

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

Message Twelve

The Meaning and Goal of Fostering

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:5; 2:1-20; 2 Thes. 3:9

1 Thes. 1:5—For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thes. 2:1-20—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. ²But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. ³For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; ⁴But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. ⁵For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. ⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, ¹¹Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, ¹²So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. ¹³And because of this we also thank God unceasingly that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men but even as it truly is, the word of God, which also operates in you who believe. ¹⁴For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, for you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they also from the Jews, ¹⁵Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out; and they are not pleasing to God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶In that they forbid us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so that they fill up their sins always. But wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. ¹⁷But we, brothers, having been bereaved of you for a little while, in presence, not in heart, were more abundantly eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸Therefore we wanted to come to you, indeed I Paul, both once and again, yet Satan hindered us. ¹⁹For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Are not even you? ²⁰For you are our glory and joy.

2 Thes. 3:9—Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

I. To foster is to bring up, to nurture, to nourish and cherish, to cultivate, to promote growth and development—1 Thes. 2:7.

1 Thes. 2:7—But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.

II. In 1 Thessalonians 2 we have a description of the fostering of the young Christian life:

A. From this chapter we may learn to serve with children and young people so that they may be fostered to grow to maturity—v. 7.

1 Thes. 2:7—But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.

B. Paul's intention was to nourish the believers, to cherish and foster them—v. 11:
1 Thes. 2:11—Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying,

1. His main concern was not to teach but to do a fostering work to help the young believers to grow—Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Heb. 6:1—Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

1 Cor. 3:6—I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2. Paul regarded the believers as members of a large family, and in such a family the emphasis is on raising the children by cherishing, nourishing, and fostering them so that they may grow.

3. Paul conducted himself as both a mother and a father to the believers:

a. “We were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children”—1 Thes. 2:7.

b. “Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us”—v. 8.

c. “Just as you know how we were to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling you and testifying”—v. 11.

C. The church may be compared to a farm (1 Cor. 3:9), and in 1 Thessalonians 2 Paul was watering, nourishing, and cherishing the tender young plants so that they could grow in life.

1 Cor. 3:9—For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

D. Paul fostered the young believers mainly by presenting them a pattern of life, a pattern of a proper living; this pattern was actually Paul himself—1:5; 2:10; 2 Thes. 3:9.

1 Thes. 1:5—For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thes. 2:10—You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe,

2 Thes. 3:9—Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

III. We need to see and understand the development of faith—1 Thes. 3:2; 2 Thes. 1:3-4:

1 Thes. 3:2—And we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you for the sake of your faith,

2 Thes. 1:3-4—We ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, even as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly and the love of each one of you all to one another is increasing, ⁴So that we ourselves boast in you among the churches of God concerning your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which you bear,

A. The Christian life is a life of faith, a life of believing—2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 11:6:

2 Cor. 5:7—(For we walk by faith, not by appearance)—

Rom. 1:17—For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, “But the righteous shall have life and live by faith.”

Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

1. Faith receives the divine things and realizes the spiritual and unseen things—John 1:12; Heb. 11:1.

John 1:12—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

Heb. 11:1—Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

2. Faith is the foundation of the basic structure of the Christian life—1 Thes. 1:3.

1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

B. Faith has two aspects—the objective aspect and the subjective aspect—3:2, 5-7, 10; Gal. 1:12; 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 4:7:

1 Thes. 3:2—And we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you for the sake of your faith,

1 Thes. 3:5-7—Because of this, when I also could bear *it* no longer, I sent to find out concerning your faith, lest perhaps the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. ⁶But Timothy, having just come to us from you and announcing the good news to us of your faith and love and that you have kind remembrance of us always and long to see us, just as we also you, ⁷Because of this we were comforted because of you, brothers, in all our necessity and affliction, through your faith;

1 Thes. 3:10—Night and day petitioning exceedingly so that we may see your face and complete the things that are lacking in your faith?

Gal. 1:12—For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *I received it* through a revelation by Jesus Christ.

Gal. 2:16—And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

1 Tim. 1:19—Holding faith and a good conscience, *concerning* which some, thrusting *these* away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1 Tim. 3:9—Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2 Tim. 4:7—I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

1. Objective faith denotes that in which we believe, and subjective faith denotes the action of believing.
2. The objective faith produces subjective believing, for our believing is out of the things we believe and is in the things we believe:
 - a. The objective faith includes the contents of God's New Testament economy—1 Tim. 1:4.
1 Tim. 1:4—Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
 - b. When we accept the word of God, it becomes both our objective faith and our subjective faith—1 Thes. 2:13; 1:6, 8.
1 Thes. 2:13—And because of this we also thank God unceasingly that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men but even as it truly is, the word of God, which also operates in you who believe.

1 Thes. 1:6—And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit,

1 Thes. 1:8—For from you the word of the Lord has sounded out; not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place, your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need of saying anything.

