

1 Thessalonians 5:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Analysis

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren—enorkizō hymas ton Kyrion anagnōsthēnai tēn epistolēn pasin tois adelphois (ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν Κύριον ἀναγνώσθῃναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς). Enorkizō (ἐνορκίζω, 'I adjure/charge solemnly,' putting under oath) is extremely strong—Paul invokes divine authority. Ton Kyrion (τὸν Κύριον, 'by the Lord') grounds the charge in Christ's authority. Anagnōsthēnai (ἀναγνώσθῃναι, 'to be read') indicates public reading in worship assembly.

Pasin tois adelphois (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 'to all the brothers')—entire church must hear the letter, not just leaders. Why such solemn charge? Possibly:

1. Paul feared leaders might suppress content challenging them (warnings to the unruly, commands to honor leaders)
2. some members might be excluded from gatherings (poor, slaves with limited freedom), requiring specific inclusion
3. Paul emphasizes Scripture's authority—his letters carry divine weight requiring universal hearing.

This verse establishes apostolic letters as Scripture to be publicly read in worship, anticipating NT canon formation.

Historical Context

Early churches read apostolic letters in worship assemblies (Col 4:16: 'when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans'). This public reading established these texts as authoritative Scripture alongside OT readings. Literate members were few; public reading ensured all heard God's word. Paul's solemn charge prevented leaders from filtering content—all members needed all instruction. Later, these apostolic letters were copied, circulated, collected, and recognized as NT canon. The practice of Scripture reading in worship continues, rooted in synagogue liturgy (Luke 4:16-17) and apostolic command.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's solemn charge that the letter be read to 'all the holy brethren' teach about Scripture's authority and accessibility?
2. How do contemporary worship practices (or failures) reflect Paul's emphasis on universal hearing of God's word?
3. What does public Scripture reading in worship accomplish that private reading alone cannot?

Interlinear Text

ὁρκίζω	ὑμᾶς	τὸν	κύριον	ἀναγνωσθῆναι	τὴν	ἐπιστολὴν
I charge	you	G3588	by the Lord	be read	G3588	that this epistle
G3726	G5209		G2962	G314		G1992
πᾶσιν	τοῖς	ἁγίοις	ἀδελφοῖς			
unto all	G3588	the holy	brethren			
G3956		G40	G80			

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 4:16 (Parallel theme): And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Acts 19:13 (References Lord): Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Mark 5:7 (Parallel theme): And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Matthew 26:63 (Parallel theme): But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

1 Timothy 5:7 (Parallel theme): And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

1 Timothy 1:3 (Parallel theme): As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

1 Timothy 5:21 (References Lord): I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

1 Kings 22:16 (References Lord): And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?

2 Chronicles 18:15 (References Lord): And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD?

Numbers 27:23 (References Lord): And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

