fellowship of saints, but one Christian helping forward another in the heavenly race?

**Spurgeon** - The more of this the better. Christian people should constantly converse with one another for mutual edification.

Encouragement should not be an intermittent occurrence but a daily occupation

Hebrews 3:13+ But **encourage one another** day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (See Related Discussion: The Deceitfulness of Sin)

**Encourage one another** - Earlier Paul used this same verb with the idea of comforting one another. **Hiebert** notes that "Many commentators, and most of our modern versions, " hold that the better rendering is "encourage," since the section being concluded is definitely calculated to cheer the hearts of the readers and to encourage them to diligence in their Christian life. But comfort as well as encouragement may well be implied in the verb, depending upon the individual need. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

After explaining that no believer will has to grieve as does the unbelieving world which has no hope Paul explained the Rapture and then said...

Therefore **comfort** (present imperative) one another with these words. (1Th 4:18+)

God comforts believers so that we might comfort others -- a clear responsibility for every Christian as **Paul** explains in his second epistle to the Corinthians...

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4)

The writer of **Hebrews** gave a similar exhortation in view of the fact that each day draws us one day closer to the return of Christ...

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, **as you see the day drawing near**. (See notes Hebrews 10:23; 24; 25) (**Comment:** One application question regarding encouraging one another is for older saints who have walked with Christ for years -- Are you discipling the next generation? Mt 28:18, 19, 20+, 2Ti 2:2+)

**Encourage** (3870) (**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. A Greek historian described a military regiment which had lost heart and was utterly dejected. The general sent a leader to talk to it to such purpose that courage was reborn and a body of dispirited men became fit again for heroic action.

**Kent Hughes** illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example - I see this

exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside **encouraging**... [exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use.

Paul uses **parakaleo** over 50 times and his specific meaning is determined from the context - Ro 12:1, 8; 15:30; 16:17; 1Co. 1:10; 4:13, 16; 14:31; 16:12, 15; 2 Co. 1:4, 6; 2:7f; 5:20; 6:1; 7:6f, 13; 8:6; 9:5; 10:1; 12:8, 18; 13:11; Ep 4:1; 6:22; Phil. 4:2; Col. 2:2; 4:8; 1Th 2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14; 2Th 2:17; 3:12; 1Ti 1:3; 2:1; 5:1; 6:2; 2Ti 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:6, 15; Philemon 1:9, 10.

**With what truth were they to encourage and build up one another?** They were to remind each other of the confidence that they could look to the future, knowing that because Christ died for them and now lived in them, they would never know the **wrath of God** which would be meted out in the **day of the Lord**. The Blessed Hope of the Lord's Return should encourage every believer to resist the spirit of the dark age in which we live (see Vertical Vision Empowers Horizontal Living).

**One another** (240) (**allelon**) means each other and speaks of a mutuality or sharing of sentiments between two persons or groups of persons. **Allelon** is a reciprocal pronoun which denotes that the encouragement and edification is to be a mutual beneficial activity. As each one encourages and edifies the other, they will both benefit. This is the description of a healthy physical body and here of a healthy spiritual body or church. We have all experienced that when we have come to the aid of a brother or sister in regard to their spiritual life, we have invariably received a blessing to our own life.

**One another** is a common Pauline phrase with most but not all the occurrences being descriptive of some aspect of the body of Christ, the Church. As such, this list would make an excellent Sunday School study, stopping at each **one another** to ponder whether the specific trait is being manifested in your local body and **if it is a desirable trait** seeking to excel still more. [Click here](#) for the list of the **one another's** in the Pauline epistles (**note**: not all refer to believers but you can readily determine the intended audience from the context. Note also that StudyLight assigns the authorship of Hebrews to Paul but I do not agree with their assignment). [Click here](#) for the **one another's** in the general epistles.

**Build up** (3618) (**oikodomeo** from **oikos** = dwelling + **doma** = building [of a house] from **demo** = to build - see word study on derivative verb **sunoikodomeo**) means literally to build, construct or erect a dwelling. **Oikodomeo** is used here as a metaphor meaning to build up, establish, confirm, edify. See **Alexander Maclean's** sermon below on [Edification](#).