- c. When we receive a word concerning the objective faith, the contents of God's New Testament economy, subjective faith is spontaneously produced in us—Gal. 1:23; 3:2, 5, 25-26.

Gal. 1:23—But they only heard *this*: He who was formerly persecuting us is now announcing as the gospel the faith which formerly he ravaged.

Gal. 3:2—This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

Gal. 3:5—He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit and does works of power among you, *does He do it* out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

Gal. 3:25-26—But since faith has come, we are no longer under a child-conductor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

- C. The work of faith includes all the actions that issue out of our living faith—1 Thes. 1:3, 9:

1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1 Thes. 1:9—For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

1. Genuine faith is never in vain; rather, a certain kind of work will always issue from living faith—v. 3.

1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

2. Faith works, acts, and issues in many things; in particular, it causes us to turn to God from everything else—v. 9.

1 Thes. 1:9—For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

IV. We need to see and understand the development of love—Eph. 3:17; 4:16; Col. 3:14; Jude 21:

Eph. 3:17—That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph. 4:16—Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Col. 3:14—And over all these things *put on* love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness.

Jude 21—Keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

- A. Faith and love are two inseparable, excellent virtues of the believers in Christ—Eph. 6:23; 1 Tim. 1:14; Titus 3:15:
Eph. 6:23—Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Tim. 1:14**—And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.
- Titus 3:15**—All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in faith. Grace be with you all.
1. Love enjoys the things received and realized by faith and partaken of by hope for nourishing ourselves, building up others, and expressing God.
 2. Faith is for appreciating, substantiating, and receiving the unlimited riches of the Triune God; love is for experiencing, enjoying, and living out the immeasurably rich Triune God.
- B. Paul first wanted to perfect the believers' faith and then encourage them to increase and abound in their love—1 Thes. 3:10, 12; 2 Thes. 1:3:
1 Thes. 3:10—Night and day petitioning exceedingly so that we may see your face and complete the things that are lacking in your faith?
- 1 Thes. 3:12**—And the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we also to you,
- 2 Thes. 1:3**—We ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, even as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly and the love of each one of you all to one another is increasing,
1. Love flows out of faith, and faith operates through love—Gal. 5:6.
Gal. 5:6—For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith *avails*, operating through love.
 2. Paul's emphasis on love indicates that love is a vital factor in the Christian life—1 Thes. 3:12; 2 Thes. 1:3; 3:5.
1 Thes. 3:12—And the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we also to you,
2 Thes. 1:3—We ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, even as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly and the love of each one of you all to one another is increasing,
2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.
 3. The divine love is immeasurable; therefore, we need to increase and abound in love—Eph. 3:19; 1 Thes. 3:12.
Eph. 3:19—And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

1 Thes. 3:12—And the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we also to you,

4. Following faith is love, which issues from faith and works together with faith as an indication of growth in life—Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:14.

Gal. 5:6—For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith *avails*, operating through love.

1 Tim. 1:14—And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

- C. Love is the motivation and characteristic of our Christian labor—1 Thes. 1:3:
1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1. Serving the living God is related to the labor of love—2:9, 11.

1 Thes. 2:9—For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Thes. 2:11—Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying,

2. The labor of love is truly a labor; it is not merely an action or some kind of conduct.

- D. Paul's desire was that the believers' faith would be perfected and that their love would increase and abound in order that the Lord would establish their hearts blameless in holiness—3:13.

1 Thes. 3:13—So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

V. We need to see and understand the development of hope—1:3; 3:13; 2 Thes. 2:16:

1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1 Thes. 3:13—So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

2 Thes. 2:16—Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope in grace,

- A. The holy life for the church life is a life with a future, a life with hope; this hope is in the Lord's coming back with resurrection and rapture—1 Thes. 1:10; 4:13-17.

1 Thes. 1:10—And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

1 Thes. 4:13-17—But we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are sleeping, that you would not grieve even as also the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so also those who have fallen asleep through Jesus,

God will bring with Him. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep; ¹⁶Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord.

- B. God the Father has “regenerated us unto a living hope”—1 Pet. 1:3.
1 Pet. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- C. God has given us “good hope in grace”—2 Thes. 2:16.
2 Thes. 2:16—Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope in grace,

- D. Endurance issues from the hope of the Lord’s coming back and is supported by it—1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:4; 3:5.
1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

2 Thes. 1:4—So that we ourselves boast in you among the churches of God concerning your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which you bear,

2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

- E. We need to participate in the endurance of Christ that we may endure suffering, as the Lord did, to stand against Satan, the enemy of God.

- F. We need to guard and protect faith, love, and hope as the basic structure of the genuine Christian life—1 Thes. 1:3; 5:8.
1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1 Thes. 5:8—But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and a helmet, the hope of salvation.