

## The Hope of Heaven

### 1Thessalonians 1:1-10

- The story behind how the book of Thessalonians came into being is a unique one to say the least, it happened on Paul's second missionary trip and followed his miraculous deliverance from a Philippian prison (**Acts 16**), when Paul arrived in Thessalonica. There he starts a church, appoints elders, encourages and disciples believers before being threatened and chased away, you may say what's so unique about that, this all happened within a short three week span. Although he's no longer physically there he wants them to know there still present in his heart so he writes them these two powerful letters meant to encourage them to continue in the faith.

#### V1-10

- **V1-3** Paul is with his companions Silas- Timothy, he's just left Philippi, passing through two more cities before arriving in Thessalonica. Some background on Thessalonica > originally it was called (**Therma**) for the many hot springs adjacent to it, later it was renamed (**Thessalonica**) after Alexander the great half sister. Once Rome conquered Greece the city it became the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia, and because it was located on the Egnatian way a major road from Rome to the Eastern provinces, is like being located on **I95 DC**, Philly, NY, it served as a city for major trade and commerce, leading to a population of over **200,000** during Paul's day.
- Paul didn't get here by accident he is both answering a call and being obedient to a call, he answered the call given in **Acts 16:9**- where in a vision he saw a man in Macedonia who said "**come over and help us**" this was in line to what Paul was told at the beginning of his conversion > **Acts 9:15** "**to take the gospel to the gentiles**" thus he was both answering a call and being obedient to his calling. **V1** the word "**church**" means "**called out ones**" Paul wanted them to know up front that they were an elect people, a called out people, a loved people.
- For this Paul, Silas, and Timothy continually gave thanks for them, and they did this through (**prayer**) **V2**, this shows that being on our knees for someone can sometimes be just as effective as being in their presence. **V3** says there were three things that they never stopped remembering > **1<sup>st</sup> work of faith**- faith is never just doormat, but filled with activity, these people put feet onto their faith, and Paul and his companions could not forget that.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> labor of love**- love also produces action, it's a verb, so by using the word Labor- it means these believers put forth maximum effort in loving each other, **3<sup>rd</sup> patience of hope**- Hope entails having a future, and upon learning that they were going to spend eternity in heaven with the Lord everything began to make sense, tragedies, trials, joy, satisfaction, all occur to prepare us for glory, so they were willing to wait on it, unsaved people are not eagerly awaiting the Lord's return. **V4** Paul says faith, love, hope, are evidences of election, as their bound together and can only come from God > **Jn 15:16**- which is why I'm so glad that Jesus chose us.

- I love what Spurgeon said > “**I am glad Jesus chose me before I was born, because I don’t know if He would have after I did some living**” of course he was joking but we get the point. Just look at the elections where man is given a choice, how’s that working out, where would we be if the Lord wasn’t doing the choosing. **V5** people are often swayed by persuasive words of man’s wisdom then they are by the power of the Holy Spirit, ministers today would rather be called “**life coaches**” who teach people how to live the good life rather than “**preachers**” who teach you to sacrifice my life, one persuades through words while the other is empowered by God.
- Through this we see “**Power**” where we get the English word “**dynamite**”, that produces “**assurance**” peace, **Heb 4:12-** says the word is alive, **Jn 16:7-10** says the Spirit is alive, so when the scriptures are opened and the Spirit is working then an explosion occurred and this is the result > a church is born. **V6-8 Mk 1:16-17** Jesus upon seeing both Peter and Andrew casting their nets tells them to follow Him and He would make them become “**fishers of men**”.
- Upon seeing the example that Paul and his companions set they began to follow (imitate) what they saw > **1Cor 11:1-** this proves that Christians need good examples as much as non believers do. This produced not just a testimony in Thessalonica but throughout all Macedonia, for everyone in the region began to hear about the change in these believers lives. These people lives were so loud that although Paul is no longer there he couldn’t help but hear from others the wonderful things that God was producing through and in them, what a testimony.
- **V9-10** if you want to see what your life is amounting to just look at those who you have the most influence over and see how their turning out, Paul says you are living proof of his ministry. Look how what Paul says here in **V9-10** correlate to **V3 > 1. They turned to God from idols-** Work of faith, **2. Serving the True and Living God-** Labor of love, **3. Waiting for His Son-** Patience of Hope. This book is an example to us to never try and put together a particular formula on how God should work, for if you do I guarantee somewhere someone is glorifying the Lord in the complete opposite of what you thought God had to work through.