The church is not to be a place of passive absorption but of active participation in the lives of others.

**Oikodomeo** - 40x in 38v in the **NAS** - build(13), builders(4), building(2), built(10), edified(1), edifies(3), edify(1), rebuild(4), strengthened(1). Mt. 7:24, Mt 7:26; Mt 16:18; 21:33, 42; 23:29; 26:61; 27:40; Mk. 12:1, 10; 14:58; 15:29; Lk. 4:29; 6:48, 49, 7:5; 11:47, 48; 12:18; 14:28, 30; 17:28; 20:17; Jn. 2:20; Acts 7:47, 49; 9:31; 20:32; Ro 15:20; 1Co. 8:1, 10; 10:23; 14:4, 17; Ga 2:18; 1Th 5:11; 1Pe 2:5, 7.

Webster's dictionary says our English **edify** is derived from the Latin *aedificare* to instruct or improve spiritually, in turn from Latin, to erect a house, in turn from *aedes* temple, house. What a picture of the power of Spirit saturated believers on their brethren.

**Vine** summarizes **the word group of oikodome (noun) and oikodomeo (verb)** noting that these is used...

both in a **literal sense**, Mt 7:24; Lk 4:29, and in a figurative, Ac 20:32; Ga 2:18. The corresponding noun, **oikodome**, building, edification, is used in a similar way, literally, Matthew 24:1 (noun - oikodome), **figuratively**, Ro 14:19 (noun - oikodome).

The word expresses the **strengthening effect of teaching**, 1Co 14:3 (noun - oikodome), and example, 1Co 10:23, upon oneself and upon others, 1Co 14:4, whether for good, 2Co 10:8, or for evil, 1Co 8:10, "emboldened." From the familiar spectacle of building operations **it transfers to the spiritual realm** the idea of assured progress as the result of patient labor. The word is used of national life, Mt 21:42, and of church life, Ac 9:31, as well as of the individual, Ro 15:2 (noun - oikodome). It is **used of the "Church which is His Body"** in Mt 16:18; Ep 4:12 (noun - oikodome), cp. 1Pe 2:5, and of the local church in 1Co 3:9; 14:5, 12; Ep 2:21 (noun - oikodome). Once it describes the resurrection body, 2Co 5:1. **God is said to be the Builder**, in 1Co 3:9 (noun - oikodome); Christ in Mt 16:18; Paul in Ro 15:20, cp. 1Co 3:10; 2Co 10:8; 13:10 (both use the noun - oikodome); the "gifts" of the ascended Lord are the builders in Ep 4:12 (noun - oikodome), cp. 1Co 14:12; individual believers, here; and in Ep 4:16 (noun - oikodome) the church is said to build itself up in love. Building up is effected by: (1) love, 1Co 8:1, cp. Ep 4:16 (noun - oikodome); (2) prophesying, 1Co 14:3, 4 (noun in 14:3 - oikodome), (3) exhortation, 1Th 5:11, cp. He 10:25. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

It has been stated that **oikodomeo**

is always a social word, having regard to the mutual improvement of members of the Church, and the growth of the whole body in faith and love. (Howson, John: The Metaphors of St Paul and Companions of St Paul)

In **Romans** Paul exhorted the saints...

So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the **building up** (oikodome) of one another. (Ro 14:19-note)

Paul used oikodomeo in his last words of warning to the Ephesian elders (if you are an elder beloved, hearken to his wise words)...

And now I commend you (literally - set you before) to God and to the word of His grace, which is able (dunamai - has the capacity or power to) **to build you up** (oikodomeo) and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

Believers do not need to be hearing something new all the time, but they do need to remind themselves of what they already know so that they do not forget it. This verse gives some insight into the meetings of the early church. They included opportunity for mutual edification among the believers. Mutual encouragement and edification are still needed in every local church. And encouragement and edification with reference to their hope in Christ's return is especially needed.

**Just as you also are doing** - Paul as a wise father in the faith, again recognizes the efforts of the believers to excel still more, which can only serve to spur them onward even more.

