

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Faith, Hope, Love

Tonight we are beginning a brand new study in the book of 1-2 Thessalonians

A)Background:- The City: Thessalonica -

B)An ancient city, originally named Therma from the many hot springs adjacent to it.

1)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 Ignatian Road made Thessalonica one of the most influential cities of the first century.

A)It was the New York, London or 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!

C)A church was born - a group of Believers were left in the hands of Timothy to Pastor for a while

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)A 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.

Let's talk for a minute about the Writings of Paul

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

B)Romans, Galatians, Ephesians Colossians

C)He Wrote letters dealt with church and ministry

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

Paul wrote letters that dealt with Eschatology - prophetic events

➤ 1-2 Thessalonians both touch on that Subject

Consider: Every Chapter of 1 Thessalonians ends w/ 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 – a 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 – Confident living in uncertain times

1) We could have called it **Living for today – while longing for tomorrow!**

D) That is the 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 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*) was a long and experienced companion of Paul.

C) **Silas & Timothy** traveled w/ Paul on his 2nd missionary journey

1) 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 address is the 2nd 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) Man cannot really experience TRUE peace until he receives God's grace

1) because only an understanding that our salvation rests not on what we must do, but on what God has done results in true peace.

PAUL Continues V.2B

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.

Paul is wanting to encourage the believers concerning their Status in the Lord

A) They indeed have been chosen by Him and are Beloved of the Lord

B) The evidence of their Conversion is seen in 3 important Characteristics that Paul is thankful for

1) **Their faith, Their love, and Their hope.**

C)3 Biproducts of a true Conversion: Faith...Love

Faith looks back to a *Crucified Savior*. **Love** looks up to a *Crowned Savior*. **Hope** looks on to a *Coming Savior*.

These 3 Characteristics constitute the outline of Ch.1

A)The **Work of Faith** is seen in v. 5-7,9

B)Their **Labor of Love** is seen in v.8

1)Their **Patient Hope** is seen in v.10

Let's Consider first of all their work of faith

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. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

What is this work of Faith that Paul is talking about?

A)Is Paul confused about Salvation?

B)Eph. 2:8-9 Makes it clear that a man is not saved by his works but by Grace - thru faith in the finished work of

C)So what does Paul mean here when he says the work of faith

1)Paul is echoing what the apostles James wrote in Ch.2:19 that though saved by grace thru faith not works

D)James makes it clear our faith is a faith that is evidenced by our works

1)Faith w/out works is dead —

E)That is what Paul is talking about here – The evidence of their faith was seen in their works

So let's consider how their work of faith was evidenced

#1 They responded to the preaching of the gospel

A)Paul says v.5 we came to you preaching the gospel

1)The gospel went forth in power and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit

B)Result: V.6 They received the word - Romans 10:17 **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." John 6:28-29

C)They heard the gospel and received the gospel - notice in much affliction

D)They counted the cost of following Jesus - not easy

#1 They responded to the preaching of the gospel

#2 There was repentance- they turned from their idols V.9 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

A)Listen - an idol is anything that takes the place of God in our lives

B)Anything that consumes our hearts, minds and attention over God.

"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

In Bible times people worshipped Baal because it was supposed to bring them financial success/prosperity

A)They worshipped Aphrodite - the goddess of sexual pleasure

B)Now in our culture: People are not bowing down to at the Altar of Baal -

1)But many are worshipping success.

C)People today are not going to the temple of Aphrodite like they did in Paul's day.

1)But they are visiting porn sites, strip clubs

D)Our culture definitely has a lust problem -

E)Our culture is full of idolaters

And the lesson we need to see tonight and apply to our lives is this,

A) If we want to see something wonderful born in our hearts like was born in Thessalonica

B) Then we need to turn from idols –

1) we need to turn from that which has our attention and hearts other than the Lord

C) The reason this is so critical is what the psalmist had to say about idols, he said... “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them.” – Psalm 115:3-8

D) Our God is in heaven
Our God is able to save

But anything we put in His place It can't speak, see, hear, smell, handle or save

A) And the worse part- We become like what we worship

B) That is a stern warning for any of us who worship the things of the world

C) The world is greedy – do I really want to be like that?

