

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of March 2012

A Submissive Church

I Thessalonians 5:12-13

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2012

The Thessalonian church was a submissive church. What made the Thessalonian church unique? - They were submissive to the word! The primary role of a Pastor is to lead his people to submit totally to the word of God. If a pastor preaches on topics that are purely his own ideas without any biblical content, a church will never be trained to accept the word of God when it is presented.

The Apostle Paul brings his first letter to a close by bringing together a number of matters relating to their lives together in the Christian Community. While some of these related to specific issues then and there, the entire section provides us with timeless counsel for life in the church. Paul here first of all urged an attitude of support and respect. He first of all deals with the behavior toward the leaders of the church.

There are five lessons we want to center our thinking on here in these two verses:

I. Paul says, “who labor among you.”

“Labor” is the word for hard work. Leadership in the church is not a matter of privilege. It is hard work! Never merely a place of honor! Although there are times when Pastors are given special treatment and privileges, it is well for us to keep in mind that leadership in the church is hard work. The pastor is to toil and toil for the church. The word “labor” means to work hard to the point of exhaustion, then to keep on laboring: to continue laboring even if one has become weary. To toil is the point of weariness, to work beyond what one is capable of doing. This is the work of the ministry, this is the demand made upon the minister’s time and energy. His whole mind, body, and soul belong to the Lord and are to be poured out into the lives of God’s people.

So Paul is saying that believers ought to know your leaders. The word “know” means to acknowledge, appreciate, respect, and know the value of. Few people labor as much as a committed Pastor. Take for example, the committed Pastor. Compare his work with any other professional.

- How much time would some other professional take away from his regular duties if he had to speak for thirty or more minutes at a conference this week.
- What would happen if he had to speak every week – two or three times to the same people.
- Attending committee meetings
- Visiting Hospitals
- Burying the dead
- Counseling the young and old

While the pastor is doing all this, he still has to manage the administration of the church. Then he must be a committed teacher of the word. That means study and preparation for the committed teacher, the hours are endless and long and the committed teacher does this every week.

The Pastors service to the church and ministry is above and beyond secular jobs. The Pastor has been called of God to teach, edify and build up the church and its believers and to equip him-self to be a dynamic witness for the Lord and to reach out to save the lost. He's to organize and minister to the desperate needs of the poor and hurting. That's why Paul says believers are to know their leaders – acknowledge, appreciate, and respect them - They deserve it.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2012

II. Who are “over you in the Lord.”

This function of leadership designates some measure of authority. The Greek word literally means, “to take the lead.” It is the same word used in Romans 12:8, “He that ruleth with diligence.” It is translated there, “he who leads.” Too often authority is looked upon as power rather than responsibility. In the church, we must resist that mistake. The authority given to Pastors is not a matter of personal power, but of moral responsibility to lead and to guide.

The thing that qualifies you to have that kind of authority is that you are, “in the Lord.” Only as you are under the Lord's authority, are you fit to lead the people. You must first of all submit yourself to the authority of the Lord. You must yield to His Spirit, live by His principle, and abide by His teachings. You must be in the Lord ad if you are in the Lord, He has the right and the authority to tell you what to do and when to do it.

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2012

III. Who “admonish you.”

This is one of those fascinating compound words used only in the New Testament by Paul. It means, literally to “put in mind.” It means to warn them. It carries not only a sense of warning but of instructing as well. You ought to respect your teachers. He is admonishing you in the word.

IV. Esteem them.

That word esteem means high regard. We ought to esteem our Pastor not by virtue of the title or the office, but by virtue of the quality and fidelity brought to laboring, leading, and teaching. The esteem called for in a response to the work that is done: “For their work’s sake.”

Pastors are highly esteemed because of the work they do. They are ministers of the Lord and they serve Christ and the church. Believers owe much to them because of their sacrificial service. They have a holy calling; a unique calling; a special calling; a sacred calling; a divine calling; a godly calling and a spiritual calling.

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2012

V. Finally Paul says, “be at peace among yourselves.”

Believers and leaders are to be at peace among themselves. This exhortation is given to the leaders as well as to the believers. Believers are not to criticize, grumble, envy, or oppose their Pastors. Differ, yes, but not oppose. Pastors are not to act as lords over God’s people, nor are they to lead for the sake of seeking position, boasting, ego, securing recognition or receiving honor. A pastor who leads for these reasons cannot feed the people or please God. He does not have the presence and blessings of God that are necessary to feed the flock of God.

But Paul says we owe to be at peace with one another. You can’t do that without being totally committed to Christ. He deserves our trust, our confidence, and our commitment. He is worthy of our allegiance, our devotion, our dedication and our loyalty.

He is the hope of the world. There is no other source of help.