The Thessalonians were actively and habitually accomplishing these tasks. But Paul's desire was for them to **excel still more...**

(Paul prays for them) and may the Lord cause you to increase and **abound (excel)** in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (see notes 1Thessalonians 3:12; 3:13) (Comment: One of the ways their love for one another was being shown was in their mutual encouragement and edification)

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (**just as you actually do walk**), that you may **excel still more.** (see note 1Thessalonians 4:1)

**Hiebert** - That this activity of mutual edification was carried forward in their assemblies is obvious. But it seems implied that the believers also took advantage of occasions of private conversation to talk about these subjects for mutual strengthening. Wherever believers encourage and strengthen each other in private conversation as well as in their assemblies by considering the eschatological truths that have been presented in these two paragraphs, there will be a healthy and flourishing church. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

**Denney** - The knowledge of the truth is one thing; the Christian use of it is another: if we cannot help one another very much with the first, there is more in our power with regard to the last. We are not ignorant of Christ's second coming; of its awful and consoling circumstances; of its final judgment and final mercy; of its final separations and final unions. Why have these things been revealed to us? What influence are they meant to have in our lives? They ought to be consoling and strengthening. They ought to banish hopeless sorrow. They ought to generate and sustain an earnest, sober, watchful spirit; strong patience; a complete independence of this world. It is left to us as Christian men to assist each other in the appropriation and application of these great truths. Let us fix our minds upon them. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. Christ is coming. There will be a gathering together of all His people unto Him. The living and the dead shall be forever with the Lord. Of the times and the seasons we can say no more than could be said at the beginning; the Father has kept them in His own power; it remains with us to watch and be sober; to arm ourselves with faith, love, and hope; to set our mind on the things that are above, where our true country is, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Expositor's Commentary)

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**Helping Hand** - An 89-year-old man who enjoys creating new words to describe old problems calls a person who finds fault with everything an *againstovist*. "Whatever you suggest," he says, "that person is against it, and will find something wrong with everything you do."

I have pondered his words and too often find myself guilty of being the kind of person he describes. What I would like to call being a "realist" is, in truth, more like being an "againstovist." And that is not pleasing to God.

In the 58th chapter of Isaiah, the prophet said that the sacrificial lifestyle God desires includes: "to undo the heavy burdens, to let the



oppressed go free" (Isaiah 58:6), to "take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness" (Isaiah 58:9).

If I'm oppressing someone by my critical spirit and stinging words, then God says it's time for me to change. He doesn't want me to find fault; He wants me to give freedom and release. Instead of pointing an accusing finger, I am to lend a helping hand.

I can't think of a new word to describe the person who lifts burdens and gives freedom, but I'm sure my friend can. And I hope that word describes me. — David McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It was only a sunny smile  
And little it cost in the giving,  
But it scattered the night like morning light  
And made the day worth living. —Anon.

**Build people up—don't tear them down.**

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**What Type Are You?** - There are two types of people in the world," someone once said, "those who come into a room and say, 'Here I am!' and those who come in and say, 'Ah, there you are!'"

How different are those two approaches! One says, "Look at me! I need attention"; the other says, "Tell me about yourself." One says, "I'm important"; the other says, "You are important." One says, "The world revolves around me"; the other says, "I'm here to serve you."

Wouldn't it be great to be known as that second kind of person—someone others love to have around? Someone who displays the love of Christ openly and unashamedly?

The New Testament gives us some practical suggestions about becoming the kind of person who demonstrates Christ's love. We are told to give preference to one another (Ro 12:10-note), edify one another (Ro 14:19-note), care for one another (1Co 12:25), serve one another (Ga 5:13), bear one another's burdens (Ga 6:2), forgive one another (Col 3:13-note), comfort one another (1Th 5:11), and pray for one another (Jas 5:16).

There should be only one kind of Christian: the "love one another" kind. What type are you? —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, teach us the secret of loving,  
The love You are asking today;  
Then help us to love one another;  
For this we most earnestly pray. —Anon.

