

1 Thessalonians 1

-Now we will study the first letter to the Christians at Thessalonica.

-On the second missionary journey, after Paul and Silas were released from prison in Philippi, they traveled with Timothy to Thessalonica.

-We read this in Acts 17:1-2:

1-When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

2-As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

-From these verses, we know that Paul was at least three weeks in Thessalonica, teaching every Sabbath in the synagogue.

-From Acts 17:4, we learn that there were both Jews and Gentiles in Thessalonica who were taught and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ:

-“Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.”

-Other Jews, however, became jealous and started a riot in the city.

-Because of the riot, when it became night, the Christians sent Paul and Silas out of Thessalonica (Acts 17:10).

-From Thessalonica, Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled to the Greek cities of Berea and Athens.

-While Paul was in Athens, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica.

-We read this in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2:

1-So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens.

2-We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

-Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen the faith of the Christians, but he was also afraid that they may have lost their faith.

-We read this in 1 Thessalonians 3:5-6:

5-For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

6-But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

-When Timothy returned from Thessalonica, Paul had moved to Corinth so Timothy joined Paul in Corinth.

-Timothy brought good news, saying that the Christians in Thessalonica were continuing to follow the Lord Jesus.

-When Paul heard this report from Timothy, he wrote this first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:1

1-Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

-How did Paul greet the Christians in Thessalonica?

-He blessed them with God's grace and peace.

-It is the grace of God that has saved us from eternal death in the Lake of Eternal Fire.

-It is the grace of God that has paid for our sins on the cross so that we are no longer enemies with God.

-It is the grace of God that gives us peace with God.

-If the grace of God has saved us from eternal death and completely paid for our sins, why do we still need God's grace?

-So that we can learn more about God in order to strengthen our own faith and to teach others.

-It is because of God's grace that we Christians have peace with God.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:2

2-We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

-Even though Paul had left Thessalonica, what did he continue to do?

-He continued to pray for the Christians there.

-As a father and mother care for their young children, we as teachers must care for those who have been born again in Christ through our teaching.

-Should we teach only until the people believe and then stop?

-No.

-We should continue to teach the people and continue to pray for their faith so that they will become disciples of Christ.

-This is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:18).

-How long does it take to teach someone about Christ?

-Perhaps one day.

-How long does it take to make a disciple?

-Many days and months and years.

-How long did Jesus teach His disciples?

-Three years.

-This shows us the importance of continuing to teach and continuing to pray for new Christians.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:3

3-We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

-As Christians, our work that we do for God and others is the fruit of our faith in Christ.

-For those who work much for God and others, we can say that their faith is strong.

-For those who do not work for God and others, we can say that their faith is weak.

-As Christians, our labor or effort that we do for God and others is also the fruit of love.

-If we understand that Christ loved us so much that He died for us, this gives us love for Him and others.

-As Christians, our endurance is from the hope that we have in Christ.

-Before Jesus died on the cross, He told His disciples and all Christians that He would return to take us to heaven:

-“I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (Jn 14:2-3).

-Because Paul and the other apostles had hope that Jesus would return to take them to heaven, this hope helped them to endure temptation, persecution, and suffering.

-Here is an illustration:

-If a young man leaves his country to go to another to work, what encourages him to endure many problems?

-The hope of returning home.

-The hope of heaven will help us to endure because our eternal home is in heaven.

-Even if life is difficult and we want to quit living, it is our hope to be in eternity with God without any problems of sin which encourages us to continue.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:4

4-For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you.

-In the Old Testament, only a few are spoken of as being loved by God.

-God said this about Moses:

-“I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name” (Ex 34:17).

-God said this about Solomon:

-“Because the Lord loved him, He sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah” (2 Samuel 12:25).

-God said this about Israel:

-“When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son” (Hosea 11:1).

-Although there are only a few in the Old Testament who are spoken of as being loved by God, in the New Testament all Christians are loved by God just as God loved Moses, Solomon, and Israel.

-As Christians, we know that we are loved by God because He has chosen us to believe in Him.

-Speaking to His apostles, but also speaking to all Christians, Jesus said this in John 15:16:

-“You did not choose me, but I chose you.”

-Speaking to all Christians in Ephesians 1:4, God and Paul write this:

-“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

-What is the greatest gift in all of eternity?

-To be chosen by God to believe in Him.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:5

5-Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

-Who convinced the Christians in Thessalonica that Paul's teaching was not from man but from God?

-The Holy Spirit.

-Who convinces all Christians that a teaching is not from man but from God?

-The Holy Spirit.

-When we teach unbelievers, can we convince them in our own power that we are teaching the Word of God?

-No

-Only the Holy Spirit can do this.

-This is what Jesus said in John 16:8:

-“When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”

-Without the Holy Spirit, people cannot believe.

-Only the Holy Spirit can convince people that we are separated from God because of sin.

-Only the Holy Spirit can convince people that the death of Christ alone can save us from death.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

6-You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

7-And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

-When Paul, Silas, and Timothy were in Thessalonica, they not only taught about Christ, but they also lived like Christ.

-Is it enough for us just to teach about Jesus?

-No.

-We must also live like Jesus.

-Because the Thessalonians had lived in sin in the past, they needed the example of Paul to live their new lives in Christ.

-This is what Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

-“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Co 11:1).

-Today, when people first believe in Christ, they also need our example to live their new lives in Christ.

-As the Christians in Thessalonica followed the example of Paul and Christ, they became a picture for all of the other believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

-When we Christians follow the example of Christ, we become a picture for other Christians as well.

-It seems that the Christians in Thessalonica suffered much persecution because they believed in Christ..

-Even in the middle of suffering, the Christians in Thessalonica had joy from the Holy Spirit because of their new faith in Christ.

-Even though Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown into prison in Philippi, they had joy from the Holy Spirit, praising God in the prison.

-Even if we suffer persecution from unbelievers, we can have joy which comes from the Holy Spirit.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

8-The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

9-for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10-and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

-The faith of the Christians in Thessalonica was known everywhere.

-The Christians had turned from serving idols to serving our living and true God.

-Paul did not need to tell anyone about the faith of the Christians in Thessalonica.

-This is because people were coming to Paul and telling him about the faith of the Thessalonian Christians.

-How do we know if people are truly saved from serving idols to serving the living and true God?

-Because these new Christians will not be afraid to tell others.

-If we truly understand that God has saved us from serving Satan and has given us eternal life free from sin and death, we will want to tell everyone in the world.

-Why do Christians no longer fear the wrath of God?

-Because Christ has paid the full payment for our sins by His death on the cross.

-Just as God saved Lot from the destruction of Sodom, God will also save all Christians before He punishes the world for sin.

-Just as God saved Noah, God will also save all Christians from the coming destruction of the world.