

Introduction

- How do you summarise things?
 - sum things up...?
 - how was Summer Focus?
 - how is Fintry Church?
- That was Paul's challenge as he rounded off his letter
 - and we are going to look at each of the things he touched on, working our way through the passage... [may find it useful having a Bible open in front of you...](#)

Exposition

- *Put up a bullet point at each section...*

Respect your Leaders

- (12) *Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. (13) Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*

- Being called "Mr Brough" by people... call me what you like...
 - old days of respect for the position are gone, and possibly a good thing, possibly not
- Paul's point here is that respect is due to those in Christian leadership, not for their position's sake, **but because of the work they do**
 - and what is that work?
 - **actively helping the Christians they are tasked with looking after to grow in faith, in knowledge of and likeness to Jesus Christ**
 - it will sometimes involve admonishment...
 - [story from an International Student's weekend about appropriate behaviour...](#)

Actively help each other grow

- (14) *And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (15) Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.*

- **First, notice Paul's assumption:**
 - people will be actively engaged in helping each other grow in faith
 - this may mean through the preaching, but it also means in personal interactions
 - notice that it is **not** limited to those in leadership...
- Does this square with 1 Thess 4:11? **"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business..."**
 - yes - for the emphasis there was about working hard, about not neglecting your own business (whether financial or otherwise), rather than about being productive, working hard to prepare for the coming of Christ rather than simply resting on laurels as if **"it doesn't matter, Christ will return soon..."**
 - here the emphasis is more clearly on the interpersonal, on having an active concern for one another...
- **Second, how are we to engage with one another towards growth?**
 - **warn the idle** - nobody just along for the ride, everyone taking their part, putting their shoulder to the task of outreach, of pastoral care - praying, visiting, taking practical responsibilities...
 - **encourage the timid** -
 - **help the weak** -
 - **be patient with everyone** -
 - **don't pay back wrong with wrong** -
 - **be kind to one another** -

React well to what happens

- (16) *Be joyful always; (17) pray continually; (18) give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

- This is about perspective - is Christ and his plans and priorities central to your life?
 - so much that, while sadness, disease, struggles may come, they are more than matched by the awareness of the joy there is knowing Christ?
 - so much so that whatever challenges come we never lose sight of dependence on God in prayer?
 - so much so that whatever our circumstances, we can see those things that we are always able to give thanks for in Christ Jesus?

Fan the Spirit's Fire

- (19) *Do not put out the Spirit's fire; (20) do not treat prophecies with contempt.*

- **Are we alert to what the Spirit is doing?**

Test everything

- (21) *Test everything. Hold on to the good. (22) Avoid every kind of evil.*

- I think most of the conservative evangelical church is fine at this:
 - we are more likely to err on the previous point, and quench the Spirit
 - but we shouldn't forget!

Be sanctified

- (23) *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Sanctification priority - what is it?
 - and who does it?

God is faithful

- (24) *The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*

- Can rely on God in this, as in all things:
 - **he is faithful!**
 - same conviction is again expressed by Paul in Philippians 1:6: "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Look after one another

- (25) *Brothers, pray for us. (26) Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. (27) I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.*

- There is a general concern for one another that we should aspire to:
 - concrete, practical, not airy-fairy love so diffuse it melts into a puddle of emotional warm fuzzies!!
 - **so pray for one another**
 - **so greet one another**
 - **so make sure good instruction is passed on and shared appropriately**

Grace

- (28) *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

- **Only by grace...**

Conclusion

- **Hearing God's voice, I will go from here and...?**