**People with a heart for God have a heart for people.**

## EDIFICATION

**Alexander Maclaren** preached this sermon on 1 Thessalonians 5:11

DO not intend to preach about that clause only, but I take it as containing, in the simplest form, one of the Apostle's favourite metaphors which runs through all his 'letters, and the significance of which, I think; is very little grasped by ordinary readers.

'**Edify one another.**' All metaphorical words tend to lose their light and colour, and the figure to get faint, in popular understanding. We all know that 'edifice' means a building; we do not all realize that 'edify' means to build up. And it is a great misfortune that our Authorized Version, in accordance with the somewhat doubtful principle on which its translators proceeded, varies the rendering of the one Greek word so as to hide the frequent recurrence of it in the apostolic teaching. The metaphor that underlies it is the notion of building up a structure. The Christian idea of the structure to be built up is that it is a temple. I wish in this sermon to try to bring out some of the manifold lessons and truths that lie in this great figure, as applied to the Christian life.

Now, glancing over the various uses of the phrase in the New Testament, I find that the figure of 'building,' as the great duty of the Christian life, is set forth under three aspects; self-edification, united edification, and divine edification. And I purpose to look at these in order.

### **I. First, self-edification.**

According to the ideal of the Christian life that runs through the New Testament, each Christian man is a dwelling-place of God's, and his work is to build himself up into a temple worthy of the divine indwelling. Now, I suppose that the metaphor is such a natural and simple one that we do not need to look for any Scriptural basis of it. But if we did, I should be disposed to find it in the solemn antithesis with which the Sermon on the Mount is closed, where there are the two houses pictured, the one built upon the rock and standing firm, and the other built upon the sand. But that is perhaps unnecessary.

We are all builders; Building up — what? Character. ourselves. But what sort of a thing is it that we are building? Some of us pigsties, in which gross, swinish lusts-wallow in filth; some of us shops; some of us laboratories, studies, museums; some of us amorphous structures that cannot be described. But the Christian man is to be building himself up into a temple of God. The aim which should ever burn clear before us, and preside over even our smallest actions, is that which lies in this misused old word, 'edify' yourselves.

The first thing about a structure is the foundation And Paul was narrow enough to believe that the one foundation upon which a human spirit could be built up into a hallowed character is Jesus Christ. He is the basis of all our certitude. He is the anchor for all our hopes. To Him should be referred all our actions; for Him and by Him our lives should be lived. On Him should rest, solid and inexpugnable, standing foursquare to all the winds that blow, the fabric of our characters. Jesus Christ is the pattern, the motive which impels, and the power which enables, me to rear myself into a habitation of God through the Spirit. Whilst I gladly acknowledge that very lovely structures may be reared upon another foundation than Him, I would beseech you all to lay this on your hearts and consciences, that for the loftiest, serenest beauty of character there is but one basis upon which it can be rested. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

Then there is another aspect of this same metaphor, not in Paul's writings but in another part of the New Testament, where we read: 'Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.' So that, in a subordinate sense, a man's faith is the basis upon which he can build such a structure of character; or, to put it into other words — in regard to the man himself, the first requisite to the rearing of such a fabric as God will dwell in is that he, by his own personal act of faith, should have allied himself to Jesus Christ, who is the foundation; and should be in a position to draw from Him all the power, and to feel raying out from Him all the impulses, and lovingly to discern in Him all the characteristics, which make Him a pattern for all men in their building.

The first course of stone that we lay is Faith; and that course is, as it were, mortised into the foundation, the living Rock He that builds on Christ cannot build but by faith. The two representations are complementary to one another, the one, which represents Jesus Christ as the foundation, stating the ultimate fact, and the other, which represents faith as the foundation, stating the condition on which we come into vital contact with Christ Himself.

Then, further, in this great thought of the Christian life being substantially a building up of oneself on Jesus is implied the need for continuous labour. You cannot build up a house in half an hour. You cannot do it, as the old fable told us that Orpheus did, by music, or by wishing. There must be dogged, hard, continuous, life-long effort if there is to be this building up. No man becomes a saint per saltum. No man makes a character at a flash. The stones are actions; the mortar is that mystical, awful thing, habit; and deeds cemented together by custom rise into that stately dwelling-place in which God abides. So, there is to be a life-long work in character, gradually rearing it into His likeness.

