

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Turning, Serving, Waiting

Today we are beginning a brand new study in the book of 1 Thessalonians

A) **The City:** An ancient city, originally named Therma from the many hot springs adjacent to it. – Murrieta of it's day.

B) In 315 B.C. it was renamed Thessalonica after the half sister of Alexander the Great.

C) During Paul's day "Thessalonica had a growing population of more than 200,000 Romans, Greeks, and Jews.

D) It was also the temporary home of thousands of sailors, travelers, and immigrants who visited its bustling port or traveled its busy highways.

A vibrant economy, a strategic harbor, and a prime location on the **Roman Empire's Egnatian Road** made Thessalonica one of the most influential cities of the first century.

A) It was the New York, Houston, LA of its day—yet for all its assets, Thessalonica was a lost city.

B) The **Greeks filled the temples**, the **Jews attended the synagogue**, and the **Romans paid homage to Caesar worship**

1) but a pervasive spiritual darkness covered the city.

Paul came to Thessalonica on his 2nd missionary journey Acts 17

A) Paul preached there **3 weeks** - Cut short by a mob that forced him to flee by night to Berea.

B) Even though Paul's ministry in Thessalonica was not a long one, - **GOD DID SOMETHING!**

1) it was solid enough to leave behind a thriving church.

1 Thessalonians is considered by many to be Paul's first epistle, his earliest writing.

A) Writing to a young church that he cared for deeply. –

B) Predominantly Gentile group – there is not one quotation from the OT in the entire letter.

C) 1,2 Thessalonians are known as Paul's Prophetic letters.

1) Eschatology is the study of Prophetic events – end time events.

D) Paul wrote **salvation letters** – soteriology is the study of the doctrines of Salvation.

1) Romans, Galatians, Ephesians Colossians

E) Wrote letters that **dealt with church and ministry**

1) **Ecclesiology** is the study of the Church – Pastoral Epistles – 1,2 Timothy and Titus

2) **But 1,2 Thessalonians deal with prophetic events**

Consider: Every Chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends with a reference to the rapture or the 2nd coming of Christ!

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

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming." 1 Thessalonians 2:19

"that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." 1 Thessalonians 3:13

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:17,18

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23

So he mentions the Lord's coming in every single chapter.

A) Which is interesting to me because this was a young church – bunch of young believers.

B) And there are those today who like to say that the study of prophecy is not important.

Bb) They say you Definitely shouldn't teach it to new Christians – too confusing.

C) Paul the apostle didn't feel that way – neither does God – Holy Spirit – inspired these writings

In fact do you realize the 2nd coming of Christ is the broadest subject in the NT.

A) 1 in 25 verses of the NT deals with the 2nd coming of Christ.

B) Very important to God – He wants his church to be ready for the Lord's return.

1) And to be living their lives in light of ETERNITY

C) We labeled this series – Faith Hope and Love – Could have called it Living for today – while longing for tomorrow!

D) Challenge of every believer in Jesus – keep the right perspective, priorities – purpose –

1) While dealing with all our day to day Challenges, Responsibilities and Distractions.

E) How to live for today- While longing for tomorrow.

1) Paul will give us some great insight into how that happens as we make our way through this letter.

Begin: Paul's greeting

V.1 *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

A) Paul begins with a greeting mentioning his traveling companions Silvanus & Timothy

B) **Silvanus** (also known as *Silas*) [took Barnabas' place] was a long and experienced companion of Paul.

C) **Silas & Timothy** traveled w/ Paul on his 2nd missionary journey and were with him when he came to Thessalonica.

D) Paul would later send Timothy back to them with this letter of encouragement.

Notice ALSO that Paul gives a double address for the church, one geographical, the other spiritual.

A) They lived in Thessalonica but they are also found "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

B) Of the two, that 2nd address is the more important.

1) You live in OCSD / Vista / CLSB/ San Marcos
Bonsall / Fallbrook / Escondido

C) That is your Physical address – but what matters most to God today – Are you in Him ! In Christ

1) Born again – Placed into God's Family

2) Placed into Christ – God sees you in Jesus

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A) GRACE & PEACE – Siamese twins

Grace is the fountain & peace is what flows from it.

B) "Grace is who God is and peace is the result of knowing Him."

C) Paul was **THANKFUL FOR THIS GROUP!**
We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 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.

