

1 THESSALONIANS 1 - "Greeting; Their Good Example!"

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

PREACHING CHRIST AT THESSALONICA!

Act 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

Act 17:2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, Act 17:3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."

Act 17:4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Act 17:5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Act 17:6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

Act 17:7 Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus."

Act 17:8 And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

Act 17:9 So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Act 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Outline of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

It is a wonderful thing when a pastor can think of his church and say, "*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers*," Paul loved the church at Thessalonica. These people were on his heart, and he was concerned for their spiritual welfare. In this chapter, Paul tells us what kind of a church he left in that wicked city. When we see the characteristics of this church, we should examine our own lives and ask, "Am I helping to make my church a model church in the Lord?"

I. They Were an Elect People (1Th 1:1-5)

A. Work of faith. See *Jas 2:14-26*.

B. Labor of love. See *Heb 10:24-25*; also *Rom 8:35-39*.

C. Patience of hope. (*Col 1:4-5*; *Rom 5:1-4*).

II. They Were an Exemplary People (1Th 1:6-7)

It is wonderful when "hearers" become "followers"! These people heard the Word, welcomed it, believed it, and suffered for receiving it into their lives. The Word imparts faith (*Rom 10:17*) and brings joy (*Act 8:8*; *Act 8:39*; *Jer 15:16*).

III. They Were an Enthusiastic People (1Th 1:8) - (Mat 6:1-4).

IV. They Were an Expectant People (1Th 1:9-10)

The second coming of Christ is a basic theme in this book. Each chapter relates Christ's return to a basic Christian truth. In this chapter we see that Christ's coming is the blessed hope of the saved. While the lost are blindly worshiping and serving their idols, the saved are serving the living God and rejoicing in the living hope that Christ will come again. Paul had instructed these people concerning the return of Christ and the time of tribulation that God has promised would come on a Christ-rejecting world. But he is careful to point out that the church will not share in that tribulation. The verb "deliver" in *1Th 1:10* is present tense — "who delivers us"; or it could be recast as a title — "Jesus, the Deliverer." The church will not go through the Tribulation. Read *1Th 1:10*; *5:1-9*; *2Th 1:1-12*; *2:1-17*. The next event on God's calendar is the return of Christ in the air, at which time the church will be caught up to meet Him. Then will follow seven years of tribulation on earth. When the cup of iniquity on earth starts overflowing, Christ and the church will return to defeat Satan and His hosts and usher in the 1,000-year reign of Christ (*see Rev. 19:11-20:5*).



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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1 Thessalonians 1 - Greeting

1Th 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 1 Paul is the writer. *Silvanus* and *Timothy* are included in the salutation, because they were with him and had been with him in Thessalonica. *Silvanus* (also called *Silas*), as an experienced companion of Paul, had traveled with him on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail ([Act 16:19-24](#)). When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him ([Act 17:1-9](#)). *Timothy*, from Lystra, son of a Greek father ([Act 16:2](#)) and a Jewish mother, Eunice ([2Ti 2:5](#)). From his youth learned the Scriptures. *Timothy*, a trusted companion, accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion to establish and encourage them ([1Th 3:2](#)).

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy left Thessalonica and went to Berea, establishing a work there. The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if the things Paul said were actually true. Troublemakers from Thessalonica came down to Berea and began to stir up trouble. Paul left Berea and went to Athens, leaving Timothy and Silas in Berea to establish the believers. He went on to Corinth and was joined later by Timothy and Silas in Corinth. There Paul was greatly concerned about the churches he had just founded, wondering about their state. Silas and Timothy came to him from Thessalonica with great news. The church there had not only survived, but was strong, influencing the whole area. Paul became so excited he wrote this letter to the Thessalonians, probably his first letter to any church writing it just a few months after establishing the church. After writing and sending this letter, Paul enjoyed a sustained and fruitful ministry in Corinth - and eventually returned to the Thessalonians.

