

- ✚ We are all only assets and players in God's kingdom, and He can move us to any place on His chess board He chooses. Goodbyes aren't easy, but they are necessary sometimes. Paul is saying goodbye to a church he only knew for about a month, but his words are just as applicable to us as they were to them, **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:12-15**.
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### 1. Adding to our list of things to do.

- 1) Rejoice always. Rejoice means "return to the source of your joy." Circumstances aren't always joyful. This is why our joy cannot come from our circumstances, our health, our wealth, or things going our way. This is not a happy departure for us, but it has been joyful, not because of the circumstances, but because we are grateful to know God's will and be useful to Him. The source of our joy is God and His will for our lives, **Philippians 4:4**. We can do what we want, where we want, for as long as we want, but if we aren't in God's will, it will all wash out on us. Seeking His kingdom first has been the source of our joy, and it will continue to be.
- 2) Pray without ceasing. Remember, God didn't save us just so we could do stuff for Him, He saved us so we could be His. Prayer is part of the return on God's investment, God loves for His children to speak to Him, **Luke 18:1**. We can pray, or we can lose heart, those are our options. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians give us not only the command to pray but also how to pray for each other (**2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:11**) and how you can pray for your future pastor and your exiting pastors in **2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:1-2**.
- 3) In everything, give thanks. "God is good" is something we only hear whenever someone gets what they want, or things are going well. Can God only be good whenever we get what we want? "My parents are good," yeah, but do they still hold that status when they send you to your room and take away all your toys or when they pack up all your stuff and move you and the family far away from all your friends? Not all things are good, there are things that are terrible and evil, but God works all things together for good, **Romans 8:28**. This process we are in may not feel good in the short run, it sure won't be easy and will be a time of testing for all of us, but it will be good because God will work it that way.

### 2. This is the Will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

- ✓ Most of the time, when we are asking about the Lord's will, it is in reference to the minor parts of God's will: where do we go, who do we call, who's going to be on which committee, all parts of God's will, but only a minor part. We sit waiting for these minor points of God's will, all the while neglecting the major points, for instance: returning to the source of your joy (not in things or accomplishments but in living for and doing the will of God), seeking first His kingdom, and all these minor things will be added, right? We pray and trust Him without ceasing, thanking Him for all things because He is faithful and will not fail us.

### 3. Things on our not-to-do-list.

- 1) Don't quench the Spirit (**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:19**). God will use who He will, and how He will. Encourage the timid, hold onto the weak, and admonish those who aren't working, **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:6-7**. Don't be a wet blanket, they put out fires, but this is the fire we want to burn hot. Wet blankets say, "That won't work", "We've done that before", or "Nobody will come," negative dispositions that can become contagious. Instead, "To this end also, we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power." **2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:11**.
- 2) Don't despise prophecy. We only think of prophecy as foretelling, but it is more often than not forthtelling, correctly applying something that God has already said. Pay attention when someone is up here speaking; expect that God will speak through that person to this congregation.
- 3) Examine and hold firm to what is good and reject what isn't. Eat the chicken and spit out the bones, nobody's perfect, but if they are people of God who are trying to honor God with what they say, expect that God will be leading you through them.
- 4) God will always be faithful to this church, **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23-24**.

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