A) PAUL was very thankful for this group of believers - Three things that marked this church: V.3

#1 Work of Faith

#2 Labor of Love

#3 Patience of Hope

B) Those Three things that marked this church in V.3 are defined for us in V.9

#1 Work of Faith – **They turned to God from idols.**

#2 Labor of Love – **They served the living God.**

#3 Their patient hope. - **Waiting for the risen savior to return.**

C)Focus of our time this Morning

#1 Their Work of Faith.

A)Now don't be confused by Paul's use of words here – Paul is not suggesting we are saved by our works.

B)On the contrary Paul was the Champion of grace!

- ❖ **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Ephesians 2:8,9

C)Paul understood that Salvation is a work of God – He mentions in **v.4 their election by God.**

1)Beautiful idea in scripture – God is the one who initiates our salvation.

When we were lost in sin – He sent his son to come and rescue us.

A)**His spirit convicts us of our sin** – and our need of a savior – tugs on our hearts – Woos us

B)We respond in Faith – nothing we can do to earn our salvation!

C)So Paul is not confused about Salvation – He knows By Grace through faith.

1)But Paul ALSO understood – what James makes very clear in his Letter – **a true faith is a working faith.**

D)True genuine faith is a faith that works –

1)True genuine faith is seen in actions – seen in transformation – seen in Change.

This is exactly what Paul is referring to in V. 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.

A)Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica – beaten and bruised following their stay in Phillipi – Riot –arrested -BEATEN -Jailed

B)Sort of the norm wherever Paul went – **Jews had such animosity toward his message.**

C)Paul says you know what kind of men we were among you – **you remember what it was like when we came**

But he also says – You know how the gospel went forth in the Power of the Holy Spirit!

A)Paul looked back at Thessalonica – mighty work of God's Spirit

Something supernatural was taking place.

B)When a big truck drives over a small bridge – Bridge quake –

1)When a big man walks on thin ice – Ice quake.

C)When Jesus comes down and touches a person's life – there is a life quake. -

1)Happened to many in Thessalonica {KNOWN in everyplace v.8

D)**So awesome when it happens** –

1)Sometimes this happens when I am talking to someone – LIGHT GOES ON

E)High school girl raised in the church – not saved

Head knowledge – not heart – LIGHT CAME ON!

F)Sometimes before I preach – I just know - The Holy Spirit is going to do something here-

1)Sense it – Preach with confidence.

The result of this move of God's spirit in their work of Faith was V.9 They turned to God from idols!-

A)**Repentance:** Change of attitude – change of heart – results in a change of direction.

B)Notice change of DIRECTION: **turned to God from idols!- Always that order.**

C)Always – turning TO not just a turning FROM!

1)People often try to turn from the sin – Change – clean up their act then come to Jesus

D)Come to Jesus – turn to Him – Help you turn from your idols – GIVES Power to turn from your idols

Do we have idols today?

A) Paul declared in Colossians 3:5 that **“covetousness is idolatry”** – Our longing for things – desires

B) So when you decide that something or someone is more important to you than the revealed will of God – **that is idolatry!**

C) If you decide that you are going to **live in sexual sin** – because you “really love this person” even though God’s word says – SIN

1) That is idolatry

D) People say: God understands our situation – he will make an exception!

1) **No he doesn’t – Psalm 138:2** – God holds His word above His name!

“An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources on it without a second thought” –

Timothy Keller

“Counterfeit Gods.”

E) **WHATEVER CONSUMES YOU!**

Maybe your idol is making money! – We don’t call it Mammon any more

A) But how many people are enslaved to making money – it consumes them – how to get more.

B) They have it – but they are miserable –

1) Rockefeller was asked – how many millions does it take to make a person happy – just a little more.

C) **OR** How many are in bondage to **sexual pleasure**: 1) We don’t call it Astar or Aphrodite anymore – But many are enslaved to it

Porn industry: 12 Billion dollar a year business in the USA – and 97 billion dollars world wide.

A) People are addicted – destroying their lives!

B) And Sexual content on prime time TV has increased incredibly

C) Result: CDC estimates that nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in this country, half among young people aged 15–24

We don’t worship Molech any more! – god – babies incinerated on the burning arms – of the idol.

A) But 53 million babies have been aborted in the USA! –

B) Not trying to condemn – if you had an abortion

1) Forgiveness and healing – Forgiven and forgotten – REUNION

C) But Idolatry- living for self-gratification is alive and well today.

American writer and intellectual David Foster Wallace was at the top of his profession.

A) An award-winning, best-selling novelist when he committed suicide in 2008.

B) But before taking his life he gave a famous commencement speech in which he said this to the graduating class:

Here is something that's true. In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism Everybody worships.