D) The world is unsatisfied in its pursuits – do I really want to be like that?

E) The Lord is pure, faithful, good, praise worthy

1) That is what I want born into my life – don't you?

So we see in our text the evidence of their work of Faith

A) Next we will consider their Labor of Love

B) Labor and love - don't really go together right?

1) Unless you really love your Job

C) Labor is one thing and Love is another and the two don't mix

But when you really love someone - You will do labor for them with Joy

A) Take for instance my grandson Josiah - I love that kid

B) And usually when he asks me to do something - help him - I respond with Joy

1) It is not labor - because I love him

C) Paul said this about his Laboring for Jesus - the Love of Christ compels me

That is an interesting statement because Paul was not talking primarily about his love for Jesus

A) But His understanding of the Love that Jesus had for him

B) Why he prayed for the believers in Ephesus that they would come to understand the surpassing greatness of the Love of Jesus

C) The more we comprehend how much we have been loved and given by Jesus

1) The more that we love him in return

D) The more that we want to serve him

So Paul mentions their Labor of love and defines it in V.8 in this way 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.

A) This is such an amazing picture: Their faith was sounding forth - the idea is like a Trumpet!

B) “Sounded forth” - Can also mean crashing out like a “roll of thunder”.

C) At a time where it was safer to be quiet to avoid danger & persecution, the Christians blazoned forth their faith.

D) Listen to how the city fathers described their impact Acts 17:6 "These who have turned the world upside down"

Q: What instrument depicts your faith? A Trumpet? A kazoo? A clanging cymbal?

So, how did they do this?

A) Not w/great crusades, campaigns, nor city wide meetings.

B) Nope, they shared w/their neighbors & friends what God had done in their life.

1)Guys that is effective evangelism !!! Sharing what God has done in your life !!!

C)Church we need to view Sharing our faith with others as a burden we bear

1)But as a blessing God has given to us - our labor of Love

So their lives were marked by a work of Faith - a Labor of Love

A)#3 A patient hope V.9-10 - 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, 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.

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

C) They believed what the angels had said to the disciples on the Mount of Olives,

"This same Jesus whom you see going into heaven shall so come in like manner," {cf, Acts 1:11}.

D)They believed that he was coming again. Their hope lay in that.

Today there are those in the church who like to put down the study of Eschatology

A)We really can't understand it

B)Just produces a mentality of escapism - and not being active for the Kingdom

C)I completely disagree - WAIT - and active waiting

Think of it this way: You know who are the most active people I have ever seen in my life

A)A Bride who is approaching her wedding day

B)Massive to do list - so many things to be done - frantically serving - Why?

C)She wants to be ready for the big day - she wants everything to be perfect

D)The Bible says - We are the Bride of Christ - we are waiting for our wedding ceremony with Jesus

E)Happens when he comes for us

Interesting that when Paul used the phrase and to wait for His son from heaven

A)He used a word that was equated with a pregnant woman waiting for her baby to come.

B)Is that a picture of Laziness ? -

C)Pregnant women are also very busy - they are getting the nursery ready -

1)Painting walls - putting together the crib

D)We call that nesting - didn't that was a people thing until - my wife got pregnant

E)They go into preparation mode

Then as they get closer to the due date -what happens

A)They are walking all the time - vacuuming - going up and down the stairs -

B)Anything that will get that baby to come out

C)That is the picture that Paul is painting here - **ACTIVE WAITING**

Busy about the Kingdom - which is exactly what Jesus described that we should be doing

A)Matthew 25 Parable of the 10 virgins - 5 who were ready and 5 who weren't - left out

B)Parable of the talents - 3 servants are given resources by their master

C)They are told the master was going away but would return - Do business until I come

The first two guys multiplied their talents - and when the master returned - they were rewarded

A)The 3rd guy buried his talent

B)What he had was taken away.

C)BE FAITHFUL

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