

“Good Church”

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Would you say you go to a good Church? What does a good Church look like? The Thessalonians had a good Church who followed a good example in Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Paul points out three qualities that made them successful.

BIBLICAL EDUCATION // ECCLESIASTICAL IMITATION // COMMUNAL APPLICATION

1. BIBLICAL EDUCATION (1 THESSALONIANS 2:13)

A. The Bible is the Word of God

- i. “Can We Trust the Bible?” By Charlie Campbell (<https://bit.ly/2Wn3SAr>) 1. Fulfilled Prophecy 2. Archaeological Evidence 3. Internal Consistency 4. Extrabiblical Writings 5. Scientific Accuracy and Foresight 6. Manuscript Evidence 7. Forthrightness About Its Authors' and Characters' Failures 8. The Persecution the Early Christians Endured 9. The Bible's Transforming Power For Good 10. The Testimony of Jesus”
- ii. *2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*
- iii. Billy Graham after being mocked for believing the Bible by Charles Templeton“...‘O God!’ he prayed “There are many things in this Book I do not understand ... There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science.’ He paused, then continued: ‘Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by faith! I’m going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word.’ When he stood up from his knees that August night, his eyes stung with tears. ‘I sensed the presence and power of God as I had not sensed it in months. Not all my questions were answered, but ... I knew a spiritual battle in my soul had been fought and won.’” – Billy Graham, Just as I Am

B. The Bible does the work of God

- i. *John 17:17 ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*
- ii. *Hebrews 4:12 (NLT) ¹² For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*
- iii. “The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation.”— DL Moody

2. **ECCLESIASTICAL IMITATION (1 THESSALONIANS 2:14-16)**

A. Imitating other Churches (Verse 14a)

- i. Eating an unfamiliar dish in Uganda... “eat the meat spit out the bones.”
- ii. “In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity”

B. Imitating suffering Churches (Verse 14b-16)

- i. Open Doors World Watch List (<https://bit.ly/2WhHZTb>) “In the top 50 World Watch List countries alone, 245 million Christians in the world experience high levels of persecution for their choice to follow Christ. That means 1 in 9 Christians worldwide experience high levels of persecution. (a 14% rise since last year) // 4,136 Christians killed for faith-related reasons in the top 50 WWL countries. // 2,625 Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced and imprisoned in the top 50 WWL countries. // 1,266: churches or Christian buildings attacked in the top 50 WWL countries.
- ii. *[Matthew 5:11–12](#)¹¹ “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
- iii. Article: “IN AFRICA, CHRISTIANS ARE IN THE FLAMES OF PERSECUTION—AND ON FIRE FOR JESUS” (<https://bit.ly/2YHSqNe>) “Even as persecuted believers in Sub-Saharan Africa feel the pressure of living in the constant and often raging flames of persecution, they are standing up with each other and for each other—on fire for Jesus. As our global Christian family goes through the fire, they are walking in faith.”
- iv. Pastor Samuel Lamb, one of the great men of China’s underground house church movement, often said, “Persecution is good for the church.” He knows this from firsthand experience. During more than twenty years in Communist Chinese prisons, his church grew exponentially.
- v. Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, founder of The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), saw the same thing in Communist Romania. He once wrote, “I have found truly jubilant Christians only in the Bible, in the Underground Church and in prison.”

3. **COMMUNAL APPLICATION (1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-20)**

A. Together as a loving family (Verse 17)

B. Together as a victorious army (Verse 18)

- i. “The word translated ‘hindered’ is a military term referring to digging a trench or breaking up a road. One of the countermeasures an ancient army would take against the opposition was to dig a massive

trench that would prevent enemy troops from reaching its men.” -
MacArthur, J. F.

- ii. 1 Peter 5:8–9⁸ *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.*⁹ *Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.*
- iii. James 4:7⁷ *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

**C. Together as a hope-filled, joyful, rewarded, glorious community.
(Verses 19-20)**

- i. Life is better in a good Church