To the church of the Thessalonians: On his second missionary journey, Paul, along with Silas and Timothy, began a ministry in Europe, having been called by the Lord in a vision, a man of Macedonia, saying come over and help us. They then set sail for Macedonia, coming first to Philippi where they established a work. Trouble arose in Philippi. They left, going to Thessalonica. For three Sabbath Days, Paul reasoned with those in the synagogue, out of the Scriptures, showing and proving that the Messiah would have to suffer, and that Jesus was the Messiah! Many believed, but envious, unbelieving Jews stirred up the town.

in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: They were a Christian church, because they believed in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s such a great thing to be able to say about a church, that they are in God and they are in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: In his very first letter, he gives us this beautiful salutation of grace and peace. Later, he will use this introduction in all of his letters. Always in that order, you can never really know the peace of God until you come to experience the grace of God in your life. Until you really understand and know the grace of God, you are always under a pressure to perform. And you are looking to your performance for your acceptance by God. There is never any peace as long as I am endeavoring to find my works and efforts to be justified or to be accepted by God!

Their Good Example

1Th 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

v. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all: When Paul thought of the Christians in Thessalonica, his heart filled with gratitude. Paul started the church there in less than ideal circumstances, being run out of town after only three weekends with them ([Act 17:1-10](#)). Yet the church was strong and full of life. Paul knew that this work was beyond him and his abilities and that it was the work of God.

Making mention of you in our prayers: Joining prayer with his praise or thanksgiving! When Paul prayed for them, it wasn’t necessarily a long time of intercession. He often simply made **mention** of a church or a person in prayer ([Rom 1:9, Eph 1:16, Phm 1:4](#)).

v. 1 Paul begins his second epistle the same way he *began his first* ([Gal 1:3](#)). It is also the way he would begin his subsequent epistles to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and the Colossians. He links grace with peace. Man cannot experience peace until he receives God’s grace because true peace is the result of an understanding that our salvation rests on what God has done rather than on what we must do. It’s been said, “Grace is the fountain and peace is the stream that flows from it”! **Are you experiencing both the grace of God and the peace of God?**

v. 2 Here again we see the evidence of Paul’s life reflecting a continuous thankful, prayer, life! **Am thankful to the Lord am I? How consistently am I praying for others?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1Th 1:3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith (justification/past), labor of love (sanctification/present), and patience of hope (glorification/future) in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

v. 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith: There were particular things about the Christians in Thessalonica that Paul simply could not forget. He always remembered them. What he remembered about them made him thankful. Despite some problems in the church, Paul was so grateful to God for the Thessalonians **because there was an undeniable work of the Holy Spirit and a marvelous change** in their lives. The three great Christian virtues were evident among them: *faith, love, and hope*. Your work of faith, The Thessalonians turned to God from idols! Their *faith* produced *work* - as is the nature of true faith. You have the kind of faith that has manifestation, action, attached! It shows itself in the exercise of love to God and love to our neighbor; (Cf. John 6:28-29; Eph. 2:8). labor of love, Their *love* produced *labor*, to serve the living and true God. Labor (*kopos*) means labor to the point of exhaustion. You have the kind of love that never lies down, doesn't quit, runs on empty! Taking note of the cost of that love for Him! That love which pushes beyond human love! 2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, They were under the sweetest and strongest constraints to do what they did. Love has a constraining virtue to excite ministers and private Christians in their duty. Our love to Christ will have this virtue; and Christ's love to us, which was manifested in this great instance of his dying for us. That love will have this effect upon us, if it be duly considered and rightly judged of. What we were before, had not Christ died! and patience (hupomone - endurance) of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ: Their *hope* produced *patience*, to wait for His Son from heaven, which is the long-suffering endurance needed to not only survive hard times, but to triumph through them. Having a hope that doesn't end but hangs on! So we're to hang on! We're not in heaven yet. Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-9) This is the hope of Jesus coming back! Waiting. Over and over again in the Scriptures, we are **exhorted to wait on the second coming of Jesus – the broadest subject in the New Testament, at least one out of ten verses!** Be of good courage. Wait on Him! And that patience as we wait in hope. We have the promise of God that He is going to do it. And that promise of God gives us a basis for our hope. **With the Thessalonians, he is talking about the hope of the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ and the establishing of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.** Paul was only with them for a very short period. No doubt a great part of his teaching did revolve **about the second coming of Jesus Christ** and the establishing of God's Kingdom upon the earth. **It was one of the major emphases of Paul's ministry. Surely it was one of the major emphases of the New Testament. And that is that Jesus Christ is coming again to establish His Kingdom upon the earth! That is what the New Testament is all about!** This same Jesus shall come again, in like manner as you have seen Him go. And when the Son of Man shall come, with all of His Holy angels, then shall He establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