The only choice we get is what to worship. And ... pretty much anything you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things—if they are where you tap real meaning in life—then you will never have enough

Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you

Worship power—you will feel weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to keep the fear at bay.

Worship your intellect, being seen as smart—you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.

C) **Interesting insights from a non Christian- But True If you are seeking to worship anything in this life – will leave you empty and wanting –**

A) Turn to Jesus – rose – lives – offers life to all who come to him - He brings lasting satisfaction – longing for.

B) Two big questions – today 1st What are you living for?

C) The first evidence of their Work of Faith – Turned to God from idols

The other evidence of their Work of Faith is seen in V.6,7 They followed and received the word with Joy in much affliction.

A) One of the tell-tale signs of a true conversion is when the going gets tough – true believer keeps going.

B) Parable of the sower – the stones – shallow no depth – heat and it withers.

C) Picture of an emotional response.

D) True believer – someone the Lord has done a genuine work in – continues to follow in affliction

1) There is in the midst of it a sense of Joy.

D) Not happiness – Praise the Lord I am getting hammered – persecuted

E) But There is a calm in the midst of the storm – a peace – God is in control.

1) They had that.

The 2nd thing that marked this Church was their Labor of Love!

A) V.9 They served the living and true God.

B) Labor = labor to the point of exhaustion – Love will cause you to do that!

C) Always amazed at how eager young guys are to help when they are in Love

1) Carrying books home, helping with projects

D) Love will cause you to labor to the point of exhaustion

Notice also - V.8 They became proclaimers of the gospel.

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

When you are in love with someone – you are excited to tell others – This is my girlfriend – boyfriend

A) Listen if he is not sure how to introduce you or reluctant to introduce you – Problem.

B) People that are in love – Instagram – Facebook

C) Sappy little things – pictures – ahhh – Love it!!!! – Guys awesome

1) This generation is so much more expressive

Past generations not so much -

A) Man and wife in counseling – I told her 25 years ago I loved her – if something changes I will let her know.

B) Social media raised the bar for guys –

1) Romantics among us can really make us look bad

This church proclaimed the Word – love of Jesus – their faith went out.

A) New believers – tell someone – go on record

B) God use you – but also Safety.

The 3rd thing that Marked this church was their Patient Hope!

❖ V.9 Waiting for the risen savior to return. deliver us from the wrath that is to come!

A) This church seemed to understand something that we often forget – that there is a time clock on planet earth.

B) Day coming when this is all going to burn fervent heat. { NOT FOR EVER

C) Day coming – Tribulation – God is going to pour out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world. But we can be saved from that – Believing in Jesus – Coming to take us out of here.

A) They believed that Jesus could come back at any moment!

As Barclay so aptly puts it, “A man can endure anything as long as he has hope, for then he is walking not to the night, but to the dawn”

Note: Waiting is an active waiting – Serving

A)Not a Hunker down and wait – Lord get us out of here mentality.

B)Not Escapism – It is Active Hope.

C)Sometimes people say that Christians who are excited and waiting for Jesus to return **tend to be lazy – inactive – not into evangelism –NOT TRUE**

Some of the greatest evangelist of all time believed Jesus could return any moment – Paul – Spurgeon – Moody – Billy Graham

A)Believing Jesus can come today – motivates us to share – serve – time is short. – **INCREASES OUR BURDEN FOR THE LOST**

B)AND - Motivates us to live godly lives! –HOPE purifies himself ... 1 John 3:1-2

C)**Woman with the Orchid** – every day – waiting for the groom!

Question: What are you waiting for?

A)Retirement? – Wow! Then what – play golf everyday..... will get old

B)**Burn out rather than rust out**- New Zealand trip coming up – 3 people in their 70's / 2 in their 60's - awesome

What are you waiting for?

A)Publishers clearing house?

B)I'm human – I sent those in – Lord I will split it with you!

C)**Padres to win the World Series?**

As we study through this letter – Prophecy series on Wednesday nights – hearts stirred up

A)Apathetic – grown cold – **return to your first love**

B)Church in Revelation –

❖ **Remember – Repent – Return**

C)Don't be like those people in the story of the boy who cried wolf. – Wolf came – not ready

1)Some of you have been around – been to more prophecy conferences than you can remember

D)Heart grown dull? – We are closer than ever before.

Jesus is not a wolf – He is the Lord

A)Be ready – watching – waiting – working – serving

B)He delays – people saved – your neighbor

C)You today – YOUR HEART

D)Holy Spirit tugging at your heart? – Respond