

# God's Hedges (II)

# Paul's last words in first epistle

- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18
  - Practical reasons to hope
  - Deeply concerned for their souls
    - New Christians
    - Under attack
  - Paul's first response may make difference in their survival

# I. Elders, 12-13

**Recognize** (understand their value);  
esteem; appreciate those who . . .

1 Sm.17:34-35

- **Labor among you.** 1:3.
- **Are over you:** preside, rule, govern (1 Tim. 3:4-5; 5:17)
- **Admonish you:** correction, Eph.6:4.
  - Includes teaching, counsel, warning (Tit.1:9)
  - Christians covet correction

## Esteem them (respect)

- Very highly (as 3:10): quite beyond all measure. Vulgate: *superabundanter*.
- In love, for work's sake (1 Tim.5:17; Hb.13:17)
- Be at peace.
  - Did some disturb the peace? (v.14)

I. Elders, 12-13

II. Strong Help  
The Weak, 14

## Warn the unruly, 14 (12)

- Disorderly, insubordinate, out of line. Plato: of intemperance in pleasures.
- 2 Th.3:6 (out of rank), 7, 11.
- Rv.3:9, divine love protects the loyal.
- Rv.3:19, love disciplines the disobedient.

# Comfort the fainthearted

- Encourage the discouraged.
- Overwhelmed by stress (2:11-12)
- Overwhelmed by sorrow (4:13-18)
  - Abram – Abraham
  - Gideon – mighty man of valor
  - Simon – Peter
  - Christians – Philemon 21



# Uphold the weak

- Help, *put your arm around*

## *Weak*

- 1 Co.9:22
- May include the immoral, 4:1-8
- May include the immature, Hb.12:12-13

# Patient with all

- Long-tempered; bear up under provocation
- Patient with people. 2 Tim.4:2
  - Summary: comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable...
  - Brethren: requires work of every Christian

I. Elders, 12-13

II. Strong Help Weak, 14

III. A Renewed  
Mind, 15-18

# Do not render evil for evil...15

- Those who hurt us can make us hurt ourselves (bad response)
- Christians cannot afford retaliation.
  - Recently converted Christians have not conquered old habits.
  - Replace retaliation with constant pursuit of what is good.
    - Always – habitual attitude
    - Pursue – a follow in haste to find good

# Rejoice always...16

- Thessalonians faced persecution without discouragement within . . .
- The command is to rejoice. Mt.5:10-12
  - Rejoicing is not same as happiness
  - Near context: do not nurse grudges (15)
  - Remote context: even in midst of persecution (Ac.16:25; Ph.4:4)

# Pray without ceasing...17

- 1 Th.1:2
- Christians seek opportunities to pray
  - NOT only when we want something / soul is in jeopardy / when we get what we want . . .
- NOT . . .
  - Merely reciprocating others' prayers for us
  - Rejoicing in prayers that are answered...
  - When we want something / it satisfies us...
  - Selfishly ignoring others with greater needs

# Give thanks in everything...18

- Doesn't say "give thanks **for** everything" but **in** everything: under all circumstances.
  - Ph.1:12-14 . . .
- What virtue is there in thanks when all is well with us? Why should I give thanks?
  1. Spiritual blessings outweigh physical, Mt.16:26
  2. Trials bless us, Ac.5:41. 1 Th.4:13-18
  3. Opposite of thanks: murmuring, 1 Co.10:10
  4. Even if we lose everything...Ja.1:17