1Th 1:4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

v. 4 Paul runs up these streams to the fountain, and that was God's eternal election. **Knowing** (this is what we know for sure), **beloved brethren, your election by God:** Paul reminded them that God loved them (**beloved**) and that He chose them (**election**). The two go together. **When we love someone, we naturally choose them.** Jesus said to His disciples, one day, you have not chosen Me, I've chosen you and ordained that you should be My disciples and that you should bring forth fruit. Knowing your election of God, God has chosen you! But what if you were choosing your eternal partner? Wouldn't you want some kind of a say in it? So if we feel that we have the right to make a choice. (cf. Eph. 1:4-5; Acts 9:15;) with whom we are going to spend our life with, surely God has the right to choose who He is going to spend eternity with. Now I don't have any problem with that because He chose me.

v. 3 What a work of the Holy Spirit to see such a church as that at Thessalonica, established following only three Sabbaths of teaching! Note the emphasis on their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. These three characteristics are such important and necessary ingredients of a well-established church! Equally important is the looking forward with such certainty, expectancy and urgency to Jesus' second coming! It is amazing how these traits could be so quickly established by the Holy Spirit in a newly formed church fellowship! How present are these characteristics in your life? How often are you praying for these three things – work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope – in our church, in our lives?

v. 4 Charles Spurgeon found four evidences of election: The **word of God coming home with power** (*our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power*). The **reception of God's word with much assurance** (*and in much assurance*). The **desire to be like Jesus** (*you became followers of us and of the Lord*). The **existence of spiritual joy in spiritual service** (*in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit*). Do you believe in **your election by God?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Someone may say, but, I don't know if He chose me or not. And it's not fair for God to choose, because I don't know if He chose me or not. I'll say, well, you can find out. All you have to do is ask Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life. Turn your life over to Him. You'll discover that He chose you! He'll say, you have not chosen Me, but I'm have chosen you and ordained that you should be My disciple. When you get to heaven, He won't say, how did you get here? I don't see your name on the list. He won't be surprised because He chose you. I find that a very comforting thing to realize that God loves me and God chose me and ordained me to be His disciple so I should bring forth fruit and that the fruit should remain. What a joy! What a glory! Now God has given to us also the capacity of choice. God has created us in Him image. God is self-determinate. He has made me self-determinate. I can chose. That's a great part of being, is the capacity of choice. But for choice to be valid, there has to be something to chose. If there is nothing to chose, what value is choice? God had to put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden and put the prohibition on it, so that there would be a choice. Of all the trees in the Garden you can freely eat, wonderful! No choice. Except the tree that's in the middle of the Garden. You are not to eat of that. Because if you do you will surely die! Oh, now there's choice. **Do I obey God** and not eat of that tree? **Or do I disobey God? I have a choice** because the tree is there. If the tree wasn't there I would have no choice. The world is very attractive, very enticing. **Your choice for Jesus becomes very valid because the alternative is very attractive.** It promises immediately fulfillment. It promises excitement. It promises, you know, thrills and sensations and all. It's very attractive. But it's still deadly. Like the tree in the Garden, it's still deadly. **For the choice to be valid there has to then be the honoring of the choice that you make.** When Adam and Eve chose to eat of the tree, God didn't come down and hit Eve's hand and knock the fruit out of it, saying I told you not to do that. The choice had to be honored. **God will honor the choice that you make, even if it is to your own destruction.** God will honor it. So that's an awesome thing to have my eternity in my hand. **I can choose to follow Jesus and receive eternal life. Or I can choose to reject Jesus and experience the death of sin.** So knowing your election of God. Once you have made your choice, then you discover God elected you all the while. Isn't that wonderful? **But He elected you because He knew in advance, knowing all things, that you were going to make the right choices and thus elect of God.** But I don't know that, you see, so it's up to me to make my choice.