The metaphor also carries with it the idea of orderly progression. There are a number of other New Testament emblems which set forth this notion of the true Christian ideal as being continual growth. For instance, 'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,' represents it as resembling vegetable growth, while elsewhere it is likened to the growth of the human body. Both of these are beautiful images, in that they suggest that such progressive advance-sent is the natural consequence of life; and is in one aspect effortless and instinctive.

But then you have to supplement that emblem with others, and there comes in sharp contrast to it the metaphor which represents the Christian progress as being warfare. There the element of resistance is emphasised, and the thought is brought out that progress is to be made in spite of strong antagonisms, partly to be found in external circumstances, and partly to be found in our own treacherous selves. The growth of the corn or of the body does not cover the whole facts of the case but there must be warfare

in order to growth.

There is also the other metaphor by which this Christian progress, which is indispensable to the Christian life, and is to be carried on, whatever may oppose it, is regarded as a race. There the idea of the great, attractive, but far-off future reward comes into view, as well as the strained muscles and the screwed-up energy with which the runner presses towards the mark. But we have not only to fling the result forward into the future, and to think of the Christian life as all tending towards an end, which end is not realised here; but we have to think of it, in accordance with this metaphor of my text, as being continuously progressive, so as that, though unfinished, the building is there; and much is done, though all is not accomplished, and the courses rise slowly, surely, partially realising the divine Architect's ideal, long before the head-stone is brought out with shoutings and tumult of acclaim. A continuous progress and approximation towards the perfect ideal of the temple completed, consecrated, and inhabited by God, lies in this metaphor.

Is that you, Christian man and woman? Is the notion of progress a part of your working belief? Are you growing, fighting, running, building up yourselves more and more in your holy faith? Alas! I cannot but believe that the very notion of progress has died out from a great many professing Christians.

There is one more idea in this metaphor of self-edification, viz., that our characters should be being modelled by us on a definite plan, and into a harmonious whole. I wonder how many of us in this chapel this morning have ever spent a quiet hour in trying to set clearly before ourselves what we want to make of ourselves, and how we mean to go about it. Most of us live by haphazard very largely, even in regard to outward things, and still more entirely in regard to our characters. Most of us have not consciously before us, as you put a pattern-line before a child learning to write, any ideal of ourselves to which we are really seeking to approximate. Have you? And could you put it into words? And are you making any kind of intelligent and habitual effort to get at it? I am afraid a great many of us, if we were honest, would have to say, No! If a man goes to work as his own architect, and has a very hazy idea of what it is that he means to build, he will not build anything worth the trouble. If your way of building up yourselves is, as Aaron said his way of making the calf was, putting all into the fire, and letting chance settle what comes out, nothing will come out better than a calf. Brother! if you are going to build, have a plan, and let the plan be the likeness of Jesus Christ. And then, with continuous work, and the exercise of continuous faith, which knits you to the foundation, 'build up yourselves for an habitation of God.'

## **II. We have to consider united edification.**

There are two streams of representation about this matter in the Pauline Epistles, the one with which I have already been dealing, which does not so often appear, and the other which is the habitual form of the representation, according to which the Christian community, as a whole, is a temple, and building up is a work to be done reciprocally and in common.

We have that representation with special frequency and detail in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where perhaps we may not be fanciful in supposing that the great prominence given to it, and to the idea of the Church as the temple of God, may have been in some degree due to the existence, in that city, of one of the seven wonders of the world, the Temple of Diana of the Ephesians.

But, be that as it may, what I want to point out is that united building is inseparable from the individual building up of which I have been speaking.