1Th 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, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

v. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only: The *gospel* is not a matter of mere words. In modern culture there is an overflow of information or entertainment that often only amounts to mere words. Yet the gospel is more than words, it also has *power*. **Also in power:** Jesus said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And that's the word, *dunamis*. The message of Jesus Christ has *power*. It has *power* for miracles; *power* for wonderful signs from God; and best of all, it has the *power* to change minds, hearts, and lives!
And in the Holy Spirit: It is a message by the *Holy Spirit*, a living Person, who works within the hearts of the hearers, to convict, to comfort and to instruct. If the preacher only speaks, then it is a matter of *word only*, but when the *Holy Spirit* works through the word, a great spiritual work is accomplished. We sometimes think too little about the spiritual operations of the Word of God. There is a spiritual work of God's Word, going far beyond the basic educational value of learning the Bible.
And in much assurance: It is a message given in *much assurance*. This describes the preacher who really believes what he preaches. There is no substitute for that *assurance*.

v. 5 We are to notice that Paul says our gospel did not come to you **in word only but by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit!** Also by the kind of men who brought this gospel message, who were beaten, bloodied and burning! **This supernatural working is how you know are of the elect, because of the power of the Holy Spirit (*dunamis*) that was there when the foundation was laid!**

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<p><u>1Th 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.</u></p> <p><u>1Th 1:7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.</u></p> <p><u>1Th 1:8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.</u></p>	<p><u>v. 6 And you</u> (yourselves) <i>became followers</i> (imitators) <i>of us and of the Lord</i>: They stopped following other things, but followed after Paul and the Lord. Paul says that it was a good thing for the Thessalonians to follow him, and he wasn't shy about saying “follow me” because he knew where he was going. In which Paul personally led these Thessalonian Christians in their spiritual life. They could see his life and were invited to learn from his example. Paul repeated this theme several times: <i>Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (Php 3:17) Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (1Co 11:1).</i> Having received the word in much affliction: The Thessalonian Christians distinguished themselves because they <i>received</i> the word, even <i>in much affliction</i>. The message they heard came with adversity, yet they received it and Paul thanked God because of it. With joy of the Holy Spirit: When the Thessalonian Christians faced the <i>affliction</i> from receiving the word, they didn't just face it with a resigned fatalism. They faced it <i>with joy of the Holy Spirit</i>. Not long before coming to Thessalonica, Paul and Silas personally experienced the principle of having the joy of the Holy Spirit even in the presence of much affliction - when they sang in the Philippian jail despite their chains and sufferings. Even in the midst of affliction, when the disciples were beaten, they went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer persecution for the sake of Jesus Christ! Much joy! They were examples of this same spirit to the Thessalonians.</p> <p><u>v. 7 So that you became examples</u>: Paul was an example to the Thessalonians. Then they <i>became examples</i> to others. This is exactly how the work of God should happen. To all in Macedonia and Achaia: The Christians in <i>Macedonia and Achaia</i> needed examples, and the Thessalonians supplied that need. This was true even though they had only been followers of Jesus a short time. We Christians always need others who will show us how to follow Jesus Christ, beyond the need of hearing about how to follow Him. The joy in the Lord, the joy of the Holy Spirit, it became an example for all around. Oh, may God help our church to be an example of what it is to have joy in the Holy Spirit. And make people see the power of God working in our midst that we become exemplary. Surely, we may have persecution or tribulation or whatever, much affliction, but oh, may it never rob us of that joy in the Holy Spirit and may that be a real witness and example to all!</p> <p><u>v. 8 From you the word of the Lord has sounded</u> (resounded) <i>forth</i>: This was part of the good example that the Thessalonian Christians provided. Sounded forth (loud ringing sound, as of a trumpet blast). The good work the Lord did among the Thessalonians became known all over the region, and everyone talked about the changes. The good news could sound forth in every place to all the earth. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything: Paul said, “You Thessalonians are sounding forth the word of the Lord so effectively that you are putting me out of business! We do not need to say anything!” Two ideas are put forth here: The word of the Lord <i>sounded forth</i>, and their <i>faith toward God has gone out</i>. Those two aspects are essential if a church will spread the gospel. First, they need a message to spread, and that message first needs to impact <i>their own</i> lives. Second, they need the faith to go out, so that their <i>faith toward God</i> goes out to all the world.</p>	<p><u>v. 6</u> How do you face affliction? The Thessalonians were commended, that even though they had received the word with much affliction and persecution, nevertheless they faced it with great joy! How do we respond to affliction and persecution?</p> <p><u>v. 7</u> As believers, we need to be good examples to others around us as Thessalonians were to those in <i>Macedonia and Achaia</i>. What kind of examples are we living to others around us?</p> <p><u>v. 8</u> From vibrant churches, people already know what God is doing there. And what a glorious thing that is. What a powerful witness. Have you observed this? Are you being a part of it?</p>
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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1Th 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

1Th 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

v. 9 How you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven: When the Thessalonians received the Word of God from Paul, they responded to it by leaving their *idols*, and they gave themselves to *serve the living and true God*. Their reception of the Word and their faith in God was shown as true because they *did* something with the Word of God.

To serve the living and true God: He is called the living God, because He has life in and of Himself, and is the fountain of life to others. All living creatures have their life, and are supported in it by Him, as opposed to *idols*, which were inanimate things made of wood or metal, and were images of men that had been dead long ago. The *true God*, because He is truth itself, and cannot lie, who faithfully performs all His promises. He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, as opposed fictitious deities of the Gentiles, which were only in name, not in truth and reality, or by nature gods. Although these Thessalonians had previously worshipped these idols, they now *turned* from them *to serve the living and true God*, not only externally, by embracing and professing his Gospel, submitting to his ordinances, and walking according to the rules prescribed by him; but also internally, in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and every other grace.

v. 10 To wait for His Son from heaven: Here again we have reference to **His second coming!** Wow! This is a high mark of grace, when the believer expects his Lord to come, and lives like one that expects Him every moment! If you and I knew, right now, the Lord would come before this service was over, what would be the condition of our hearts?

Even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come: Here we are pointed to the essence of salvation in saying Jesus *delivers us from the wrath to come*. We are saved *from* something, and that something is the righteous *wrath* of a holy God. In the fifth chapter, **we will see the expression *God did not appoint us to wrath (1Th 5:9)*** to refer to God's deliverance of His people in the context of the wrath to come upon the world in the last days. We thank God, Jesus has saved us from the wrath to come. And before the wrath of God is poured out, He is going to take His church out of the world, because He has not appointed us unto wrath. Jesus is talking about this period of the wrath of God that is going to come, that is the Great Tribulation. **Luk 21:34-36** *"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. [35] For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. [36] Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* Read **1Th 1:10; 5:1-9; 2Th 1:1-12; 2:1-17**

This teaching of Paul of the coming of Jesus was a predominate part of his ministry. Oh, that it would become a dominant theme in the church again, that we would establish the hope of the coming of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the people. This has a great urgency in getting the gospel out. It also gives an urgency to our letting go of the things of the world, of having our touch with the world as light as possible!

v. 9 It's tragic that sometimes it goes the other direction. It did with the nation of Israel. God's complaint concerning the nation of Israel, was that that they turned from Him, the living God, until idols. They have forsaken Me, God said, the fountain of living water.

How has your experience been in this?

v. 10 If you and I knew, right now, the Lord would come before this service was over, what would be the condition of our hearts? **Is that state of heart we ought to be? God help us that we might be watching, waiting and ready!** Paul said, let your **every contact with the world be as light as possible. It helps to keep us pure.** I want to be watching and I want to be ready when Jesus comes for His church. I surely don't want to be left behind to face the wrath of God! And so it gives that incentive for purity.