Now, it is often very hard for good, conscientious people to determine how much of their efforts ought be given to the perfecting of their own characters in any department, and how much ought to be given to trying to benefit and help other people. I wish you to notice that one of the most powerful ways of building up myself is to do my very best to build up others. Some, like men in my position, for instance, and others whose office requires them to spend a great deal of time and energy in the service of their fellows, are tempted to devote themselves too much to building up character in other people, and to neglect their own. It is a temptation that we need to fight against, and which can only be overcome by much solitary meditation. Some of us, on the other hand, may be tempted, for the sake of our own perfecting, intellectual cultivation, or improvement in other ways, to minimise the extent to which we are responsible for helping and blessing other people. But let us remember that the two things cannot be separated; and that there is nothing that will make a man more like Christ, which is the end of all our building, than casting himself into the service of his fellows with self-oblivion.

Peter said, 'Master! let us make here three tabernacles.' Ay! But there was a demoniac boy down below, and the disciples could not cast out the demon. The Apostle did not know what he said when he preferred building up himself, by communion With God and His glorified servants, to hurrying down into the valley, where there were devils to fight and broken hearts to heal. Build up yourselves, by all means; if you do you will have to build up your brethren. 'The edifying of the body of Christ' is a plain duty which no Christian man can neglect without leaving a tremendous gap in the structure which he ought to rear.

The building resulting from united edification is represented in Scripture, not as the agglomeration of a number of little shrines, the

individuals, but as one great temple. That temple grows in two respects, both of which carry with them imperative duties to us Christian people. It grows by the addition of new stones. And so every Christian is bound to seek to gather into the fold those that are wandering far away, and to lay some stone upon that sure foundation. It grows, also, by the closer approximation of all the members one to another, and the individual increase of each in Christ-like characteristics. And we are bound to help one another therein, and to labour earnestly for the advancement of our brethren, and for the unity of God's Church. Apart from such efforts our individual edifying of ourselves will become isolated, the results one-sided, and we ourselves shall lose much of what is essential to the rearing in ourselves of a holy character. 'What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.' Neither seek to build up yourselves apart from the community, nor seek to build up the community apart from yourselves

### **III. Lastly, the Apostle, in his writings, sets forth another aspect of this general thought, viz., divine edification.**

When he spoke to the elders of the church of Ephesus he said that Christ was able 'to build them up.' When he wrote to the Corinthians he said, 'Ye are God's building.' To the Ephesians he wrote, 'Ye are built for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' And so high above all our individual and all our united effort he carries up our thoughts to the divine Master-builder, by whose work alone a Paul, when he lays the foundation, and an Apollos, when he builds thereupon, are of any use at all.

Thus, dear brethren, we have to base all our efforts on this deeper truth, that it is God who builds us into a temple meet for Himself, and then comes to dwell in the temple that He has built.

So let us keep our hearts and minds expectant of, and open for, that Spirit's influences. Let us be sure that we are using all the power that God does give us, His work does not supersede mine. My work is to avail myself of His. The two thoughts are not contradictory. They correspond to, and fill out, each other, though warring schools of one-eyed theologians and teachers have set them in antagonism. 'Work out.., for it is God that worketh in.' That is the true reconciliation. 'Ye are God's building; build up yourselves in your most holy faith.'

If God is the builder, then boundless, indomitable hope should be ours. No man can look at his own character, after all his efforts to mend it, without being smitten by a sense of despair, if he has only his own resources to fall back upon. Our experience is like that of the monkish builders, according to many an old legend, who found every morning that yesterday's work had been pulled down in the darkness by demon hands. There is no man whose character is anything more than a torso, an incomplete attempt to build up the structure that was in his mind — like the ruins of half-finished palaces and temples which travellers came across sometimes in lands now desolate, reared by a forgotten race who were swept away by some unknown calamity, and have left the stones half-lifted to their courses, half-hewed in their quarries, and the building gaunt and incomplete. But men will never have to say about any of God's architecture, He 'began to build and was not able to finish.' As the old prophecy has it, 'His hands have laid the foundation of the house, His hands shall also finish it.' Therefore, we are entitled to cherish endless hope and quiet confidence that we, even we, shall be reared up into an habitation of God through the Spirit.

What are you building? 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone.' Let every man take heed what and how and that he buildeth thereon.